Das Böse, der Teufel und Dämonen – Evil, the Devil, and Demons

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Apotropaic Inversion in the Temptation and at Qumran

Michael Morris

Introduction

There are a number of documents among the Dead Sea Scrolls that provide insight into demonological beliefs and practices in Second Temple Judaism. Some of these texts are concerned principally with defending oneself against demonic influence. The protection from demons is achieved in one of two ways: in the first way, which is exorcistic, a person is cured of current demonic affliction; in the second way, which is *apotropaic*, preventative measures are taken, via petition or incantation, to ensure safety from *future* demonic harm. While most discussions which intersect Oumran studies with anti-demonic traditions in the New Testament have typically focused on exorcism,1 there have been some recent efforts to broaden the conversation about apotropaic elements in the gospels. In particular, scholars including Matthias Henze and Erkki Koskenniemi have grappled with the puzzling occasion of Satan's use of the apotropaic Psalm 91 in the Matthean and Lucan Temptation pericope (Mt 4:1–11; Lk 4:1–13).² Although several convincing elucidations are offered regarding the nature and purpose of Psalm 91 in the Temptation, more must be done in order to situate Satan's invocation of the psalm within its larger context of early Jewish demonological tradition.

Building on the contributions of Henze, Koskenniemi, and others, this paper seeks to explain the attribution of Psalm 91 to Satan in the Matthean and Lucan Temptation. This portrayal of the Devil using an apotropaic text begs questions about continuity and discontinuity between the Temptation and surrounding demonological constructs. How Psalm 91 resonates in its early Jewish environment has been discussed already, however there is as yet no assessment of the psalm's

¹ Two helpful modern surveys of exorcism in the New Testament are: G. H. TWELFTREE, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (WUNT 2. Reihe 54 Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993); and E. SORENSEN, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (WUNT 2.157 Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 2002). Both of these works take into account texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

² M. Henze, "Psalm 91 in Premodern Interpretation and at Qumran," in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (ed. M. Henze; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 183–184; and E. Koskenniemi, "The Traditional Roles Inverted: Jesus and the Devil's Attack," *BZ* 52 (2008): 261–268.

use in the Temptation that incorporates the specific "inversion" technique of *11QApocryphal Psalms* (11Q11) into the conversation. Attention to this tactic in 11Q11 and elsewhere brings into sharper focus the unusual expression of Psalm 91 in the Temptation.

Psalm 91 in the Temptation & 11QApocryphal Psalms

Psalm 91 has a unique place within demonological contexts. It is a conventional hymn articulating God's protection for a faithful supplicant, and some have argued that the original Hebrew passage alludes to demonic evil.³ The earliest explicit connection between the psalm and anti-demonic material is from Qumran. *11QApocryphal Psalms* pairs the biblical passage with exorcism hymns, thereby placing Psalm 91 firmly within the framework of anti-demonic ritual.⁴ In later tradition quotations of the hymn are used in Aramaic incantation bowls and amulets, and there are direct references to demons in the Aramaic translation of the prayer in the Targum of Psalms.⁵ Thus, it is clear that Psalm 91 was associated

³ See especially the terminology in vss. 3–6, 13. Cf. I. Fröhlich, "Evil in Second Temple Texts," in *Evil and the Devil* (eds. I. Fröhlich and E. Koskenniemi; vol. 481 of LNTS, ed. M. Goodacre; T&T Clark, 2013), 45; and A. J. Schmutzer, "Psalm 91: Refuge, Protection and its Use in the New Testament," in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul* (eds. D. M. Howard Jr. and A. J. Schmutzer; Moody Publications, 2013), 94–105. Fröhlich describes מול ("pestilence") and מול ("destruction") in vss. 3 and 6 as "demonic representatives of the plague." Schmutzer observes the similarity between the "flying arrow" (מול ("wir)) in vs. 5 and the Canaanite god "Resheph" whose symbol was an arrow. He comments: "While these demonic identities may be depersonalized in Israel's theology, the same identities were not dismantled in the antecedent pantheons and practices surrounding Israel." (SCHMUTZER, "Psalm 91," 96.) For a general overview of the apotropaic use of the psalm, see: T. J. Kraus, ""Septuaginta-Psalm 90 in apotropäischer Verwendung: Vorüberlegungen für eine kritische Edition und (bisheriges) Datenmaterial," *BN* 125 (2005): 39–73.

⁴ Psalm 91 is preserved in 11Q11 col. vi (cf. F. García Martínez, E. J. C. Tigchelaar, and A. S. Van Der Woude, *DJD XXIII: Qumran Cave 11. II (11Q2–18, 11Q20–31)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998)). On Psalm 91 in 11Q11, see Henze, "Psalm 91," 186–182; and H. Lichtenberger, "Ps 91 und die Exorzismen in 11QPsAp^a," in *Die Dämonen* (eds. H. Lichtenberger, A. Lange, and K. F. D. Römheld; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2003), 416–421. Some scholars (e.g. Mika Pajunen) temper the strong anti-demonic nature of the prayer argued by others (e.g. Henze) while acknowledging the clear anti-demonic role of the prayer in 11Q11. Cf. M. S. Pajunen, "Qumranic Psalm 91: A Structural Analysis," in *Scripture and Tradition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Rajja Sollamo* (eds. A. Voitila and J. Jokiranta; vol. 126 of *Supplements to the JSJ*, ed. J. J. Collins; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 604–605.

⁵ Cf. L. H. Schiffman and M. D. Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah: Selected Texts from Taylor-Schechter Box K1* (Semetic Texts and Studies 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 39; and D. M. Stec, *The Targum of Psalms: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, vol. 16 in *The Aramaic Bible* (eds. K. Catcart, M. Maher, and M. McNamara; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 175.

with the ability to "ward off" demons. This evidence suggests that the tradition would have been recognized during the time when the synoptic gospels were composed.

Given its apotropaic connotations, it is unusual to find quotations from the psalm attributed to Satan. In the Temptation account, "the Devil" cites parts of the psalm within a challenge set to Jesus: "if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down [from the temple's pinnacle]; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone" (Mt 4:6, cf. Lk 4:9-11). Many explanations for this occurrence, such as a comparison to rabbinic disputation or a misuse of scripture by Satan, do not address the problem of why the Devil is depicted as drawing upon an apotropaic passage. However, several theories rightly take into account the anti-demonic nature of the psalm. Among these is an argument offered by Koskenniemi. For Koskenniemi, the Davidic hymns in 11Q11, of which Psalm 91 is included, are employed to frighten away demons by reminding them of the cosmological order established by God. Yet in the Temptation, the traditional roles held by exorcist and demon are reversed and it is Satan who invokes the psalm in a challenge to Jesus. This is done to remind Jesus of the same cosmological order by calling into question his claim of divine sonship. While Koskenniemi is persuasive in his assessment of the Devil's use of Psalm 91 in light of 11Q11, less convincing is his theory that it hinges on the interpretation that Satan is uncertain of Jesus' identity as "son."8

Henze suggests a different viewpoint, one that makes good sense of the psalm's use in the double tradition. In his discussion on Luke's version of the narrative he explains that:

 $^{^6}$ The arch-demon of the gospels is most often referred to in the Matthean and Lucan temptation as \dot{o} διάβολος. In Mt 4:3, 10 the figure is designated \dot{o} πειράζων and Σατανᾶ respectively. As the limited space of this paper precludes a more thorough discussion of the demonology/satanology in Matthew and Luke, the monikers "Devil" and "Satan" will simply be used interchangeably. Further, all English translations of the biblical text, unless otherwise noted, are from the *Revised Standard Version*.

⁷ Similarly, Andrei Orlov comments on veneration motifs in early Jewish apocalyptic texts, and argues that the traditional roles in those motifs are reversed in the Matthean Temptation. A. A. Orlov, "Veneration Motif in the Temptation Narrative of the Gospel of Matthew: Lessons from the Enochic Tradition" (paper presented at the Seventh Enochic Seminar "Enochic Influence on the Synoptic Gospels," Camaldoli, Italy, July 25, 2013), 1–24.

⁸ This arguably is not the case. In the expression εἰ νἰὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ (Mt 4:3,6; Lk 4:3,9), εἰ might also be translated as "since," which conveys that the Devil is not testing the status of Jesus as "son," but takes Jesus' sonship as a given. Rather, it is the nature and mission of Jesus as "son" that is being challenged in the narrative. Cf. W. D. DAVIES and D. C. ALLISON, Matthew I-VII: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew, vol. 1 (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 361; and F. BOVON, Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50 (Hermenia; trans. C. M. Thomas; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 143.

By quoting Psalm 91, the demon par excellence inverts the intention of the dictum, originally spoken to console those haunted by evil spirits, and now turns it into a tool for temptation. The point here is not so much that the devil quotes Scripture out of context, as is often remarked. To the contrary: the audacity of the satanic trial can be appreciated to its fullest only when the larger, antidemonic context of the quote is realized... The force of the temptation lies precisely in the implied context of the quote, i.e., its antidemonic connotations which undoubtedly would have been known to Luke and his original audience.⁹

This assessment, like Koskenniemi's, takes into account the apotropaic background of Psalm 91. Yet for Henze, it is the *function* of the psalm that is inverted from one of apotropaic efficacy to one of demonic aggression. Henze's article does not discuss analogous occurrences of this "inversion" tactic, but other examples are available. In order to place the inversion of the psalm within a larger anti-demonic tradition, these similar techniques are considered here.

"Inversion" Tactics

An important parallel to the inversion of Psalm 91 in the Temptation is present in 11Q11. The exorcism incantation preserved in column v is reconstructed and translated as follows:

4 לדויד עֹ[ל ל] השמ יהו[ה קרא בכו] עת
 5 אל השמ[ים כי] יבוא אליך בלי[לה וא] מרתה אליו
 6 מי אתה [הילוד מ] אדם ומזרע הקד [ושי]ם פניך פני
 7 [שו]ו וקרניד קרני חל [ו]ם חושך אתה ולוא אור

- 4 Of David. A[gainst An incanta]tion in the name of YHW[H. Invoke at an]y time
- 5 the heav[ens. When]he comes to you in the nig[ht,] you will [s]ay to him:
- 6 'Who are you, [oh offspring of] man and of the seed of the ho[ly one]s? Your face is a face of 7 [delu]sion and your horns are horns of ill[us]ion, you are darkness and not light¹⁰

These lines appear to be instructions about how to use an incantation. This includes a directive in line 5 for the exorcist to engage the demon verbally (אליו Line 6 identifies the demon as "offspring of man" and "seed of the holy ones"; a description that suggests an Enochic aetiology of evil spirits which is present elsewhere in the Qumran literature. Hence, the demon's "horns" (קרך) and "face" (פנים) must be understood metaphorically since the evil spirits of Eno-

⁹ HENZE, "Psalm 91," 185–186. Craig Evans offers a similar view of Psalm 91 in the temptation, but does not elaborate on the issue. Cf. C. A. Evans, "Jesus and Psalm 91 in Light of the Exorcism Scrolls," in P. W. Flint, J. Duhaime, and K. S. Baek (eds.), *Celebrating the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Canadian Contribution* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 541–555.

¹⁰ The Hebrew reconstruction and English translation is from García Martínez and authors, *DJD XXIII*, 198–200.

¹¹ Cf. P. S. ALEXANDER, "The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Comprehensive Assessment* vol. 2 (ed. P. W. Flint and J. C. Vanderkam; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 337–341.

chic tradition are non-corporal. In the Ancient Near East "horns" could represent "fear" or "power" while "face" could simply refer to the entity's presence. In lines 6–7 these attributes are proclaimed to be "empty" (מלום) and an "illusion" (מלום). These lines are more than descriptions of demonic characteristics. Philip Alexander suggests they are a "strategy of psychological counter-attack." Namely, the practice of disparaging the demon's features as futile is an element of the overall anti-demonic measure conveyed in the incantation.

The "psychological counter-attack" against a demon in 11Q11 can be compared to the "inversion" tool of Satan. In the Qumran passage an effective technique is for the exorcist to mock the powerful qualities of the demon. In the Temptation this technique is used against the righteous individual; the result is an authoritative anti-demonic text invoked by Satan. In this instance the psalm would be expressed not to "ward off" Jesus, but rather to display the power of Satan and to neutralize any attempt to ward *him* off. Whereas the exorcist in 11Q11 subverts the demon's weapons of intimidation, Satan adopts this method by challenging the effectiveness of apotropaic prayer. In both instances, the tools of influence are mocked. This interpretation not only serves to demonstrate the "force of the temptation," as Henze observes, but also accentuates the hostile tone of the narrative.

The "inversion" strategy is found elsewhere in the gospels. In the pericope of the Gerasene Demoniac (Mt 8:28–34; Mk 5:1–20; Lk 8:26–39) demons are portrayed using language normally proclaimed by an exorcist. In what is often a feature of exorcistic practice demons call upon Jesus' identity ("Son of God") followed by an appeal ("do not torment me") (Mk 5:7; Lk 8:28; cf. Mt 8:29). The incantation terminology is strongest in Mark 5:7 where the demon commands Jesus with an adjuration in the name of God (ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μή με βασανίσης). If In this episode a tactic is used wherein one figure (viz. the demon) seeks to counteract or subjugate an enemy (viz. Jesus) by seizing upon what is typically a weapon of the opposition. This is similar to the mocking of demonic power in 11Q11 and the reversal of apotropaic potency in the Temptation. The language in the Gerasene Demonic indirectly offers insight to the use of Psalm 91 in the Temptation as an example of "inversion" techniques in the synoptic gospels.

¹² I accept the translation of the reconstructed word with as "empty" or "delusion" based on comments from García Martínez and authors, *DJD XXIII*, 201.

¹³ ALEXANDER, "Demonology of the DSS," 346. Likewise, García Martínez and authors contend: "Both the face and the horns inspire fear. By proclaiming these to be delusionary, the one who speaks these words negates their awesomeness" (*DJD XXIII*, 201).

¹⁴ Securing the name or identity of a demon and adjuring the demon with a command were typical features of exorcistic formulae. Cf. Fröhlich, "Evil in Second Temple Texts," 46–49.

The Temptation and "Scriptural Apotropaism"

The interpretation of Psalm 91 in the Temptation within an apotropaic context warrants an evaluation of other possible apotropaic trends that may be present in the pericope. For instance, well known are Jesus' responses to Satan's enticements with quotations from Deuteronomy. The potential link between Jesus' use of Deuteronomy to a passage in the *Damascus Document* has been commented on by others. Manuscript CD-A column xvi lines 4–5 are translated: "And on the day on which one has imposed upon himself to return to the law of Moses, the angel Mastema will turn aside from following him, should he keep his words." Menahem Kister concludes that, according to this passage, torah observance has the result of keeping demonic evil at bay. An article by David Lincicum surveys amulets, incantation bowls, and magical writings in which the quotation of scripture is used for protection from demons. Therefore, it may be that the traditions outlined by Kister and Lincicum apply also to the Temptation narrative where Jesus affirms his *observance* to the torah by *quoting* Deuteronomy in the face of demonic confrontation.

Certainly there are difficulties that must be addressed before asserting Jesus as a practitioner of apotropaisms. Not least among these issues is whether or not it is problematic for the "Jesus of the gospels" to be dependent on a formulaic system to gain protection from the Devil. Nonetheless, there are points of similarity between elements of the Temptation and early Jewish anti-demonic methods that should not be overlooked. Furthermore, the basic theme of the Temptation account is comparable to apotropaic petitions in *Jubilees*. In certain pleas for protection (e.g. *Jub*. 10;5–6; 12:20; 19:28) the faithful supplicant fears demonic influence that threatens to make him stray from the righteous path. This type of demonic activity is essentially ethical temptation and, in some cases, leads to idolatry. The purpose of Satan's trials in the Temptation pericope is to obfuscate the nature of Jesus' sonship and to "lead astray" Jesus from fulfilling his

¹⁵ See for instance E. Best, *The Temptation and the Passion* (SNTS 2; 2d ed.; Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 50.

¹⁶ F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ and E. J. C. TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Vol. 1; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 565. The figure "Mastema" represents the chief of evil beings and is, in this sense, equivalent to the gospels' title "Satan." In *Jubilees*, the being "Mastema" is depicted as the leader of the evil spirits (e.g. *Jub.* 10:8, 11:5). Cf. ALEXANDER, "The Demonology of the DSS," 341.

¹⁷ M. KISTER, "Demons, Theology and Abraham's Covenant (CD 16:4–6 and Related Texts)," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Fifty: Proceedings of the 1997 Society of Biblical Literature Qumran Section Meetings* (eds. R. A. Kugler and E. M. Schuller; Scholars Press, 199), 167–184

¹⁸ D. LINCICUM, "Scripture and Apotropaism in the Second Temple Period," *BN* 138 (2008): 63–87.

¹⁹ On the various types of demonic influence in *Jubilees*, including a coercion to idolatry, see J. C. VANDERKAM, "The Demons in the *Book of Jubilees*," in *Die Dämonen*, 339–364.

mission.²⁰ This includes explicitly the temptation of idolatry (Mt 4:9; Lk 4:7). Hence, the framework for apotropaisms in *Jubilees* (i.e. a righteous individual confronted with demonic snares which include idolatry) is found also in the Temptation narrative.

If apotropaic elements are judged to be present in the Temptation then it offers an occasion for investigating their potential appearance elsewhere in the gospels. Even a cursory glance at the Matthean Lord's Prayer (6:9–13) reveals its similarity to early Jewish petitions, some of which are apotropaic (e.g. *Plea for Deliverance* in 11Q5 column xix). If Matthew retains the apotropaic characteristics from his source in regard to the Temptation, he may have also made use of an "apotropaic sense" in his version of the Lord's Prayer.²¹ Additionally, the anti-demonic context of Psalm 91 in the Temptation may shed light on Luke' allusion to the psalm elsewhere in his gospel (Lk 10:19–20).

Conclusion

Satan's invocation of Psalm 91 in the Temptation makes the most sense when the apotropaic connotations of the psalm are taken into account. Furthermore, the nature and function of this satanic ploy are more fully realized when measured against similar anti-demonic tactics from Qumran and elsewhere in the gospels. In 11QApocryphal Psalms the powerful characteristics of a demon are inverted and made part of an exorcist's incantation. The account of the Gerasene Demonic depicts an inversion of exorcistic language by which the demons adjure Jesus. Thus, the Temptation narrative portrays not simply a misuse nor an ignorance of scripture on the part of Satan, but an aggressive manipulation in which the Devil mocks the apotropaic efficacy of Psalm 91 in order to intimidate Jesus.

The examples of "inversions" in 11Q11 and the Gerasene Demonicac offer precedent for a specific interpretation of the episode in the Temptation. Recognition of these tactics influences the way in which the Temptation is read; namely, Satan's depicted attempt at a power play is considerably amplified. This relates to an issue of continuity insofar as the Devil seeks to entrap Jesus by employing a strategy which is attested to in other demonological frameworks, including a Qumran text. An element of discontinuity emerges in that the scenarios in 11Q11 and Gerasene Demonic are *exorcistic* and the situation in the Temptation is not. Hence, while the general methods are similar, the details are different. An important question which remains unanswered at this stage is to what degree the construct of "inversion" tactics impacts the demonology and Satanology of the

²⁰ As Evans writes: "The temptations do not directly challenge the divine sonship of Jesus; rather they attempt to misdirect it and, if successful, render it powerless and ineffective." C. A. Evans, *Matthew*, NCBC (ed. B. Witherington III; Cambridge University Press, 2012) 80. Cf. Bovon, *Luke 1*, 143.

²¹ Cf. B. G. Wold's article on apotropaic prayer in this volume.

Matthean and Lucan narratives. Resolving this question has repercussions also for the adjudication of apotropaic elements elsewhere in the New Testament.