2.7 DEMONOLOGY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

2.7.1 BACKGROUND

At first, one is perhaps inclined to dismiss the presence of the demonic in the New Testament as a haphazard, occcasional intrusion into the main stream of biblical ideas (see Ling 1961:1). But a closer examination reveals that every New Testament writer, without exception, makes some reference to demonic power or powers.

Moreover, there is now a growing recognition among New Testament scholars that these references are not to be rejected, as they have been formerly, on the grounds that they are a more *zeitgeschichtlick* feature - one which the New Testament writers happened to share with their times, but without abiding significance (see Ling 1961:1). Against indications in the New Testament that Jesus took the devil seriously, the sceptics have responded variously: Jesus did not himself seriously refer to the devil and the demonic, for the evangelists merely put such words into his mouth; Jesus and the apostles referred to the devil only because they had to communicate to people in terms of the first-century worldview; Jesus and the apostles did actually believe in the devil and the demonic, but their belief was part of the first-century worldview along with the belief that the sun revolves around the earth; the ideas of Jesus can be divided between those having universal significance and those, such as the reality of the devil, that are ephemeral and relevant only as historical curiosities (see Russel 1986:261).

Despite the unanimous Christian tradition affirming the existence of the devil and the demonic, the argument that belief in Satan is not part of the core of faith, finds a firm basis in the undisputed fact that no creed or council ever required it. Less firm and more nimble is the argument that conciliar statements on the devil's existence can be rejected as part of an outdated worldview.

What needs to be pointed out, though, is that if modern believers still pride themselves on the true marks of the church - *una, sancta catholica apostolica* - they need to alienate the untenable position of veering off from the apostolic tradition that clearly acknowledges the existence and operation of the devil and the de-

monic according to the New Testament writings (see Joubert 2000; cf. Eph 2:20: "Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets ...").

But it needs also to be mentioned that the proliferation of demonic belief as found in later Judaism, can most probably be ascribed to Persian influence. It was during and especially after the interaction with Persians that Jews began to speculate on the origins of demons (*Jub. 2:2; 4:22; 1 Enoch 6:1-7*; 6; cf. *m. 'Abot 5:6*) and the belief developed that evil spiritual beings were more independent of God than those who performed positive functions for him (Job 1-2; cf. Twelftree 1992:164). The Essenes at Qumran believed that everyone was ruled either by the prince of light or the angel of darkness whom God had created. But this dualism was secondary in that, in the first place, it was God who created both these spirits and designed humans to live under them.

When it comes to Greek thinking, we discover that the word *daimonion* was used in a variety of ways: for a deity (Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.276), a lesser deity (Plutarch, *Rom 51*), a divine power or unknown supernatural force (Josephus *J.W.* 1.69), the human element in touch with the divine (Galen, *De Placitis* 6.6.4) and an intermediary between humans and the gods (*Corp. Herm. XVI.18).* Philo of Alexandria identified the angels of Genesis 6:1-4 with 'demons' (*De gigantibus* 6). In the New Testament and contemporary literature, the term *daimonion* refers not only to malevolent spirits but also and more precisely to beings who in their true nature are agents of Satan and whose mission it is to oppose the work of God and his people (Yeboah 2000:337).

2.7.2 SATAN

2.7.2.1 SATAN AS THE CENTRAL FOCUS

The popular habit of mind in New Testament times was one which still regarded local or individual instances of evil as the activities of single autonomous demons, or groups of demons, and of this attitude the synoptic gospels provide abundant evidence. The gospel writers, however, appear to be aware of a different view on such matters, a view which they are conscious of having inherited from Jesus himself (see Ling 1961:12). Careful examination of the gospels suggests that one

distinguishing mark of the ministry and teaching of Jesus is his attitude towards Satan.

According to Yates (1980:99), the contribution of the gospels to the understanding of demonology is two-fold. Firstly there is evidence of a definite shift of emphasis from the operation of individual demons to the view that they formed part of the kingdom of Satan. The Beelzebul controversy (Mk 3:20-27; Mt 12:22-32; Lk 11:14-23; cf. Leivestad 1954:44-47) and the missionary charges to the disciples, help us see that Jesus regarded the operation of evil through the demons, as part of the activity of Satan. Thus the exorcisms are no longer to be seen as isolated victories over a series of autonomous demons, but part of Jesus' messianic assault on the powers of evil. Jesus does not have an atomistic view of the world of evil, but sees it as a unity under Satan, whose power is beginning to crumble. Secondly, Jesus made his attack on the demons, and through them on the power of Satan himself, in his capacity as God's representative. The exorcisms are part of his messianic activity, although the final victory over evil is only achieved through his suffering, death and resurrection (Yates 1980:100). These points are confirmed by the Acts of the Apostles, where the disciples are portrayed as continuing the messianic activity of Jesus.

In the New Testament, there is an absolute antithesis between God and Satan, between the kingdom of God as represented by Jesus, and the rule of Satan. Thus, we are given the picture of Satan in constant opposition to the work of Jesus and his followers. What was postulated in the apocalyptic, pseudepigraphal literature and other related writings, that Satan embodies the ultimate truth lying behind the profuse demonology of popular thought, is explicitly affirmed by Jesus and the early Christians.

In the New Testament, there is no indication as to the origin of Satan (see Kelly 1968:1; Buitenhard 1978:471). Jesus and the ancient church simply accepted the existence of the devil and demons and their activities in human experience as a reality that could not be denied or wished away. In the New Testament, there is only one devil and is looked upon as the author or instigator of evil for humankind, both moral and physical. In his work of evil, he is assisted by demons, the agents of the kingdom of darkness.

An astonshing number of names are used of Satan in scripture. They provide a useful starting-point for examining his characteristics. For the Hebrew mind, a name is not just a label; it depicts character (Green 1981:42). Despite the variety of names, however, and many centuries over which scripture was written, there is a remarkable uniformity in the way in which God's main enemy is regarded. The Greeks used *diabolos* for a slanderer (Xenophon, *Agesilaus* 11.5) and the LXX used it to translate *satan* ("adversary") in the sense of accusing people and attempting to separate them from God (1 Chr 21:1; Job 1:6-2:7; Ps 108:6 (LXX); Zech 3:1-2). In the gospels, he is portrayed as the adversary of Jesus (Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13), the enemy of his work (Mt 13:39) and the chief of demons (Mt 25:41). Mark does not use the term. John uses it in 6:70; 8:44 and 13:2. In Matthew and Luke the term 'devil' is used interchangeably with *satan* (cf. Mt 4:1, 5, 8, 11 and 4:10; Mk 4:15; Lk 8:12).

The English transliteration of the Greek *satanas* (Mk 1:13; Lk 22:3), in turn, is a transliteration of the Hebrew *satan* (*11QPS 19:15*; cf. Twelftree 1992:164). In the intertestamental literature the name occurs in the form of *mastemah* (*1QM13:4*; *Jub* 10:8). In the gospels, the name "Satan" is used as a synonym for the devil (cf. Mt 4:1; Lk 13:16) and the arch-demon (Mk 3:23). The devil (Eph 6:11) is also described as Beelzebul and the prince of demons (Mk 3:22; Lk 11:15), 'Belial' (2 Cor 6:15), the commander of the spiritual forces of the air (Eph 2:2), the evil one (Mt 5:37), the enemy (Mt 13:34; Lk 10:19), the dragon (Rev 12:13) and the old serpent (Rev 12:9), a devious allusion to Genesis 3. In the book of Revelation, the text tells of grotesque locust-like demons who "have as king over them, the angel of the abyss, his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon" (9:11). Both the Hebrew and the Greek names mean "destroyer". The above names paint an awesome and gruesome character whose beauty was changed into scheming, seething, destructive wickedness when he revolted against the holy God (Dickason 1975:124).

There are also names by which Satan is designated that indicate his activity. Matthew gives three names to the one who tempted Christ: "the devil" (4:1), "the tempter" (4:3), and "Satan" (4:10). As tempter, Satan tries human beings in moral combat, enticing them to evil. The title of "the accuser" as referring to Satan is found in a context of his defeat by Christ: "For the accuser of our brethren has

been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night" (Rev 12:10). Satan has always done this. He accused Job before God and brought about a spiritual battle in which the grace of God and the uprightness of Job were demonstrated to the defeat of Satan (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5). Satan accused Joshua and Israel, but the angel of the Lord defended them (Zech 3:1-2). The devil is also a deceiver "who leads the whole world astray" (Rev 12:9). Jesus calls him "the father of lies" (Jn 8:44). Satan is the master of misrepresentation (Green 1981:51). His deception involves a wide range of scheming, from hiding his own existence to actively promoting false philosophies, religions, and outright perversions of behaviour and morals (Dickason 1975:125).

Insofar as the nature of the devil is concerned, Russel (1977:256) identifies nine important characteristics of Satan:

> He is the personification of evil.
> He causes physical indisposition by either attacking the bodies of human beings or taking possession of them.
> He tempts people to sin, either to destroy them or to make use of them in his spiritual war against God.
> He denounces sinners and punishes them.
> He is the leader of the hosts of evil spirits, fallen angels or demons.
> He possesses most of the evil characteristics of the subversive, classic demons of nature.
> He was the ruler of the world from pre-creation until the advent of God's kingdom.
> He was involved in continuous conflict with God before the Kingdom of God was established.
> At the end of the world he will be conquered and destroyed by God.

These characteristics basically boil down to the fact that the devil is God's opponent and is doing his best to thwart Jesus' work of salvation (see Sabourin 1974:150-151; cf. Van Aarde 1987:29; Gibson 2000:344)

2.7.2.2. SATAN'S ENMITY WITH GOD

As an opponent of God, Satan seeks to thwart the advance of God's purposes and the Christian mission (see Ryken *et al* 1988:761). The diametrical opposition between God and Satan is evidenced in Acts 26:17-18, where, while recounting his vision of Jesus and his subsequent conversion, Paul cites Jesus as saying, "I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."

The association of Satan with darkness and God with light is characteristic of the broader images of darkness and light, evil and good, damnation and salvation. The important point here, however, is that it reflects the underlying antipathy between Satan and God (see Ryken *et al* 1998:761).

The conflict between Satan and God comes to its most colourful expression in Revelation. Here we find explicit references to the struggle between Satan and God that has broken out in heaven and is fought on the terrestrial plane (12:7-9). In relating this struggle between God and Satan in Revelation, Rotz (1998:202) says the archenemy of God appears to the seven churches without prior introduction. This adversary is mentioned in four of the letters, five times (2:9, 13, 24; 3:9) by the name, *satanas* (Satan) and once (2:10) as *o diabolos* (the devil). The archenemy of God, according to Rotz, is given no introduction because he needs none. The great dragon, the serpent of old, who is called the devil and Satan was a familiar figure to the church of the first century. In Revelation, the four-fold name dragon/serpent/devil/Satan is used twice (12:9 and 20:2), both times in the context of defeat. Both times the enemy is thrown down. In chapter 12, the dragon is hurled down from heaven and in chapter 20, Satan is thrown into the abyss.

Satan occupies centre-stage in chapter 12 of Revelation, appearing in heaven as "another sign" after the sign of the "woman" about to give birth to a child (Rotz 1998:206). But Rotz (1998:207) also cautions that the emphasis of the character of Satan is not on description, but action. Satan is portrayed as a fearful dragon who is capable of sweeping a third of the stars from the sky with enough

power to deceive the whole world (12:9; cf. 20:10), so that the power of the dragon should not be underestimated. The overriding theme in Revelation, however, remains one of defeat for God's chief opponent. In chapter 12, after the devil is hurled down, a victorious voice declares:

> Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ for the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down (12:10).

The destiny of the devil and his cohorts was never doubted in the early church and the book of Revelation witnesses to this fact.

2.7.2.3 SATAN'S HOSTILITY TOWARDS HUMANITY

In the opinion of Ryken *et al* (1998:761), Satan's ill will towards humanity is summed up best in 1 Peter 5:8: "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Satan is portrayed as the tempter who tests persons to see whether they will succumb to evil, perhaps in a way comparable to the role of Satan in Job, but also as the one who drives humans to do evil. At times the dividing line between the two activities may be blurred (see Ryken *et al* 1998:761).

In the synoptics, Jesus was led into the desert where he would not only endure but resist temptation by the devil (Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13). Other evil actions are attributed to the agency of Satan, for example, Jesus' rebuke of Peter (Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33); the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot (Jn 6:70-71).

In some parables that Jesus relates, the hostility of the devil towards God and humankind is depicted (see Page 1995:114; Payne 1980:163f; Foerster 1971:160). In the parable of the sower (Mt 13:1-9; Lk 8:4-8; Mk 4:1-9 and interpretation Mt 13:18-23; Lk 8:11-15; Mk4:13-20), the explicit references to the devil appear in the interpretation where he is identified with the birds that ate the seed along the path. In late Judaism, there is a very close parallel betweeen birds and Satan (see *Jubilees* 11:5-24). In *Jubilees* 11:11, it is said that before

the time of Abraham, Prince Mastema (Satan) sent birds to eat the seed that was being sown by the farmers. Then the land began to be barren (v. 13). In verses 18-24, the narrative goes on to tell how Abraham frightened the birds away and devised a method of planting the seed that prevented the birds from getting it. In addition to this story, Satan is associated with birds in the *Apocalypse of Abraham 13:3-7; 1 Enoch 90:8-13 and Sanhedrin 107a*. In the parable of the sower, the identification of the birds with Satan is not arbitrary, and it would have been reasonable for Jesus to expect that a Jewish audience would think of Satan when they heard of birds taking away the word of God (Page 1995:115). Oddly enough, each version of the interpretation of the parable refers to Satan by a different expression. Mark uses "Satan" (4:15); Matthew uses "the evil one" (13:19); Luke uses "the devil" (8:12). Jesus claims that the devil, by inducing people to reject his message, opposes what he has come to accomplish. Undoubtedly, the early Christians believed that Satan continued to do this by hampering the mission of evangelism of the church. Behind their experience of short-lived conversions, they detected the pernicious influence of the devil (see Page 1995:115).

In the gospel of Matthew, a parable of the weeds is given (see 13:24-30 and the interpretation in 13:36-43). Similar to the parable of the sower, it uses the imagery of sowing seed and mentions Satan in the interpretation. This parable identifies the weeds as "sons of the evil one" (v. 38). The wheat and the weeds grow together until harvest. Then they are separated, and the weeds are burned. Satan's opposition to the work of Jesus is evident in the parable of the weeds, as it was in the parable of the sower, but here it takes a different form (see Page 1995:117). By being compared to an enemy who sows his seed while others sleep (Mt 13:25), the devil is represented as one who does his malicious work with stealth. Thus he poses a particular threat to the unwary. The delay in the separation of unbelievers and believers, according to Page (1995:117), speaks of the fact that, though the advent of the kingdom will not result in an immediate division between the two groups, such a division ultimately will take place.

The parable of the sheep and the goats, which appears in Matthew 25:31-46, is the last one in the gospel to mention Satan and speaks of the final judgement, as does the parable of the weeds. This teaching about the sheep and the goats occupies a climantic position in Matthew, for it appears at the end of the last of

Matthew's five great discourges (Page 1995:117). In it, Jesus describes the division of humanity that will take place when the Son of Man comes in glory. Whether people are rewarded or punished on that day will be determined by how they have responded to human needs during their lifetime.

Our main concern in the story, though, is what the king says to the ones on his left, the unrighteous, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt 25:41). Though Satan is mentioned in passing, the reference to him is of considerable interest (Page 1995:118). Firstly, this is the only occurrence in the New Testament of the phrase *the devil and his angels*, although there is a similar expression, *the dragon and his angels* in Revelation 12:7. Secondly, this is the only unambiguous reference in the gospels to Satan's final punishment, which is described using a common apocalyptic motif - destruction by fire (cf. Rev 20:10, 14-15). Again, the ultimate doom of Satan appears to have been a familiar concept to the readers/listeners of the evangelist's gospel.

2.7.2.4 OTHER FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS OF SATAN

In the view of Foerster (1971:162), the crucial point about the devil is made in John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it". The relation of the devil to an individual person is that of father to child (cf. 1 Jn 3:10), that is, he determines a person's whole being.

Three things are said about Satan in John 8:44 (see Foerster 1971:163). The saying that he was a murderer from the beginning reminds us of the Fall. The statement which follows, that Satan "abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him", according to Foerster, is none too certain, textually, but he is of an opinion that it means that at no time can one speak of truth in connection with the devil. This is made by the third assertion that when he speaks lies, he speaks from what is his own. The devil is a master of misrepresentation and subterfuge (Green 1981:51).

Satan is also called the prince of this world which appears three times in the gospel of John (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). It is alluded to in Ephesians 6:12 where Paul speaks of "the world rulers of this present age" (see Green 1981:47). John, in his first letter, says bluntly, "the whole world lies in the arms of the wicked one" (5:19). Satan, as prince of this world, can dispose of its kingdom according to what he says in Luke 4:5-6. Paul expresses this in the sharpest possible form in 1 Corinthians 4:4 by calling the devil "the god of this world". Foerster (1971:79) maintains that this means that the devil arrogates to himself in this world the honour which belongs to God. The dominion of Satan over this world is primarily a dominion over human beings. He is the strong man armed who guards his goods (Mk 3:27 and par.) Unredeemed humanity is his sphere of lordship (Mt 6:13). A decisive point in the New Testament is that human beings cannot free themselves from this yoke (Foerster 1971:79). Though Satan is not equated with death as in later Rabbinism, he seems to have some form of power over death (Heb 2:14; cf. 1 Cor 15:26, 54-57).

An interesting observation about the devil being the ruler of this world, is made by Green (1981:47), who maintains that the devil has a particular relation to this world. Green says that this may be only as a result of Satan's rebellion but he goes on to question whether it is possible that he was assigned some special task of oversight of the world by God in the beginning before his Fall. Was he originally God's angelic administrator of our earth? And did the rightful prince turn through rebellion into a usurper prince? Green concludes that that must remain sheer speculation. But if we were to appreciate the interconnectedness between creation and redemption with Jesus as Lord of both (see De Gruchy and Field 1994:205; Vance-Welsh 1992:261), there is a greater weight in viewing Satan as a usurper prince. The teaching that depicts God as having abandoned the world to the devil, is not wholly biblical (see Khathide 1999a:95). In his cosmic understanding of redemption, Paul speaks of the created order groaning in anticipation of its liberation (Rm 8:18-25). Again, in the Colossian hymn to the cosmic Christ, Paul describes salvation as a cosmic event (Col 1:15-20). The God of creation is the same God of redemption (see Muller-Fahrenholz 1995:40f). Creation should be seen as God's grace (Moltmann 1980:100).

Satan is called "prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2), a curious title which presupposes a cosmogony different from ours. We tend to think of hell as "down", but Green (1981:45) argues that this is not a geographical statement but a value judgement. The ancients tended to see "the abyss" as the final destination of Satan and his angels (Lk 8:31; Rev 20:2) but the air, the area between earth and heaven, as a sphere of his present activities. In Ephesians 6:12, he is seen as head of "the world rulers of this present darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places". The symbolism, according to Green (1971:46), indicates Satan's "in between" position, a rebel banished from the throne of God but all the same a mighty force to be reckoned with, far more powerful than human beings. Satan controls the power of darkness. It is not surprising that in the late first-century A.D. *Epistle of Barnabas* (4:9), Satan is called *ho melas,* "the black One". He rules the darkness of this world, and his aim is to keep humankind incarcerated within it (Green 1981:46; Foerster 1971:79).

There is an interesting passage in the *Testament of Levi 3,* which says, "He who fears God and loves his neighbours cannot be smitten by the spirit of the air, Beliar." Beliar or Belial is another name we find once attributed to the devil by Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:15, and its precise meaning, for Green (1981:46), is both obscure and contested. Payne (1962:138) says the sense of this word is generally clear from its context; 'son of' or 'man of' Belial clearly means a very wicked person. The word occurs in Psalm 18:4, parallel to the word 'death'; hence the RSV translation 'perdition'. Payne agrees with Green that the derivation of the word is obscure.

In the intertestamental literature, the name, "Belial", was used synonymously with Satan which means a worthless one (Payne 1962:138; Green 1981:46). In the writings of Qumran, Belial appears as the name of the evil spirit. God created two spirits, the spirit of light and the spirit or the angel of darkness (Belial), who both exercise their power in the present *(1QS1:18; 2:5, 19; 3:20-23)*. Belial is the angel of malevolence *(1QM 13:12)*, who lives in the hearts of his followers, the "sons of darkness" *(1QS 1:10),* and rules in the preacher of apostasy *(CD 12:2)*. The enemies of the righteous are filled with "guiles of Belial" *(1 QH 2:16f; 6:21; 7:4)*. Belial's followers are called "his congregation" *(1 QH 2:22)*. Unchastity, riches and defilement of the temple are the "three nets of Belial" *(CD*

4:15). His power is like a flood, threatening the world and the righteous one *(1QH 3:20, 32; 5:39)*. But God protects his righteous ones *(1QM 14:9)*. At the end of days in the final war, the "sons of darkness" constitute Belial's army *(1 QM 1:1, 13)*. But it will be destroyed *(1 QM 11:8f)*, because God himself is fighting against him *(1 QM 15:3; 18:1, 3)*. As God has created the spirit of wickedness or Belial, he has appointed an end for the being of wickedness *(1 QS 4:18)*, then Belial, his angels, and the hosts of people who belong to his "lot" will fall under judgement. In the last violent battle, Belial's end will come and then truth will reign on the earth. God will create something new, the return of paradise and a life of people with the angels *(1 QS 4:20-25; 1 QH 3:21f; 6:13; 7:14f)*.

In the Qumran writings we can draw some tentative conclusions of Belial in relation to Satan of both the Old and New Testament. In these writings, Belial does not appear as accuser, and accordingly has no access to heaven or to God. Nor is it stated that Belial was the one who deceived Adam and Eve and so brought sin into the world. What is clear, though, is that God has created Belial, the angel of darkness, the spirit of evil, and both the just and the unjust. In the defeat and judgement of Belial or Satan, it becomes clear that the dualism inherited by Jews from Zoroastrianism or Persian influence is dealt a severe blow. Even though evil continues to exist in the world, God remains sovereign (see Malina *et al* 1994:14).

The New Testament view of Satan is that the goal of his activity is a human being's destruction in alienation from God (Foerster 1971:79). The destruction that he brings embraces harmful processes of every kind (Mk 3:23f and par.; Lk 13:11, 16; 1 Cor 5:5, 2 Cor 12:7; 1 Tim 1:20). The demons are subject to him and seek to do bodily and spiritual harm to people in the service of the devil. There is no doubt that all the activities of demons and evil powers constitute a single reality. Demons, and finally Satan, lie behind all paganism, and especially behind magic (Foerster 1971:80). Beitenhard (1978:471) writes that the devil's area of activity is primarily the non-Christian world (Acts 26:18; cf. 2 Cor 6:16), and, hence, magic is bound up with him. Thus in Acts 13:10 the sorcerer is called a child of the devil. Satan can, but not necessarily, stand behind illness (Lk 13:16; cf.. 2 Cor 12:7; Acts 10:38). A sickness that is aligned to demonisation is a work

of the power of the evil one. A sickness which does not have the features of possession can also be attributed to Satan (Lk13:16). Foerster (1971:159) cautions, however, that it is worth noting that not every sickness is regarded as due to Satanic influence. But Foerster also points out that no balance or clear-cut distinction is attempted between natural and Satanic ailments; the "murderer from the very beginning" is secretly behind the phenomenon of sickness. Hence, Acts 10:38, according to Foerster's line of argument, can represent all the cures of Jesus as exorcisms of the devil.

Thus, all the functions ascribed to Satan in Judaism, are found again in the New Testament (see Yates 1980:101). But they now culminate in a single, supernatural power and dominion of Satan to which demons and the whole of this aeon are basically subject. It is also to be observed that the traditions preserved in the synoptic gospels do not offer fully developed Satanology but they do show what the primitive or first-century community regarded as important and worth keeping and passing on with respect to the work of the evil one.

2.7.2.5 SATAN CAST OUT

Ryken *et al* (1998:761) interpret Satan's being cast down or out as a mysterious and evocative motif that seems to cover the entire span of salvation history. They maintain that there has been a common belief in the fall of Satan from heaven before human history began. The motif rests on the Old Testament passages, which may or may not be, an adequate basis for the belief. In Isaiah's taunt against the king of Babylon, or at the whole of the Babylonian monarchy personified as a single individual (see Page 1995:38), the prophet exclaims: "How are thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isa 14:12). The word translated as "morning star" *(helel),* was rendered as "Lucifer" in the Latin Vulgate, and from there it made its way into the King James Version of the Bible. Walls (1992:755) explains Lucifer as a Latin name for the planet, Venus, the brightest object apart from the sun and moon, appearing as the evening, sometimes as the morning, star. In Isaiah 14:12, it is the translation of *helel* ('shining one': LXX *heosphoros*, 'light-bearer'; cf. the Arabic for Venus, *Zuhrafun*, 'the bright shining one'). Because no mortal can be literally fallen from heaven, Ryken *et al* conclude that the imagination reaches out to picture Satan as being in view.

The oracles of Ezekiel against Tyre, according to the proponents of this view, elaborate the picture further, portraying a being who once was "the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty ... in Eden, the garden of God ... You were anointed as a guardian cherub ... You were on the holy mount of God ... You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you ... you were filled with violence and you sinned, so I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God and I expelled you, O guardian cherub" (Ezek 28:12, 13, 14, 15, 16).

The comment of Lloyd-Jones (1976:70-71) is that these descriptions, though primarily, perhaps meant to apply to Tyre and to Babylon, are generally agreed to have much wider meaning which is something quite customary in prophecy. In prophecy, a person starts with the immediate, but it is also a foreshadowing of something bigger which is to come. This happens with regard to good as well as evil (cf. Green 1981:36-42).

Ryken *et al* (1998:762) admit that mystery surrounds this motif, and that this mystery is intensified when we find other references to Satan's fall from heaven that make it, at least, metaphorically, a repeated action. Shortly before his passion, Jesus said, "Now shall the ruler of the world be cast out" (Jn 12:31). When the seventy disciples returned and told Jesus they cast out demons in his name, Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Lk 10:18).

Beitenhard (1978:470) views Revelation 12:5, 7-12 as linking this fall of Satan (Lk 10:18) with the appearance of Jesus himself. Foerster (1971:80) says that through Christ, the accuser Satan is cast down from heaven and with this fall, Satan loses his right of accusation of all human beings and judgement is now committed to Christ. Though Satan's activity in general is not ended, with the total cessation of the ability to accuse, he has also lost his power to harm wherever the power of Jesus is at work (Foerster 1971:157). Beitenhard says that this motif of Satan being cast down or out, breaks up the dualistic view of the world held in Qumran. Jesus has defeated and disarmed the devil, and can thus rob him of his plunder (cf. Mt 12:27-29). On the fall of Satan, De Bondt (sa:178) comments that

De discipelen sien in hun Meester terecht den Beheerscher der daemonen. Hij is de Kurious, de Heer ook over de hellemacht. En dat hebben ze nu mogen undervinden in hun eigen werk. Want in Christus 'naam de booze geesten zich aan hen.

2.7.3 THE POWERS OF EVIL

2.7.3.1 DEMONS IN NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS

(a) THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF DEMONS

Demons, as angels, are termed spirits (Mt 8:16; Lk 10:17, 20). The gospels prove conclusively that demons are purely spiritual beings (see Unger 1994:62). Some scripture portions illustrate this point: "And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons (*daimonizomenous*), and he cast out the spirits (*ta pneumata*) with a word" (Mt 8:16). "And the seventy returned with joy, saying 'Lord, even the demons (*ta daimonia*) are subject unto us in thy name'" (Lk 10:17). To which the Lord responds: "Nevertheless in this rejoice not, that the spirits (*ta pneumata*) are subject unto you" (v. 20). Likewise in Matthew's report of the lunatic boy it is said "the demon" (*daimonion*) went out of him (Mt 17:18). In Mark's gospel the same demon is called an "unclean spirit" (*to pneumati akatharto* - Mk 9:25). Luke recounts the incident of "certain women who had been healed of evil spirits (*pneumaton poneron*) and infirmities," of whom the first recorded is Mary Magdalene, from whom it is said, seven demons (*daimonia hepta*) had gone out (Lk 8:2). Demons and evil spirits are therefore one and the same thing (see Dickason 1975:162f; Unger 1994:63). The spiritual nature of both Satan and his demonic hosts, in the words of Unger, is graphically set forth by the apostle Paul when he emphatically says the believer's intense warfare "is not against flesh and blood", but against the non-material, the incorporeal, which he describes as "powers", "world-rulers of this darkness", "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12). Again, the apostle Paul seems clearly to designate the "powers of the air", of whom he says Satan is "prince", as "spirits" (Eph 2:2).

Demons are termed "unclean spirits" (Mt 10:1; Mk 1:23; Lk 11:24) or "evil spirits" (Lk 7:21). They are termed "spiritual forces of wickedness" (Eph 6:12). Unger (1994:67) says of the nature of demons that the depravity and complete moral turpitude of these unseen agents of evil are everywhere witnessed to in scripture by the devilish effects they produce in their victims, and by the frequent epithet of "unclean", which is applied to them. They use those they possess or influence as "instruments of unrighteousness" (Rm 6:13), to promulgate "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1) and destructive heresies (2 Pet 2:1).

That evil spirits are believed to possess superhuman intelligence and knowledge, especially foreknowledge, is attested to by the widespread practice of seeking oracles from them (Unger 1994:66). If Plato's etymology of *daimon* from an adjective signifying "knowing" or "intelligent", is correct (Plato, *Cratylus* I, 389), it hints at intelligence as the basic characteristic in the conception of demons (cf. Langton 1949:153, 179; Nevius 1968:33, 38). Scripture also uniformly stresses how perspicacious demons are: they know Jesus (Mk 1:24), bow before him (Mk 5:6); speak of him as the "Son of the Most High God" (Mk 5:7), realise that there can be no fellowship between light and darkness, between him and them (Lk 8:28), entreat favours of him (Lk 8:31) and comprehend the future, and their own inevitable doom (Mt 8:29).

Coupled with their superhuman intelligence and moral turpitude is an amazing strength. An evil spirit inhabiting a man, resisted two of the seven sons of Sceva. He "leaped on them and subdued both of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded" (Acts 19:16). The maniac of the Gerasenes (KJV) was controlled by many unclean spirits, "and no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain" (Mk 5:3). He had broken all shackles and chains and was ucontrollable. Demonic power is often manifest in viciousness (see Dickason 1975:165). The same maniac usually was crying out and gashing himself with stones (Mk 5:5). One man's son had the symptoms of an epileptic. Jesus cast out of him a demon who had thrown him often into fire and into water (Mt 17:14-20). It seems demons promote self-destruction in their victims (Dickason 1975:166). The great power of demons was dramatically demonstrated when Jesus cast out the demons from the demon-possessed

Gerasene. They entered into a herd of about two thousand swine and rushed them over a steep bank to perish in the sea (Mk 5:13).

The strength of the demons is also seen in their working of supernatural feats. Demons can produce deceptive "miracles". Like their leader, the devil, they may interfere in the laws of nature (see Dickason 1975:166). Satan works "all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess 2:9) through the Antichrist.

The false prophet who supports the Antichrist also performs "great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men" (Rev 13:13; cf. Rotz 1998:208-214). He even animates the image of the Antichrist to deceive human beings (Rev 13:15. This may be Satan's personal work, or it may be the work of his demons (Dickason 1975:166). Demonic miracles or works of power are not meant to glorify God but serve as counterfeiting actions with an express purpose of causing human rebellion against God and the revealed divine truth. The magicians of Egypt seemed to duplicate some of God's miracles through Moses, but were unable to match others (Ex 8:5-7, contrast vv 16-19). The magicians recognised that the greater power came from God (Ex 8:19). The miraculous power of Satan and his demons is limited. The magicians may try to duplicate God's miracles through demonic help but they have limited power.

(b) ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS

Böcher (1972:13) thinks that what is probably the major function of the demons is to cause harm *("schädigung")*. Consequently, the prevalent attitude towards the demons in the first-century Mediterranean world, including Jews, was that of constant fear. There was a principle of causality whereby evil was always referred back to the work of demons.

Yeboah (2000:338) reports that according to early Christian literature, demons do not operate in a vacuum. They "oppress", attacking people from without, or "possess", entering an individual's body and attacking it from within. Yeboah also believes that demons cause diseases and sickness of all kind, although not all sicknesses may be attributed to them (Mk 1:32; 2:10-12). For people in

antiquity, certain kinds of sicknesses were caused by demons even if the symptoms can be explained by modern medicine. The presence of a demon in a person might sometimes not be obvious to a third party unless confronted by an exorcist (Mk 1:21-28). Most of the time, however, a demonic activity in a person's life would be obvious (Mk 5:1-19).

Demons may cause many sorts of physical ailments and injuries aimed at disabling the body (cf. Dickason 1975:174), like dumbness (Mt 9:32-33; 12:22; Mk 9:17-29), blindness (Mt 12:22), deformity (Lk 13:11-17) - the trouble of the woman was attributed to "a spirit" (v. 11) who was regarded as an agent of Satan (v. 16). Epilepsy, a term describing the boy in Matthew, is "moon-smitten" (see Mt 17:15-18), but the parallel passages describe the effects of the malady. Mark 9:20 states, "the spirit threw him into convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling about and foaming at the mouth". Luke 9:39 says, "A spirit seizes and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him."

Certain mental disorders stem from demonic influence and control. Again, not all mental illnesses, like physical sicknesses, result from demon activity (see Koch 1970:58). In the case of the maniac from the Gerasenes, the characteristics of insanity appear to be withdrawal, nudity, moroseness, filth and compulsive behaviour (Lk 8:27-29). After Christ cast out the demons, the people found him "sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid" (Lk 8:35). Suicidal mania could be another form of a demon-inspired mental disorder. A demon who controlled a boy from childhood often threw him "into the fire or water to kill him" (Mk 8:22). One demoniac kept gashing himself with stones (Mk 5:5). Demons may move people to destroy human life (Rev 18:2, 24) or they may directly slaughter them.

The activities of demons are quite diverse but always directed toward the promotion of unrighteousness and ultimate destruction of that which is good (Dickason 1975:169). Demons oppose God and try to promote the programme of the devil. Satan, though, is not omnipresent, omnipotent nor omniscient (Dickason 1975:169). But his presence, power and knowledge are greatly extended through his demons. Dickason is of the conviction that because of this, Satanic power is

felt in many places simultaneously and in some places constantly. Pooling their resources and millennia of experience, they multiply effects, whether in individuals, nations or the world system. Demonic cooperation is evident in several places in scripture (Mt 12:26, 45; Lk 8:30; 1 Tim 4:1). Basing his belief on Daniel 10:13, 20, Dickason (1975:170) is persuaded that Satan and his demons are behind the scene in determining the philosophy, not only of individuals, but also of world powers which is illustrated by the fact that often governmental policies opposing the spread of the gospel can be traceable to the work of demons (Rev 12:9; 13:1-8).

More often, evil spirits imperil a person's well-being by subjecting them to temptation (see Unger 1994:69; Dickason 1975:177). Many scriptures specifically ascribe this power to Satan (Gen 3:1-7; Mt 4:3; Jn 13:27; Acts 5:3; 1 Thess 3:5). The power of temptation is possessed by Satan's many subordinate evil spirits, through whose instrumentality he accomplishes his nefarious purposes. Satan moved David to put confidence in human resources; so he numbered Israel (1 Chr 21:1-8). Demons may encourage the same thing. They appeal to the flesh of believers and encourage selfish and lustful desires (1 Cor 5:1-5; Eph 2:2-3; 1 Thess 4:3-5; 1 Jn 2:16). Christ warns the church in Pergamum about Satan's influence and the sin of idolatry and immorality (Rev 2:12-14). The same warning came to Thyatira, where demon influence in idolatry also led to immorality (Rev 2:20-24). "The prince of the powers of the air, the spirits that are now at work in the hearts of the sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:2 - *Weymouth*) may be thought of as conjointly, perpetually, and indefatigably engaged in a vast programme of suggestion and solitication for evil (Unger 1994:69).

The Bible points to the demons behind idolatry. In turning people from God, Satan and his hosts often turn them to idols. The Hebrew Old Testament clearly reveals demons promoting and receiving the worship given to idols (Lev 17:7; Dt 32:17; Ps 96:4-5; Isa 65:11). The demonising of heathen gods, so conspicuous in the Septuagint (Ps 91:6, LXX 90:6; 96:5, LXX 95:5; Isa 62:3, 11) is proof, that already in the third century B.C., demonism was recognised as the dynamic of idolatry. Idol-worship was considered as nothing else but demon-worship (see Unger 1994:30).

Similar to viewing pagan gods as demons, is viewing idols as demons. To the ancients, idols, images or even uncarved sticks and rocks were home to spirits (Jer 2:27; cf. Gen. 28:18; Homer *Iliad* 22.126). They believed that a demon inspired (lived in) the idol, so they sometimes used the word *idol* in parallel or interchangeably with *demon* (Dt 32:16; Zech 13:2). "For all the gods of the people are idols, but the Lord made the heavens" (Ps 96:5). "They sacrificed their children to demons (*shedim*, a word for 'demon' borrowed from Akkadian), the blood of their children to the idols of Canaan" (Ps 106:37-38). "They sacrificed to demons who were not God, to gods whom they have not known", (Dt 32:17). The Septuagint (LXX) twice translates the Hebrew *'elohim* "god[s]" with *patachra*, the Persian word for "idol" (Isa 8:21; 37:38 - see Ryken *et al* 1998:203). Paul asserts that meat offered to idols is really offered to the demons behind the idol (1 Cor 10:19-20).

Dickason (1975:173) also maintains that in primitive religions where magic, superstition and worship of evil spirits are key factors, demons provide the power to keep men and women enslaved (cf. Unger 1971:150). Barnhouse (1965:205f) is of the opinion that although the motivating factors of polytheism are complex, and in some cases remarkable people have been elevated to the rank of gods, demonism always remains the dynamic behind the zeal of idolatry whether they worship Marduk, Ashur, Zeus, Jupiter, Apollo, Ra, or a host of lesser deities (cf. Dickason 1975:173; Unger 1971:152).

Demonism may also manifest itself in cults of Christendom (cf. Dickason 1975:173). Perversions of the scriptural view of the person of Christ, his atonement, the method of salvation, and the essence of the Christian life cause divisions among those who profess the name of Christ. John admonishes believers to test the spirits, whether they be of God or of Satan (1 Jn 4:1-4). The New Testament warns against heresies and cults that distort the truth while retaining some of it (2 Cor 11:13, 15, 22, 23; Gal 1:6-8; Col 2:18-23; 1 Tim 4:1-4).

It seems evident from scripture that the activity of demons is so intimately and inseparably bound with their prince-leader, that their work and his are identified as similar in many ways, rather than differentiated. Thus, the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is described as going about "doing good, and healing all

that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10:38). It is obvious, even from a cursory examination of the facts, that this so-called oppression of the "devil" was largely the work of his emissaries and servants - the demons (cf. Unger 1994:69).

(c) ABODE AND TIMES

Dickason (1975:76) writes that since the Fall, evil angels have been cast out of heaven and are now found in various places. Evil spirits are found in the heavenlies. Christians struggle against wicked spirit beings in the heavenlies (Eph 6:12). Dickason says that these are most likely the demons, Satan's henchmen who seek to hinder God's purpose and people on earth. They may live and move in the stellar heavens.

In his vision, John pictures a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth (Rev 9:1-11). There are varied interpretations about the identity of the star. Rotz (1998:309) believes that there is no reason to identify this star with Satan or any evil power. For Rotz, the star represents some heavenly figure divinely commissioned to carry out God's purpose. But Ford (1975:143), Swete (1977:114) and Harrington (1993:109) associate the fallen star with Satanic forces (see also Barclay 1960:61). Beasley-Murray (1972:160) allows for either interpretation. Mounce (1977:187) equates the star with the angel with the key to the abyss (20:1).

Whether this star or angel is good or holy (Mounce 1977:187; cf. Dake 1998:292) or evil (cf. "the fallen stars" *1 Enoch 86:1f; 88:1*) is something that falls outside the focus of our current study. What is of interest is that the star had the key to the bottomless pit. When he opened the abyss or pit, out came monstrous creatures who had an angel king over them (v. 11). These creatures, in the opinion of Dickason (1975:76), appear to be demons or wicked angelic spirits who had been imprisoned for some time. In her argument, Rotz (1998:309) concludes that even if we have in mind an evil agent as represented by the star that falls from heaven to the earth, the character still remains an instrument of the divine will. The star opens the bottomless pit, releasing smoke and the locust army whose description (see Rev 9:7-10) includes "tails and stings like scorpions" (cf. Lk 10:19). For Rotz (998:310), the overarching emphasis in this pericope is

the sovereignty of God who allows the star to have the key and therefore open the pit. God also contains the effects and duration of the locusts' power.

Also in the vision of John, we are told of at least four great angels who are bound or will be bound at the river Euphrates (Rev 9:14). They may be leaders of great angelic armies involved in the destruction of one-third of humankind (Rev 9:15-18; cf. Dickason 1975:76). This place of retention (*abussos* - "the provisional prison"; see Rotz 1998;309) seems to be a different location from the abyss (Dickason 1975:76).

Some angels are described by Jude 6 as those who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode. These God has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgement of the great day. Their release from these bonds is only for the entrance into the lake of fire (Mt 25:41; cf. Dickason 1975:77). These words parallel what 2 Peter 2:4 says about angels that sinned peculiarly and are cast into *tartaroe* (a name in classical mythology for the sub-terranean abyss in which rebellious gods and other such beings as the Titans were punished). The word was, however, taken over into Hellenistic Judaism and used in the book of *Enoch 20:2* (see Fritz 1980:775). The larger contexts of Jude and 2 Peter 2 indicate that these are the same angels and the same place (Dickason 1975:75). So far we have discussed what seems to be the place of judgement for evil spirits.

Böcher (1972:22f), in terms of the present abode of demons, makes references to the elements in the cosmology of Judaism and the New Testament: fire, water, air and earth. In antiquity, these elements were considered to be the home and vehicle of good, bad, high and low entities. For example, elements of fire could represent the image of the Holy Spirit (e.g. Acts 2:3f); water, the place where Jesus calls his disciples, preaches, heals, transforms misfortune into fortune; air, the wind of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) and earth-desert as a place for temptation, exodus but as well as the revelation of the Messiah (cf. Mk 1:45). The mountain could also be seen as a place of theopany (cf. Mt Zion, God's presence, Torah, transfiguration, place of prayer).

But as much as high and good entities could be associated with the elements of water, air, water and earth, Böcher (1972:22f) also points out that evil and low entities could as well use these elements for their own sake. For example, the devil is referred to as the ruler of the forces of the air (Eph 2:2). Demons live in the air or heavenly regions (Eph 6:12). The desert is resting place of demonic powers (Mt 12:43) and for Satanic attack on Jesus (Mt 4:1f). The mountain could also be a home for the demonised (Mk 5:5). The Bible also mentions the mythical mountain of Armageddon (Rev 16). The cave is referred to as a place of demons (Mt 8:28; Mk 5:3).

According to Ryken *et al* (1998:202), the ancients in Palestine and neighbouring countries found in the violence of nature tangible evidence of the cosmic battle. The primordial waters, rebelliously struggling to escape their divinely ordained boundaries (Job 38:8, 11), required the rebuke of God (Ps 104:7). The gospels revisit this motif when Jesus "rebukes" the wind and the sea (Mt 8:26; Mk 4:39; Lk 8:24). The disciples' astonished response, paraphrased as "what sort of person commands the elemental spirits?", is consistent with their literary background (see Ryken *et al* 1998:203). The Old Testament pictures storms from the sea as mythological monsters, enemies of the Lord to be slain by him (Job 9:13; 26:12-13; Ps 89:1; Isa 51:9; cf. the Babylonian story *Enuma Elish* and the Canaanite storm god - see Riley 1999:244-249). In the gospels, Jesus quietens the storm and reveals his power over the water or the primordial sea. In a rather symbolic way, Jesus demonstrates his power and victory over the demons of the sea by walking on water (Mt 14:22-33). When those who were in the boat saw the wind die down, they worshipped Jesus and said, "Truly you are the Son of God" (Mt 14:33).

When it comes to the time of demons, the night and darkness are favoured. At night and in the dark, the wicked and dangerous demons threaten the safety of human beings, for example, the angel of death (Lk 12:20). Both the betrayal (see Jn 13:30; 1 Cor 11:23) and the captivity (see Lk 22:53) of Jesus occur at night. In Exodus 10:21-23, darkness is the work of the demons of punishment (see also Rev 16:1f). Demonic chaos of the world happens at the beginning and the end of times (Gen. 1:2; Mk 13:24). Demonic darkness is also a place of punishment for sinners and heretics (Mt 8:12; 22:13). Contrary to this, the time of

salvation has won victory over darkness (Rom 13:12). In the eschatological time of salvation, there will be no more night (Rev 21:24; 22:5 - cf. Böcher 1972:26).

(d) FORM OF DEMONS

In reference to the form of demons in the belief system of the first-century world, Böcher (1972:27) writes that people of antiquity personalised and made concrete dangers in terms of demons who caused this. Therefore, these demons looked like those who caused these dangers: animals of the biting, stinging and poisonous kind and this included humans as well. These were usually either magnified as giants or played down as dwarfs. Repulsive people were often feared to have demons. The fear of demons is exemplified by the episode in which the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water. It is, therefore, against this background that "fear not" (Mt 14:27) becomes an important phrase.

In the New Testament, demonic manifestations assume animal form. In the story of temptation, beasts appear to belong to Satan (see Mk 1:13). Attacking predators are metaphoric for demonic castatrophes like wars, hunger and pests (Rev 6:8; Jer. 15:3; Ezek. 14:21; 33:27 - cf. Böcher 1972:28). In the book of Daniel demonic animals emerge from the waters (7:3-8). In the New Testament, Anti-Christ is depicted as an animal of the underworld (Rev 11:7; 17:3, 8). The lion is an ambivalent animal because it is used both in the good and bad sense. Christ is the lion of Judah (Rev 5:5). The devil is also referred to as a roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8). Paul says that he "was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim 4:17).

There are also other popular animals that are associated with demons. Demonic enemies of Christians are described in images of wolf (Mt 7:15; Lk 10:3, Acts 20:29). The symbol of a wolf also refers to false prophets and heretics. Dogs, on the other hand, remind of heathens, heretics and enemies (Mt 15:26; Phil. 3:2; 2 Pet 2:22). Unclean and hateful birds may resemble the demonic (Rev 18:2; 19:17, 21; cf. Isa 13:21f; Ezek 39:17-20). In both the Old Testament (Gen 3) and the New Testament (see Rev 7:9; 20:2), the snake often depicts a demonic influence or enemies of the gospel with the exception of Matthew 10:16. Jesus gives his disciples power over serpents and scorpions (Lk 10:19; cf. Ps 91:13). The only reference to frogs is Revelation 16:13, which possibly has its background in the

story of the frog plague in Egypt (see Ex 7). Locusts may also be regarded as demonic insects (Rev 9:3, 7-11; Joel 2:2-11).

(e) DEMON POSSESSION

Unger (1994:78) asserts that it cannot be denied that the period of Jesus' public ministry was the time of an unusual and startling outbreak of demonism. It seemed as if all the fury of the underworld of evil was concentrated against the Messiah and his public ministry, so that in the synoptic gospels, cases of demon possession and demon expulsion are extremely common. This is a fact corroborated by Leahy (1975:143) that there is certainly no evidence in the New Testament that the first-century Jews were suddenly confronted with new and unfamiliar phenomena in respect of demon possession; contrary is the case.

An attempt has been made on exegetical grounds to establish an eschatological case for believing that possession has now virtually ceased. Conybeare (1896, 1896-1897) was one of the early proponents that, in an age of science and enlightenment, there are no longer any demons, nor any cases of demon possession (Conybeare 1896-1897:602). The contention that demon possession ended with the New Testament, is both evidentially and historically untenable. That demon possession by no means ended with New Testament times is irrefutably proved by the witness of early church history (see Unger 1994:81). The *Epistle of Barnabas* (13:19) represents the heart full of idolatry as the abode of demons. The *Shepherd of Hermas* (*circa* 120) contains considerable philosophy of demon possession.

In the immediate post-apostolic period, Christians continued to wrestle with the forces of darkness. Demons were blamed by Christian thinkers for the physical evils in the world. Tertullian, a learned and skilled rhetorician in Carthage in North Africa, in his *Apology* for Christianity about 200 A.D., included an extended discussion of demons which is of comparable significance for early Christian views on demonology (cf. Ferguson 1984:117). Tertullian referred to diseases and illnesses which they cause, and then seem to cure. He illustrated their effects upon bodies and souls by the way an unseen poison in the breeze can blight crops (*Apology 22*). To the evil spirits, "belong famine, blasting of the vine and

fruit trees, pestilence among men and beasts, all these are the proper occupations of demons" (Origen, *Against Celcus* viii.31).

The main work of demons, however, was seen in the moral sphere. Or, at least, more attention was given to their activity in relation to human beings. They try to keep human beings from God (Justin, *1 Apology 58*; Tertullian *Shows 10*); "inciting and instigating men to sin" (Origen, *On First Principles* 111.2.1). So close was the association of temptation and sin with the work of demons that various evil impulses and acts could themselves be called demons. For instance, the early Christian prophet Hermas says, "evil speaking is a restless demon" (Mandates 2.3) and again, "presumption and vain confidence is a great demon" (*Similitudes* 9.23.3).

Yet demonic temptations to sin were not considered to overpower human beings (see Ferguson 1984:119). Free will was preserved. The emphasis on free will was consistently maintained in the history of the early Christian thinkers (Justin, *1 Apology 43*; *Dialogue with Trypho 102; 141).*

Given this belief history on demonic activity in the early stages of Christian thought, it is rather an absurd observation that some New Testament authorities on the subject of demons, like Conybeare, Alexander and others seem to believe that spirit possession has now virtually ceased. The view of William Menzies Alexander is repeated in a modified form by Geldenhuys (1962:174) in his commentary on Luke's gospel. Geldenhuys does not try to establish any criterion of genuine demon-possession, but he is emphatic that "demon possession is a phenomenon which occurred almost exclusively, but then to be sure on an amazing scale, during Jesus' appearance on earth and to a lesser extent during the activity of the apostles". Geldenhuys sees possession now as comparatively rare, but believes that it will reappear at the end of the age in the Anti-Christ and in his followers (2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2), but then Christ will triumph over the evil one. The problem of the cessation of demon possession, according to Unger (1994:81), is a popular and widespread error that labours under the impression that now in an age of science and enlightenment, demons, or demon possession, no longer exist. Leahy (1975:130) attributes the non-belief in demons and demon possession to theological modernism or liberal theology which views angels, whether fallen or

unfallen, including the devil, as belonging to the realm of myth (see Bultmann 1984) and reflect an outside and pagan influence on the writers of scripture. Speaking for theological liberalism, Brunner (1952:133) says, "The Bible speaks of angels and of the devils; in accordance with the scripture, we can do so too. But for us *this* way is impossible."

Instead of accepting biblical evidence on demons and demonisation as a valid report, theological liberalism tries to explain away a phenomenon that was common in the first-century Mediterranean world. Theological liberalists would do so by advancing several theories. The first is the mythical theory which says that the whole narrative of Jesus' demon expulsions is merely symbolic, without actual foundation or fact (see Strauss 1836:21-52). Demon possession, so called, is but a vivid symbol of the prevalence of evil in the world, and the casting out of demons by our Lord, a corresponding figure of triumph over evil by his doctrine and life.

The second theory is that of accommodation, that Jesus Christ and the synopticists in making reference to demon possession, spoke only in accommodation to the prevalent ignorance and superstition of their auditors, without making any assertion as to the actual existence or non-existence of the phenomena described, or the truth or falsity of current belief (see Leahy 1975:133; Unger 1994:91). Thirdly, it is the non-involvement theory which says that Christ purposely did not correct the popular opinion of his day, considering that it was not necessary for him to do so and not wishing to engage in a controversy which was not relevant to his essential ministry. Fourthly, a fairly common view is the limitation theory which says that Christ shared the contemporary belief in the existence of demons and therefore his word is not final for us. It is claimed, for example, that his attitude to the Old Testament and to the universe was simply that of the first-century Jew. Fifthly, the refraction theory asserts that Christ did not cast out demons, but that the gospel writers have erroneously attributed this to him. They could only describe, it is said, the healing power of Christ on the minds of people in a language intelligible to themselves and to their age, and so they gave a 'refracted' account, that is, an account coloured by their own culture and outlook (see Leahy 1975:133-134).

Although these theoretical arguments are used by their proponents to dispel the existence of demons and demonic possession and may appeal to a western mind influenced by science and enlightenment, they are simply not sound when they are held against scriptural evidence and the reality of spiritual phenomena occurring in many cultures across the world. The conflict with the powers of evil lay at the heart of the mission of Christ (Leahy 1975:133). A belief in the spirit world which was prevalent in first-century Palestine, was not contradicted by Jesus and the apostles, but simply affirmed to be true (Greig and Springer 1993:415), and this background of Satanic evil, in Ladd's (1974:51) view, provides the cosmic backdrop for the mission of Jesus and his proclamation of the kingdom of God. The spirits were greatly feared by common people of the Jewish, Greco-Roman world of the first century (Kraft 1995:44). On his part, Guthrie (1981:149) argues that if good angels are portrayed as powerful agencies in carrying out God's will, then we lock ourselves in an untenable position if we deny the New Testament perspective that there is also a well orchestrated army of evil agencies which counterfeits the activities of God's good angels.

The problem of the cessation of demon possession (see Conybeare 1896-1897: 600-1) is challenged by both the historical reality and what happens in many cultures of the world. Oesterreich (1930) has written a fascinating survey of the history of possession from the most ancient times until recently in all countries of the inhabited globe. Langton (1934) has done some investigation on the doctrine of spirits, angels and demons from the Middle Ages to the present time. Leahy (1975:108f) makes his contribution to the history of demonic activity since New Testament times. This involves inquiring into the views of the Reformers on demonology up to the testimonies given by missionaries in mission fields as far afield as China. Pressel (1977) writes about spirit possession among the Brazilian mediums. Bourguignon (1968a; 1968b:18-32; 1979:245-265; cf. Boddy 1994:409) looks at the altered state of consciousness, especially spirit possession, in more hierarchical, horticultural and agricultural societies which appears frequently in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin American, African-American and Mediterranean cultures. Furthermore, Bourguignon (1973:12f), in her inquiry, shows interest in institutionalised altered states and possession beliefs in the New Testament. This leads DeMaris (2000:15) to conclude that whatever the exact mix-

ture of trance and possession trance, "the New Testament spirit world confirms Bourguignon's characterisation of Mediterranean cultures".

While debates and denials in the past have been raging among New Testament scholars on the subject of demons and demonisation, contemporary historical Jesus scholars have begun to show a great interest in the world of spirit and manifestations thereof - exorcisms, healings and visions that pervade human life (DeMaris 2000:12; cf. Dunn 1975). Neufeld (1996:154) believes that the use of social scientific and anthropological models for biblical interpretation has opened up windows on the social world of the ancient Mediterranean area (see e.g. Rohrbaugh 1993: Neyrey 1991; Malina 1993a, 1993b; Crossan 1991). Kraft (1996) has also added his voice in the employment of anthropological expertise as an indispensable tool for cross-cultural witness.

In New Testament scholarship circles, the fullest use of anthropological models in the historical Jesus debate has been John Pilch's application of altered states of consciousness research to various episodes in the gospels - Jesus' transfiguration, walking on the sea, healing and resurrection appearances and to related phenomena described in the New Testament. Altered states of consciousness research examines and compares what could variously be described as ecstatic, trance, mystical, transcendental or visionary experiences that pervade human cultures around the world (see Bourguignon 1968a; 1979).

Pilch (1996:135) has rightfully pointed out that what could have contributed to a failure to correctly interpret the "supernaturalistic" Mediterranean culture is the fact that every researcher (in this case western) inevitably begins from a personal perspective within the researcher's own culture. He also admits that perhaps there is no other way to begin. This is the reason, he believes, why comparative studies, such as psychological anthropology and other anthropological disciplines, are so pertinent to biblical studies. The vast majority of biblical researchers are outsiders to the culture they are investigating. Pilch goes on to say that if they do not use a comparative approach, they run the risk of interpreting ancient Mediterranean texts anachronistically and enthnocentrically. Psychologically-minded interpreters are even eager to analyse ancient Middle Eastern persons with tools developed in the western culture. The sad consequence of this ap-

proach, according to Pilch (1996:135), has been "that translators and exegetes have regularly imposed their western emic views as etic perspective on native emic reports" (see also Pike 1954; Segall *et al* 1990). While scholars, like Matchet (1972), would regard the (spiritual) experiences of the Hopi Indian women as hallucinatory, Pilch's model, based on the altered states of consciousness, would come to a different conclusion. In the ancient Mediterranean world, many spiritual or supernaturalistic experiences that could be construed as of a psychological or psychiatrical nature by western people, would be accepted as normal culturally valid experiences. Unfortunately, demon possesion, like other spiritual or supernaturalistic experiences in the New Testament times and other modern cultures, has become a theological casualty of an imposed etic of western-minded researchers.

When we come to the New Testament, we discover that there is a profound awareness of the activity of demons and of the forces of darkness that are marshalled against the Son of God and God's people. Leahy (1975:78) reckons that conflict with evil powers is mentioned some fifty times in the gospels alone. During the ministry of Jesus, there were afflicted people whose symptoms were diagnosed as different from ordinary illnesses by their contemporaries, by Jesus and by the evangelists (Wright 1978:474). They diagnosed possession or other influence by one or more evil spirits. Wright argues that, if we wish to regard some at least as mentally deranged (e.g. schizophrenics), we have the difficulty of their immediate cure by word of command in a way unmatched by modern psychotherapists.

In fact, contrary to what psychotherapists say, the gospel writers reveal otherwise. The diminutive word for demon, *daimonion*, is used by Matthew eleven times, by Mark thirteen times, by Luke twenty-two times in his gospel and once in Acts. Twice Matthew uses the term 'unclean' as descriptive of 'spirit'; Mark does so eleven times and Luke five times in his gospel, applying the term 'unclean' to demon once. Twice Luke applies the adjective 'evil' to spirit; and in Acts he uses 'unclean' twice and 'evil' four times with reference to spirit. The word *daimon* (demon) occurs less frequently in the gospels, and the verb 'to be demonised' occurs seven times in Matthew, four times in Mark, once in Luke

and once in John. Quite clearly, the gospels are at one in their presentation and exposure of demonic activity (Leahy 1975:79).

Concerning the nature of the possessing spirits, Wright (1978:474) says that, although the gospels admit that departed spirits may return (see Lk 24:37f; Mk 9:4; Mt 14:26), there is no suggestion that these are the spirits who possess, contrary to the belief of mediums and some modern exorcists. They belong to Satan's kingdom (Mt 12:26, 27) and consequently face ultimate destruction (Mk 1:24) in torment (Mt 8:29) in the abyss (Lk 8:31).

There seem to be grades of possessing spirits. A spirit may take with him "seven other spirits more evil than himself" (Mt 12:45; Lk 11:26). Jesus spoke of one kind that needed intensive prayer and fasting before it could be cast out (Mk 9:29). The argument about casting out by Beelzebul turns on the superiority of one spirit (i.e. the Holy Spirit) over another (Mt 12:33f).

The writers of the New Testament, like the Jewish people of their day, distinguish between ordinary cases of illness and illness which was merely symptomatic of something much more sinister (Leahy 1975:79). They distinguished between ordinary illness and demon-possession (Mk 1:32,34; Mt 8:16- cf. Short 1955:117). They even distinguished between madness and possession (Mt 4:24). We read of numerous cases of people who suffered from such afflictions as deafness, dumbness and blindness, who were in no way possessed by demons. The physical manifestations of possession indicated in the New Testament include hypochondria, insanity, epilepsy, frenzy, impediment of speech, dumbness, deafness and blindness (see Leahy 1975:79). The demoniac is seen to have one or more of these afflictions, and there is something more than the usual symptoms of an ailment (see Ferguson 1984:4-5). The way a demoniac talks seems to be unusual for ordinary sufferers (Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24) and often possess supernatural strength (Mk 5:4; Acts 19:16). No mental illness is indicated in the case of the dumb man in Matthew 9:32, or in the case of the blind man in Matthew 12:22, yet both men were demon-possessed. In other cases of demon-possession, epileptic symptoms are attributed to demon activity (see Mt 17:15-18; Mk 9:17; Lk 9:39). The moonstruck *(seleliazomai)* was one category of people healed by Jesus (Mt 4:24; 17:15). The epilepsy was supposed to have been caused by

the moon and the change and full moon. In support of this view, Plutarch describes the effects of moonlight upon human beings *(Quaestiones Convivales 658E-F)*. But Dake (1998:19) contests that the 'moonstruck' condition or mental derangement was really caused by a demon which attacked at this time so as to make others think that the moon was the cause. Pilch (2000:20) says that some translators of the gospels render the Greek word for 'moonstruck' by the English word 'epileptic'. He maintains that this translation is an interpretation that illustrates medicocentrism, a species of ethnocentrism that chooses to view texts about sickness and healing from the ancient Middle East in a western biomedical perspective. Historians of medicine are as guilty of medicocentrism as exegetes and theologians (Scarborough 1969:11).

Neufeld (1996:156) says that a graphic example of behaviour perceived to be bizarre and abnormal, and that leads to social ostracism, is recorded in the story of the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:1-20; Mt 8:28-34; Lk 8:26-39). We are told that this man was possessed by demons, but prior to his possession he lived in the city and his behaviour and mental state were socially acceptable. Now, however, he has to be found naked (Pilch and Malina 1993:20-25, 119-125). He did not live in a house but in cemetries among the tombs (cf. *Sanhedrin* 65b), a mark of deviance (Neufeld 1996:156). The Lucan narrator comments casually at one point that the demon drove him into the wilds (deserts or solitary places - Lk 8:29; cf. *4 Maccabees 18:8* - "seducer of the desert"; *1 Enoch 10:4f*). Mark also records that he was a creature of the night, roaming the cemetries/ tombs, howling and bruising himself with stones (Mk 5:5). Even though the city folk attempted to repatriate or domesticate him, they eventually gave up and instead resorted to chaining him. But the man in the wilderness, in his wild state, was able to break the chains at will (Neufeld 1996:156). He exhibited powers unusual for a human and so was regarded as unpredictable and beyond community control (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992:208). After the man's encounter with Jesus, the reader is informed by both Luke and Mark that the crowd found the man clothed and in a right state of mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus, his deliverer.

The episode highlights the conflict between Jesus and the demons, a conflict which occupied a prominent place in the ministry of Jesus. Also, the story of the

Gerasene demoniac contains elements which reflect the popular demonology of Jesus' day. Demons could take possession of a person who would show signs of insanity because a different personality dwelled in him - the demons spoke differently from the persons possessed (Mt 8:29). There was a dramatic difference in behaviour before and after the cure or deliverance. There is a contrast between the nakedness and violent, restless movement in Luke 8:27-29 and the cured state in Luke 8:35 - "They found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind". In *Erubin 41b,* it is stated, "Three things deprive a man of his senses and of the knowledge of his creator, namely, idolators, an evil spirit and oppressive poverty." In the case of the Gerasene demoniac, the evil spirit had deprived him of his sense, but after exorcism, he was completely restored.

In the story, we also learn that it was possible to expel the demon or demons (Mt 8:32; Lk 8:29, 31, 33; cf. Josephus *Antiquities* viii.47f). The knowledge of the name of the demon gave control over the demonised person (Lk 8:30; cf. Philostratus *The Life of Apollonius* iv.20). When Jesus asked what his name was, his response was, "My name is Legion, for we are many" (Mk 5:9). A Roman legion usually consisted of six thousand men, and the name 'Legion' in this account indicates the invasion of this man's personality by many demons (Leahy 1975:82; cf. Lk 8:2).

Ferguson (1984:4-5) also maintains, based on the story of the Gerasene demoniac, that demons could go from a human being into animals (cf. Böcher 1972:72). In his comment, Ferguson says that the unclean spirits entered the herd of unclean animals and caused the same violent, uncontrolled behaviour they had caused in the man, making the pigs run down a steep bank into the lake where they drowned (Lk 8:33; Mt 8:32). Unger (1994:74), as touching the destiny of demons, says that the evil spirits are by no means ignorant of what lies in store for them and the sure fate that awaits them. That is why they cried out in dismay to Jesus, "What do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?" (Mt 8:29). The demons in the Gerasene man manifested a peculiar dread and terror of the abyss, intimating that they viewed it as a place of torment and confinement (Unger 1994:74). In the Lucan narrative, we are informed that the demons "begged him repeatedly not to order them to

go into the abyss" (Lk 8:31). Geldenhuys (1977:255) comments that the spirits are afraid of returning to the "deep" - the "abyss", the present abode of the demons. Their diabolical craving is to enter into human beings or animals in order to be able to exert their unholy influences. The story of the Gerasene demoniac gives us a tentative summary of the characteristics of popular demonology in the first-century Mediterranean world.

The contemporaries of the Gerasene demoniac and other cases of demon possession knew the phenomenon quite well. Neufeld (1996:156) writes that in almost every case recorded in the gospels possession brought about a radically divided self (dyadic, not individualistic) or a conflict of mind in the demoniac - the one possessed. This conflict of mind reshaped the former self, defined by one's place in community life and family (the dyadic personality), to form a new socially defined self, which could be termed an *alter persona* (Pilch 1995; Neyrey 1991:67-96). The expression of the new self inevitably separated the person from his/her normal relations or primary community. Hollenbach (1994:121) says indeed "the new self exists in a new social relationship, one of ostracism". The new social relationship then led to a new identity, and the community, noting the new behaviour (extreme strength, howling, not eating), labelled the individual "insane" or "possessed" (Neufeld 1996:156).

DeMaris (2000:18), in his inquiry into possession in ancient times and now, points out that we should differentiate between negative and positive, uncontrolled and controlled, possession. He says in the first-century Judean society, as in other societies where possession is common, perceptions of it are varied (see also Bourguignon 1968b:13-15; Goodman 1988b:21). Such societies prize possession when those possessed, spirit mediums and healers, for instance, bring vital information or the power to cure illness, to the community. On the other hand, societies react negatively to possession when it results in insanity or sickness (Lewis 1989:48-49; Kiev 1968; Heusch 1981: 155-158). In the world of the New Testament, positive possession meant being filled with the Holy Spirit, but those overtaken by an unclean spirit were considered negatively possessed. In the case of Jesus, Mark is very interested in the issue of spirit possession and so begins his account of Jesus' initial possession experience by the Spirit and recounts that in a possessed state he is driven immediately (Neufeld 1996:156).

Mark is anxious to show the consequences of that possession: namely, that Jesus, as Spirit-possessed, is empowered to forgive sins (Mk 2:10) and overpower demons (Mk 1:21-27; 5:1-20).

DeMaris (2000:19) also points out that one key to distinguishing good from bad possession, is the presence or absence of ritual: negative spirit possession befalls individuals and is ritually unregulated; positive spirit possession happens to individuals or groups and is ritually controlled (see Lewis 1989:48-49; Pressel 1977:344-345; Lee 1968:36-41; Jones 1976:35). The regulated triggering of spirit possession in willing subjects through ritual means stands in stark contrast to sudden, involuntary, spontaneous possession which is regarded by most cultures as potentially harmful and dangerous (Garrison 1977; Oesterreich 1966:131-375; Pressel 1977:345). The proof that Jesus' possession was positive and not negative came from its association with ritual activity, namely, water baptism (DeMaris 2000:20; Neufeld 1996:156).

By examining the instances of demon possession in the New Testament, we realise that it is a stark, stern reality. In the gospels and Acts, the tormented, raving demoniacs are introduced frequently. Leahy (1975:90) concludes that, by carefully looking at these instances, we are able to form a general impression of the nature of demon possession in New Testament times. He goes on to list at least six features of demon possession in the ancient world. Firstly, demon possession may be voluntary or involuntary. Secondly, there is no essential link between the character of the victim and his/her possession. Thirdly, possession may be permanent or spasmodic, the former case being illustrated by Luke 11:26 where the word translated "dwell", indicates permanent residence. Fourthly, body and mind are affected. There is either a general suppression of the personality, or the emergence of a kind of double personality. In either case, the victim becomes the instrument of the demon. Consequently it is the demon who speaks through the instrumentality of the person possessed. Fifthly, symptoms vary greatly, but frequently include, especially in cases of negative or involuntary possession, mental abnormality, epileptic or similar fits, superhuman strength, suicidal tendencies and a malignant attitude towards others. Sometimes there is an uncanny recognition of the presence of Christ and an acute awareness of his person and authority. Sixthly, deliverance, when it comes, is sudden.

THE LIVING DEAD

In reference to the living dead or ancestors, Bolt (1996:75) presents a view that, although it would be "a rare reader today who would equate the 'demons' exorcised by Jesus with ghosts, i.e. spirits of deceased human beings who still exert an influence upon the living, many ancient readers of the Gospels would have done so automatically." Ancient Mediterranean people did not understand physical death as annihilation. Joubert (2001:1) writes that the souls of the deceased continued to exist, albeit in shady, subterranean places such as Hades or Sheol. Joubert goes on to say that although the corpses of the deceased were doomed to corruption, their souls remained alive, at least as long as their bones remained intact, or while their memory was kept alive.

In ancient Israel and in later periods, the dead played a significant role. The fact that in later periods Jews "were allowed to offer prayers at these tombs [of the patriarchs] confirms the insight that the ancestors (and their tombs) achieved the status of intermediaries with the divine world" (Craffert 1999a:81). Craffert elaborates this view further that in fact, prayers could be addressed to the deceased rather than to a divine being. Put differently, the ancestors themselves had become divine beings of a kind. The early church adopted this line of tradition from their Jewish faith predecessors. A Christian cult of the dead originated early in the church. The shrines of the Christian martyrs played a major role in this cult. Archaeological evidence shows that some thirty localities in Palestine from the fourth century have been identified as Christian holy places which were associated with the life of Jesus while the tombs of the saints and martyrs of the church became focal points for early Christian worship (see Craffert 1999a:81).

In the Greco-Roman sources, it is clear that Greeks and Romans maintained that there was a link between the *daimons* and the dead. Hesiod (pre 700 B.C.) argues that when the people of the golden age died, they were transformed to become watchers over humanity (*Op.* 121 ff), called "pure *daimons* dwelling upon the earth." It was believed that they roamed everywhere over the earth, clothed in mist and keep watch on judgements and cruel deeds, and also gave wealth (see Bolt 1996:78). According to Homeric tradition, the souls of the dead

went to the underworld where they existed as shadows (cf. *Iliad 1.3-5*). Plutarch, considered immensely important as a source for ancient demonological views (see Bolt 1996:85), believed that good men's souls ascended to heaven to live in eternal bliss, while impure souls hovered in the air as ghosts (*De Sera Numinis Vindicta* 564A-B). In order to establish *communio* with the dead, as well as to protect the living from them, sacrifices of wine, oil and food, such as bread and dried fruit, were brought to the graves of the dead and at the gravesite the dead were orally summoned to eat and drink (see Joubert 2001:4).

The magical sources, though they are mostly later than the New Testament period, are nevertheless useful for comparative purposes, since it is highly probable that they represent collections of much earlier material (see Bolt 1996:87). In the magical papyri, a distinction is made between 'natural magic' and spiritistic magic. Langton (1942:42) observes that although 'natural magic' shows no explicit connection with spirits, ghosts, demons, or gods, on the contrary, in the case of the spiritistic type of magic, the ghosts of the dead are called up by the necromancer to give oracles or to discover hidden treasure. They are sent to enter into the bodies of humans, to afflict them with disease and to cure them. Many of the papyrus spells were used in connection with graves and corpses, and several have been found in graves, even in the mouth of a mummy *(PGM XIXa)*. Most of the curse tablets come from graves; some from other places connected with the underworld, such as cathonic sanctuaries, or wells and other bodies of water (see Bolt 1996:88).

Many of the spells in the magical papyri show us that the *daimons* manipulated by the magician, were patently connected to the spirits of the dead. The invocation of the *daimons* in the dark or those 'beneath the earth' *(PGM XXXVI.138, 146)*, can be compared with the notion that it is the dead who are away from the light (cf. Bolt 1996:89). It is from the region of the corpses that the spells often seek to enlist an 'attendant' *(paredros, PGM* 1.1 and 42) or an 'assistant' *(PGM IV. 1849f)*. The use of an assistant *daimon* who is the spirit of a dead person is especially clear in the love charms, as exemplified by the "Wondrous Spell for binding a Lover" *(PGM IV.296-466)*. The curse tablets also provide evidence that the spirits of the dead were evoked as powers since the 4th century B.C., and at that time they were called *daimons*. Both the curse tablets and the papyri

show that this belief in the *daimons* as the dead eventually became enshrined in magical vocabulary with the term *nekudaimon*.

Basing his thesis on the notion of mere popular level as represented by the magical world, Bolt (1996:96) says that *daimons* were persistently identified with ghosts, and that also protrudes into the literary sources, both Greco-Roman and Hellenistic-Jewish. The involvement of ghosts in exorcism is well attested from ancient Egypt, ancient Babylon and Assyria, and in the second-century Greek writers Lucian (*Philops.* 16) and Philostratus (*VIT.Ap.* 3.38; 4.20). According to Bolt, later readers apparently read gospel exorcism accounts from this point of view, despite the Fathers' objections. Bolt believes that, perhaps this would have been automatic for many of Mark's earlier readers as well.

To illustrate this point, Bolt (1996:98f) employs the story of the Gerasene *daimon* to show specific links between this man's *daimons* and the dead. The man is located in the tombs, which were widely recognised as the haunts of *daimons* (cf. Isa 65). Theissen (1982:89, 255) also believes that the *daimons* possessing this man are the spirits of the dead, even further speculating that they are the ghosts of those who fell in battle with the Romans. Cotter (1999:121) speculates that the spirits of the dead who love pigs might well refer to Romans who have died there in the Decapolis, and now threaten the living as they did when they were alive.

To a reader who connects *daimons* with the departed spirits, Bolt (1996:99) presumes that this man from the tombs is literally filled with a legion of the dead. The clash with Jesus shows that Jesus can control such hordes, cast them out, and even banish them from the region which allows them to exert an influence in the upper world. Jesus, also, acting as a superior spirit, certainly sent them back to their proper domain. The story is cast as a contest between Jesus and the power(s) of death. The man leaves the tombs and once again enters ordinary life. In his deliverance, we see the victory of Jesus, the higher spirit, having conquered spirits of destruction and death. In a sense, the man had been "domesticated" (Neufeld 1996:156) in the power of the Spirit in the life of Jesus.

In his thesis, Bolt (1996:101) concludes that for a person who viewed the *daimons*

as ghosts of the dead, Jesus' exorcisms would be seen as an assault upon the world of the dead, and even upon death itself. Although later sources reveal that Jesus was mistaken for a magician (see Smith 1978), in the Marcan narrative it is also clear that Jesus was also different from other magicians. In Mark's story, among other things, he was cast as a superior spirit (5:1-20); rumoured to be a ghost-manipulator (6:14f); and even mistaken for a ghost himself (6:49). The end of the story presents him as a crucified man, i.e. one with the potential of being a very powerful spirit indeed (Bolt 1996:101). But, by the end of the book of Mark, the readers are left gazing upon the empty tomb of a man who had been crucified, and hearing the declaration that he had arisen. Apparently Jesus' assault on the dead was complete and the dead would no longer hold sway over the living because a far greater spirit was now alive in their world.

For Bolt (1996:102), Mark's story holds promise that his readers could look at their world with new eyes, and face it with less fear, because a man who had been crucified, had risen from the dead. In this, Bolt shares similar conclusions with Joubert that, though the dead continue to exist, albeit in different spatial locations, and may exert influence on heretical and unbelieving humanity, for example, magicians *(PGM XXXVI.138*; Bolt 1996:89) and false teachers (Joubert 2001:9; cf. Jude 4; 1 Tim 4:1), they cannot in any way cause the righteous living or the community of faith harm, because God is their protector.

In his study on the living dead in the book of Jude, Joubert (2001:8) says that in a so called "already/not yet" schema, implicit in vv. 5-7, Jude stresses that the disobedient dead are prisoners in the underworld where they ("already") expe-rience preliminary forms of punishment in anticipation of the day of judgement ("not yet") when the full force of God's wrath will be meted out. On the other hand, the good news for the faithful is that these "living dead" cannot in any way cause them harm. The chains, darkness and fire referred to in Jude 6-7, accord-ing to Joubert, do not merely illustrate the present and future fate of the disobe-dient dead, but the idea conveys or acts as an assurance to the righteous that they are safe from the influence of their forefathers' enemies from beyond the grave. The wicked dead are completely stripped of their destructive powers and of any *pre-mortem* honour that they might have possessed. Joubert concludes, therefore, that Jude's ingroup does not need protective amulets, chants or magical

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spells to guard them. God is protecting his people during this final stage of history.

ANTI-DEMONIC MEASURES AND MAGIC

Böcher (1972:33) tells us that as much as the New Testament shares the background of fear for demons with the Old Testament and heathen religions, it also shares in the remedies. They are part of medicine that belongs to religion and the cult. Both the Old and the New Testaments, according to Yamauchi (1982:169), were born in environments permeated with magical beliefs and practices. The religious beliefs and practices of most people were identical to some form of magic while the neat distinction between approved and disapproved religion did not exist in the ancient world, except perhaps among a few intellectuals (see Craffert 1999a:158). It is, therefore, understandable that in his confrontation with the devil and demons, Jesus appears to be using some of the similar techniques of his time.

The Word-magic

Böcher (1972:33), in reference to the word-magic, points out that in the New Testament, as in the rest of the Mediterranean world, the word-magic is used in the sense of religious science and phenomenology and no theological value is attached to that term. In the healing of the possessed, for example, Jesus threatens demons (Mk 1:25). Satan is verbally addressed and threatened when Peter is admonished (Mk 8:33). Jesus also rebukes fever (Lk 4:39) and the stormy sea (Mk 4:39). In the same way, God threatens the devil (Jude 9). Jesus overcomes his temptation by words of exorcism (Mk 4:10; Mt 16:23; cf. Böcher 1972:34).

The gospel stories show Jesus using a number of formulae to expel the demons (Twelftree 1992:166). In Mark 1:25, Jesus says to the demon, "Be quiet ...". In Twelftree's view, this command is not so much for silence, but, in view of its use in the period as an incantational restriction, Jesus is seeking to bind the demon *(P. Oslo 1.161-162)*. In three stories, Jesus is reported as saying, "Come out of [him]" (Mk 1:25; 5:8; 9:25). This command is the basic method found in com-

mon with all kinds of exorcists known in the New Testament period (Lucian *PhiloPs* 11 and 16; Philostratus *Vit. Ap.* 4.20; *PGM IV 1243-1249*).

The use of names in the anti-demonic words in the Jewish art of exorcism plays an important role as well (see Böcher 1972:34). In Mark 5:9, Jesus asks the demon, "What is your name?" Twelftree (1992:167) thinks that this verse suggests that Jesus had already commanded the demon to come out of the man, but in response, the demon had tried to fend off Jesus' attack by using a formula to bind *(horkizo)* Jesus. So, apparently being initially unsuccessful (Twelftree 1992:167; cf. Mk 8:22-26), Jesus uses another way of overcoming the demon by asking its name, thereby disarming it *(cf. PGM IV 3037-3079)*. In this story the significance of an exorcist knowing the name (cf. Philostratus *Vit. Ap.* 4.20) is shown. Some of the ancient exorcists had difficulty in getting demons to speak *(PGM IV 3039-3041)*. Jesus seems to have experienced no difficulty (Mk 1:23-25; 5:5-7). In Mark 9:25, Jesus commands the demon not to return to the person (cf. Mt 12:43-45; Lk 11:24-26). The idea of demons returning to people is extremely old and well documented in the New Testament period (Josephus *Ant.* 8.46-49; Philostratus *Vit. Ap.* 4.20; *PGM IV 1254, 3024-3025*).

The usage of a name as part of word-magic is shown as another way of anti-demonic measure. Aune (1980:1546) says that the fundamental significance of the magical use of names of divinities or great men of the past is that such names share the being and participate in the power of their bearers. This is well known from biblical texts, where it is often said that the name of God dwells in a certain place, which was a way of saying that Yahweh himself dwelt there (cf. Craffert 1999a:121).

The early church made full use of the name of Jesus in their anti-demonic strategy. Christians exorcised "in the name of Jesus" (cf. Lk 10:18; Mk 16:17; Acts 16:18). The name of Jesus was a name of power to the ingroup, but definitely a name the demons feared (see Böcher 1972:34). From the evidence of the New Testament, it is known that the disciples objected when they came across people who dispelled demons in the name of Jesus. These were freelance Jewish exorcists who performed exorcisms in Jesus' name during his lifetime (Mk 9:38; Lk 9:49). Nobody outside the group was allowed to use his name as a source of

authority and power. Using someone's name (especially someone with power) was supposed to be done in the proper way, but also with proper authority (Craffert 1999a:121). The account in Acts 19 in which Jewish exorcists tried to perform an exorcism in the name of Jesus, shows demonic reaction and this is illustrative of the improper use of the name. The name of Jesus was held in high esteem by the early church. The believers not only exorcised in the name of Jesus, but they also healed in that name (Jas 5:14). Baptism in the name of Jesus was also believed to be a way of expelling demons as well as protection against their threat (Böcher 1972:35).

In this category of word-magic, there is also the use of foreign words of power like *Abba* (Mk 14:36), *Amen* (Rom 1:25), *Maranatha* (1 Cor 16:22) and *Hosanna* as part of liturgical formulas (Mt 21:9). Real words of "magic", however, especially in the ears of Greeks, were *talitha koum* (Mk 5:41 - the Aramaic for 'girl, rise') and *ephphatha* (Mk 7:34 - the Aramaic for 'be opened'; cf. Böcher 1972:35). Craffert (1999a:123) comments that it is possible that they were meant in their literary context to carry the flavour of powerful words, and if translated, would lose their power.

The touch and laying on of hands

A touch was believed to be able to cause infection with demonic threats and therefore nothing unclean was supposed to be touched. In the same way, healing with a touch could come from a physician or healer. In the exorcisms of the Jewish people associated with the Qumran library a story is told of Abraham as an exorcist who healed the Pharaoh by the laying on of hands *(1 QapGen 20:28-29)*. Philastratos reports Apollonius healing a young bride by touching her *(The Life of Apollonius 4.45)*

According to Craffert (1999b:105), in the Greco-Roman world, the implicit assumption of touching or laying on of hands was the widespread idea that power resides in and emanates from certain individuals and objects. This was the case with the so-called divine men or miracle workers and also certain objects, such as amulets and statues. The story of the woman with haemorrhage who touched the hem of the garment of Jesus and was consequently healed, demonstrates

how people in the New Testament period believed in touching (cf. Acts 5:15; 19:12). In the gospels, we are told how Jesus touches the sick when healing them (e.g. Mt 8:15; 9:29; Mk 5:41; Lk 7:14).

Insofar as the laying on of hands is concerned, Böcher (1972:37) also points out that in the Bible, the practice has a dual function: in the positive sense, it imparts and in the negative sense, it expels. The principle of the laying on of hands is operative in imparting healing and blessing. The Holy Spirit is imparted when hands are laid upon disciples (Acts 19:5) and the imparted Spirit expels demons (see Böcher 1972:37). Where the ordained ministry is concerned, hands are laid upon those chosen (Acts 13:3).

* *Exorcist Practices with the Elements*

People in antiquity in their battle against demonic dangers, used the causality of *homöopathischen magie* (homeopathic magic - see Böcher 1972:37). In 'small doses', the defence-magic made use of these elements that are hosts to the demons (see Mk 3:22). The New Testament gives ample evidence of a big system of defence mechanisms and cleansing with fire, light, breath, water and other fluids.

Böcher (1972:38) believes that light was used by ancient Christians as an anti-demonic measure. Using his premise as Acts 20:8, Böcher concludes that in worship services, lamps, lights and candles were used. In their fight against the powers of darkness, Christians were supposed to let their light shine (Lk 11:35). Jesus calls his disciple community to be "the light of the world" (Mt 5:14).

In Judaism, water was used as cultic cleansing of hands, vessels and the whole body. In John 5:1-9, there is washing with the intent of healing (see Böcher 1972:39). John's baptism symbolised the washing way of sin (Mt 3:11). The ideal was taken up by the New Testament and the ancient church (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor 6:11). But an ethical transformation of this idea becomes evident in 1 Peter 3:21 where baptism is no longer a cultic act of cleansing, but a call to obedience (see Böcher 1972:40).

In the post-apostolic church, water baptism assumed some exorcist status. This was born out of a strange notion that each kind of vice or sin is under the control of a particular demon (see Kelly 1968:35). Origen, for instance, comes to such a conclusion in his *Homilies on Joshua* (15.6), basing his convictions on the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. He elaborates his theory's consequences in the *De principiis* (3.2.2). With this kind of connection between sin and demons, it was natural to regard conversion to Christianity, and especially baptism, as a means of ridding oneself of whatever demons one was infested with (cf. *Clementine Recognitions* 2.71). According to Kelly (1968:38), the renunciation of Satan is perhaps the best known of the demonological aspects of Christian baptism.

In terms of fluids, saliva and the act of spitting were commonly believed to have magical powers to protect and to heal (see Craffert 1999b:102). Spitting was a common action to ward off evil, specifically as protection against the evil eye (see Malina 2001:124). Paul himself refers to the practice of spitting as protection against the evil eye (Gal 4:14; cf. Eastman 2001:69f). The Roman author, Pliny the Elder, reports that the best safeguard against serpents is the saliva of a fasting human being while the saliva of a fasting woman is judged to be a powerful remedy for bloodshot eyes. Other uses include spitting on epileptics during a seizure, spitting in one's hand to increase the force of the blow and applying it to various sores. Saliva is carried with the finger to behind the ear as a remedy to calm mental anxiety. These prescriptions are all given in the context of several other substances such as human urine, with supposedly magical powers (see Pliny the Elder *NHist. 28:7*). Included in Pliny's list of bodily fluids, are ear wax and menstrual blood. In the New Testament, we are also told that in several of Jesus' healing stories, saliva is applied (cf. Mt 8:22-26; Jn 9:1-41).

Protection against the Evil Eye

In the New Testament, references to the evil eye involved social and moral overtones found in the Old Testament and other extrabiblical sources (see Malina 2001:22-23). According to the gospels, Jesus, himself, made mention of the evil eye more than once. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew contains something on the evil eye (Mt 6:22-23; cf. Lk 11:34-36). This precedes an ensuing reference

to the evil eye by Jesus in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-16). On another occasion, according to the gospel of Mark, Jesus, in a dispute with the Pharisees over the issue of purity (Mk 7:1-23), lists the evil eye (Mk 7:22) among the group of evil things (Mk 7:23).

One of the most explicit references to the evil eye is found in Paul's letter to the Galatian community: "O foolish Galatians, who has injured you with the evil eye?" (Gal 3:1). Elliot (1990:262f) sees evidence throughout the book of Galatians of evil eye accusations by both Paul and the Galatians. In face of the accusations, Paul defends himself, saying, "You did not shield your eyes from me and my portrayal of the Christ" (Gal 3:16); "You did not spit in my presence" (Gal 4:14); "You would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me" (Gal 4:15) and counters this charge with an evil-eye accusation of his own: "It is not I but rather my opponents who have the evil eye" (see Gal 4:17-1 8; 5:20, 26; cf. Malina 2001:123).

The evil eye, according to the ancients, was caused by envy. Philo stereotypes the Egyptians as an envious and evil-eyed people in his writing against Flaccus: "But the Egyptian," he states, "is by nature an evil-eyed person, and the citizens burst with envy and considered that any good fortune to others was misfortune to themselves" (*Flaccus 29)*. This association of the evil eye and envy is typical of ancient Mediterraneans (see Malina 2001:122; Neyrey 1998:223). The Israelite tradition, for example, is full of warnings against persons with the evil eye (e.g. "An evil-eyed man is not satisfied with a portion and mean justice withers the soul" [*Sir. 14.9*]; "An evil-eyed man begrudges bread and it is lacking at his table" [*Sir 14:10; cf. Tobit 4:7, 17*]; "The evil eye of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind" [*Wisd. Sol. 4.12*]).

Protective measures were taken by the ancient Mediterraneans because the dangerous evil eye was believed to lurk everywhere. Vigilance was required of all persons in all walks of life (Malina 2001:123). No one and no sphere of activity was immune from injury from the baleful glance. According to Plutarch, the evil-eye possessor, in fact could afflict not only his/her friends and relatives but even themselves (*Quaest. Conviv.* 682A-F). Particularly vulnerable were children (Plutarch, *Quaest. Convic.* 680D, 682A, 682F), and then also domestic resi-

dences, fields and animals, work sites, food and means of livelihood; that is, everything necessary for the continued existence of the family unit.

Malina (2001:123) lists a range of protective amulets that ancient Mediterraneans used to protect themselves, their houses, their shops, and the public places they frequented. Among these, a common protective device was a staring eye worn as amulet or carved into a wall or put into mosaic flooring. The eye served as a mirror to reflect the evil eye back to its possessor. Equally effective was a phallus, worn around the neck, inscribed in stone or hanging from the wall. The most common way to keep envy at bay was to use devices designed to ward off the effects of the evil eye, such as tattoos, seals and signet rings, incantations, and the like (see Judg 8:21, 26; Isa 3:20). The purple tassels at the bottom of one's cloak served this purpose (Lk 8:44). Malina also mentions that the pregnant Mary could travel alone to visit her cousin - a very unusual behaviour in that culture - since the child in her womb served to defend and protect her from all harm. The leaping of Elizabeth's own foetus in her womb can be interpreted, says Malina, as a recognition of Jesus' apotropaic powers and abilities (Lk 1:39-41).

There were also other various types of behaviour undertaken by people to reduce their visibility and vulnerability (see Malina 2001:125) Secrecy or concealment of prized possession was considered as protective in a limited-good environment in which there was hostility, gossip, competition and conflicts of opinion. Neyrey (1998:223) says of the environment of the ancient Mediterranean that, "Given a world where all goods, especially reputation and honour, are perceived to exist in limited supply, the increase by another person invariably means a decrease for oneself". In such an environment, where a person was thought to be increasing in value, thus leading to envy, the evil eye was intended to harm or diminish the success of such a person. Neyrey (1998:224) concludes, therefore, that the evil eye aggression can be seen as another form of honour challenge. Against such a hostile cultural environment, it is understandable, in some way, that people would resort to secrecy and concealment to ward off envy.

Malina (2001:125) also mentions denial as a protective measure against envy which might come in a form of the simple rejection of a compliment. Malina

illustrates this by stating, for example, Jesus' rejection of the label "good" when the greedy (i.e. rich) man addressed him as "good teacher" (Mk 10:17). In a limited-good atmosphere, "while claims to worth needed public acknowledgment in the world of Jesus, words of praise could kill" (Malina 1998:126). By responding, "Why do you call me 'good'? No one is good but God alone" (Mk 10:18), Jesus simply avoids envy by refusing the compliment of "Good Teacher". Malina also mentions a conciliatory bribe (a gift bestowed on others, for example, the feeding of the crowds [Mt 14:13-21]) and true sharing (considered as the levelling of wealth, e.g. Acts 4:34-35) as ways to ward off or reduce sentiments of hostility in those who would be envious of the rising prominence of accumulating wealth of some person.

As also stated earlier, in the ancient Mediterranean world, spitting was used as a counteractive measure against the omnipresent threat of the evil eye. Pliny the Elder writes,

> If we hold these beliefs, we should also believe that the right course, on the arrival of a stranger, or if a sleeping baby is looked at, is for the nurse to spit three times at her charge *(Natural History 28.7.38)*.

Beyond spitting, the ancients employed a veritable arsenal of devices and methods for warding off the dreaded evil eye (see Elliot 1990:262f). The underlying principle was of homeopathic magic and *similia similibus*, the use of 'like against like'. Such practices were attested to in art, artefacts, and architecture as well as literature, including the hanging of bullae around the necks of children and other amulets. Another way to deal with envy was to confront envious persons and accuse them of harbouring the "evil eye" (Malina 2001:124).

Conclusions

Reading its passages, it is clear that the New Testament is rooted in the belief of the prevalence of demons at the time. Like the rest of the people in the Mediterranean world, the Jewish people and Christians of the first century, believed in the principle of causality: evil was always referred back to the work of demons.

There was also a belief in anti-demonic measures and remedies like to ban or expel demons and also to protect people against them. The fear of demons is concomitant with the use of the magical spells. The writers of the New Testament seem to be conversant with all of these.

2.7.3.2 JESUS AND THE POWERS OF EVIL

(a) THE INCARNATION

The incarnation of Jesus, the *Logos* (Jn 1:1, 14), though generally not connected with the defeat of the powers, is actually an integral part of God's onslaught on the kingdom of darkness. Christendom often focuses on the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ as the main events in the redemptive act of God and thus overlooks the significance of the incarnation. Without the incarnation ("God made flesh"), there would have been no death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. Even the book by Baillie (1977), *God was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement*, which is an excellent work on the subject, does not project the incarnation of Christ as part of God's strategy to overcome the kingdom of the evil one.

Some scholars, though, hint at the importance of the incarnation in connection with God's victory over the powers of evil. One of these is Fackre (1984:104) who sees *Logos ensarkos* (enfleshed Word) as the final thrust toward the recalcitrant world, this time one that enters the arena of God's long-time reach and the world's constant rebellion. In the view of Fackre, the incarnation is the enfleshment of the seeking vision of God, of the God with shalom in mind, with the intention of liberation and reconciliation. Though not a strong believer in modern-day demon-possession, Alexander (1902:50f), nevertheless, makes vital comments on the incarnation when he says that it (the incarnation) initiated the establishment of the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. According to Alexander, the incarnation determined a counter-movement among the powers of darkness (cf. Leahy 1975:140).

The incarnation, when seen in the light of the struggle with the powers of evil, is like an invasion of the 'enemy' territory if we consider that the Bible calls Satan

the "ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31; cf. Lk 4:6), "the god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4), "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2) and we are told that "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (I Jn 5:19). The invasion or intrusion of the *Logos* is implicitly mentioned in the Marcan narrative of the Beelzebul controversy when Jesus responds, "No one can spoil his [Satan's] goods, except he first binds the strong man" (Mk 3:27). The incarnation needs to be understood as the beginning of the defeat of Satan and his kingdom. It signals a new epoch of the arrival of the kingdom of God in Christ. In respect of the fact that the devil was unable to stop the birth of Jesus, it became obvious that, no matter how he would try, he was going to fail to halt the events of the cross, the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus Christ. The incarnation sounded a deathknell to Satan, the archfiend and leader of the rebel forces, "a would-be, but unsuccessful, usurper of God" (Ling 1961:10).

(b) THE MISSION OF CHRIST

* CONFRONTATION WITH THE DEVIL

The public ministry of Christ was marked by the eruption of the demonic forces and fierce opposition by the devil. It was the critical and inevitable clash of God's light of perfect holiness and truth against the gross darkness of error and deceit. Unger (1994:79) sees it as the unavoidable collision of the unhindered power of the Holy Spirit, manifested in a sinless life, with the opposing power of Satan. It was impossible for the Son of God to be in the vicinity of evil power, and not to expose it, and challenge it. There seems to have been no alternative to this conflict because the Son of God was manifested with the specific purpose "that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I Jn 3:8).

The first explicit reference to Satan in the gospels appears in the account of the temptation of Jesus in the desert. All three of the synoptic gospels record this incident and place it right after the baptism of Jesus. In the temptation, Jesus faces, right at the beginning of his public ministry, the first of many confrontations with the devil and his forces. Mark, especially, shows Jesus as thrown into conflict from the very outset. The Marcan version of the temptation uses a striking image (not used by Matthew and Luke) of the Spirit "driving or casting out

Jesus" (DeMaris 2000:15; see *ekballo*) into the desert or wilderness, "the traditional place of temptation and haunt of wild beasts to face Satanic temptation" (Yates 1980:106). The reference to the wild animals in Mark has been interpreted variously by different scholars (see Gibson 1994:3f). For some, the presence of animals may highlight the fact that Jesus was alone in an uninhabited area, which could be dangerous for the unwary (Lane 1974). Others went so far as to suggest that the animals have demonic associations (e.g. Ling 1961:79; cf. Böcher 1972:27-30; *Ber. 6a; Kid. 72a; 29a*). Yet others have proposed that Mark uses an Adam-Christ typology and mentions that Jesus was with the animals to recall the dominion over the animals that was given in Eden and to anticipate the harmony with the animal world that is prophesied in Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25 and Hosea 2:18 (e.g. Guelich 1989:39).

In the view of Page (1995:91), the reference to the wild animals actually provides an important clue for the proper interpretation of Mark's rather cryptic version of the temptation. Mark does not focus on the details of the temptation like Matthew and Luke. What he says is simply that Jesus' temptation is like Adam's, but with opposite results. What Adam lost, Jesus gained. Page comments that by portraying Jesus as being at peace with wild animals, Mark hints at the arrival of the Messianic age and the restoration of the created order to its divinely intended harmony. If we move from the premise that the animals had demonic associations, the tameness of wild animals in the presence of Jesus would signal Jesus' victory over the evil forces.

In all three advances of the enticing of the devil (see Lk 4:1-11; Mt 4:1-11), Jesus uses the word of God to rebuff the enemy (see Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). In overcoming the devil in the desert, Jesus also practises "exorcist fasting" (see Böcher 1972:45; cf. Mk 9:29). The fact which is mentioned by all the accounts of the temptation that Jesus was led (Mk *driven*) by the Spirit "to be tempted" by the devil, suggests that even the temptation fell within the divine plan (cf. Job 1-2). The implication is clearly that Satan is under God's control (Page 1995:91).

The temptation of Jesus in the desert by the devil is crucial in our understanding of Christ's victory over the forces of evil. The parable of the binding of the strong man in the Beelzebul controversy, suggests a decisive victory over Satan. A num-

ber of scholars have found just such victory in the temptation of Jesus in the desert (see Stewart 1951:297-298). This first encounter that Jesus had with Satan came at a critical juncture in Jesus' life, just after his Messianic investiture at his baptism and prior to his public ministry. Jesus emerged from the contest as the victor (Page 1995:106). In the desert, Jesus is tempted not merely as an individual, but as God's representative (Yates 1980:106). Jesus is victorious in temptation as he chooses the mission entrusted to him by God. Though this leads to suffering and humiliation, he is ultimately vindicated by God. This victory over Satanic temptation is held up as an example to the saints in their perseverence in suffering (Heb 2:18; 4:15). Though Jesus would experience other confrontations with the devil later on in his public ministry and passion, victory over him in the desert ensured the total defeat of the enemy at any later stage. As the devil fails in tempting Jesus, it proves that Jesus is supreme over Satan (Yates 1980:107). The Spirit of God in Christ, who had driven Jesus to be tempted by the devil in the desert, is triumphant over the arch-enemy of God (see Ling 1961:100). Such a victory of Jesus over the devil proves the absolute sovereignty of God (see Calvin *Institutes* 1.14.15), which effectively means that the devil serves God's glory, albeit against his will. Calvin asserts that, "Because with the bridle of his power God holds him (Satan) bound and restrained, he carries out only those things which have been divinely permitted to him; and so he obeys his Creator, whether he will or not, because he is compelled to yield him service whenever God impels him" (*Institutes* 1.14.17).

JESUS' MINISTRY OF EXORCISM

At the time of Jesus and the writing of the gospels, the destructive work of demons was combatted in a number of ways (see Twelftree 1992:165). One way is illustrated in the Magical Papyri *(PGM V.99-171)*; others being the story of Eleazer (Josephus *Ant.* 8.46-49), the Jewish exorcists of Matthew 12:27 (par. Lk 11:19), the so-called strange exorcist (Mk 9:38-39), the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:11-20) and the rabbinic material (*Pesiq. R.* 40b; cf. *b.Pesah* 112b). Other stories of exorcists like Apollonius of Tyana (Philostratus *Vit. Ap.* 4.20), Abraham (*Genesis Apocryphon* 20), the sorcerers known to Celsus (Origen *Contra Cels.* 1.68) and others, serve to indicate that the peripatetic philosopher-healer would have been a familiar sight in the time of Jesus and the evangelists.

Unger (1994:101) argues that, strictly speaking, there are no exorcisms in the Bible because the use of the word, in its essential etymological meaning, forbids its employment with regard to the expulsion of demons by our Lord or his disciples. Unger rightfully points out that in its original understanding, exorcism signifies the casting out of evil spirits by conjurations, incantations, or religious or magical ceremonies. However, the definition of exorcism in the first-century milieu and in modern times, has come to mean the expulsion of evil spirits by the use of techniques varied from a few words of command to a full cultic ceremony (see Twelftree 1993:13). In its widest usage, it has become an inclusive term of the act of expelling evil spirits.

In the life and ministry of Jesus, exorcism occupied a significant role. Despite the relative importance of exorcism to Jesus and the gospel writers, there are only four longer exorcism stories of Jesus in the gospels (Mk 1:21-28; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29), a very brief report of an exorcism (Mt 9:32-34; 12:22 [par Lk 11:14]) and a number of references and sayings on Jesus' dealing with the demons (Mk 1:32-34, 39; 3:7-12; cf. Acts 10:38). In the observation of Twelftree (1992:165), the four stories of Jesus dealing with the demons and the demoniacs show that such people might sometimes, but not always, have been socially rootless, perhaps driven to the margins of society by their behaviour or the economic situation in Palestine. Nevertheless, Jesus can be seen dealing with a range of people, not just the disadvantaged or the wealthy. It also needs to be highlighted that insofar as Luke is concerned, the poor and the marginalised occupy a place of prominence in the ministry and mission of Christ. Already in the Magnificat (Lk 1:53) we read: "[God] has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty" (see Bosch 1991:98).

The four accounts of exorcisms performed by Jesus that are related in considerable detail in the synoptic gospels are (1) the demoniac in the synagogue of Capernaum, (2) the Gerasene demoniac, who was possessed by a legion of demons, (3) the demon-possessed daughter of the woman from Syrian Phoenicia, and (4) the epileptic boy whose father brought him to Jesus. All four of these accounts appear in Mark. Matthew and Luke each include three of them. Matthew omits the first, and Luke omits the third.

A brief survey of the four accounts reveal cursorily how Jesus encountered and dealt with the demoniacs of his day. The story of exorcism of the demoniac in the Capernaum synagogue is related in Mark 1:23-28 and Luke 4:33-38. Luke appears to have followed the Marcan account quite closely, making only minor modifications thereto (Page 1995:138). The story portrays a man in the mainstream of Jewish society and participating in the religious life of his community (see Twelftree 1992:165). The chaotic and unpredictable character of the demoniac could mean that at times the man showed no adverse symptoms of his condition. When confronted by a spiritual enemy, the demon manifested in the man in the synagogue. The demon recognised the identity of Jesus and further asked, "Have you come to destroy us?" This possibly revealed the Jewish speculation that Satan's forces would be destroyed in the last days (see *1QM* 1:10-15; 14:9-11). When the demoniac acknowledged Jesus as "the Holy One of God," shows not only the nature of demon possession whereby the evil spirit overrides the personality of the individual he possesses thus controlling what the person says or does, but probably also the demon's recognition of the one he knew was his master (see Page 1995:141, 143). As the Holy One of God, a disputably messianic title, Jesus responds by silencing the demon (see also the rebuking of the storm - Mk 4:39) and then orders the demon to leave by a command of power (cf. Leahy 1975:85). Mark reports that when the demon left, the man was shaken violently (Mk 1:26) and Luke says that the man was thrown down (Lk 4:35). The astonishment of the synagogue onlookers was great and they are shown as wondering at the authoritative ministry of Christ.

The most extensive exorcism narrative in the New Testament is the account of the Gerasene or Gadarene demoniac (Mk 5:1-20). Unlike the other stories of exorcisms, this is the only account in which Jesus' initial command of exorcism is not immediately effective, in which Jesus inquires about a demon's name and grants a request from demons, and in which demons are transferred from one host to another, in this case, from a human being to a herd of pigs (see Page 1995:146). The narrative reveals a picture of a man living on the margins of society among the tombs, perhaps living in burial caves (Twelftree 1992:166 - See Nm 9:11, 16; *11QTemple 48:11-13; 49:5-21; 50:3-8; Acts of Andrew 6; Jerome Letter 108.13*). That there had been unsuccessful attempts by other exorcists, for this shackling or hobbling has parallels in the magic bowls (see

Twelftree 1993:144). The chaining could have been one way violent demons were dealt with. In this exorcist narrative it becomes clear that even the most violent, marginalised and unsociable demoniac can experience deliverance through the supernatural power of Christ and be integrated into society again.

But not all demoniacs were cut off from society. The epileptic boy appears to have remained with his family and to have been sufficiently controllable for him to accompany his father to see the disciples of Jesus (Mk 9:14-29). The demonised daughter of the woman from Syrian Phoenicia also remained in a family situation (Mk 7:24-30). The reasons for the woman not bringing her daughter from home are not related. Twelftree (1992:165) says perhaps the girl was a danger to the public, or too sick to move or terrified of leaving home. Twelftree speculates that the woman, being Hellenised, may have been from the leading stratum of society and found her daughter's sickness an embarrassment, for the demon-possessed were the focus of ridicule (cf. Philo *Flacc.* 36, 40). Twelftree argues further that, if being cared for at home is a sign of wealth, as is perhaps the case here, as also in the story of the epileptic boy, it might indicate that these families might have had some financial means above the average (see also Twelftree 1993:144-145).

In the healing of the daughter of the Syrophoenician woman, a unique and remarkable aspect is that Jesus, in the gospel narratives, appears to heal from a distance. Since it happens from a distance, there is no command to the demon to depart (see Page 1995:158). According to Matthew 15:28, Jesus assured the woman that her request had been granted, and according to Mark 7:29, he told her that the demon had left her daughter. The healing of the demonised girl from a distance is similar to that of the centurion's boy (Mt 8:5-13 par. Lk 7:1-10; cf. b. *Ber 34b*; Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius 3.38*). Jesus, like other exorcists of his period, was known as an exorcist able to heal from a distance (see Twelftree 1993:146).

The epilogue to the story of the epileptic boy in Matthew 17:19-20 and Mark 9:28-29 is of particular interest because it contains the only example in the New Testament of an unsucessful attempt at exorcism by the followers of Jesus. What makes this failure remarkable is that it occurs after the disciples had already been commissioned to perform exorcisms (Mt 10:1,8; Mk 3:15; 6:7; Lk 9:1) and had

been successful at doing so (Mk 6:13). It would seem that the disciples had every reason to think that they could expel the demon from the epileptic boy, but, as Page (1995:163) rightly points out, it is precisely where their problem lay. Based on their previous experiences, they probably thought that they had divine power at their disposal to use as they saw fit, but in Jesus' view, such thinking evidenced improper faith. Instead of depending completely upon God, the disciples had come to rely upon themselves and their past successes. In Mark 9:29, Jesus responds in a curious way to the disciples' query regarding their failure. Jesus says, "This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting." Some suggest that Mark intended for prayer to replace exorcism as a method of dealing with possessed people (see Miller 1977; see *1QapGen* 20; Toon 1974:365). However, Page (1995:163) contends that evidence from the patristic period that exorcism by word of command continued to be practised, makes this unlikely. The Marcan narrative, by mentioning prayer and/or fasting, demonstrates that divine power is not under human control; it must always be asked for. In biblical exorcism, God remains the only source of authority and focus of worship and gratitude.

In terms of the method of exorcism, Twelftree (1992:167) points out that alongside these aspects of Jesus' exorcisms, which were common to other exorcists of the period, there were other features of his technique less familiar to his observers (see Brewer 1996:144). The first that Twelftree mentions is that when Jesus expelled demons he did not use mechanical devices. A feature common to many other exorcists' technique was the aid of some apparatus, device or feature of speech. In *Tobit 8:3,* incense is burned to expel the demon; in *Jubilees 10:10* and *12,* medicines are used; in the *Genesis Apocryphon 20,* Abraham lays hands on the Pharaoh; Eleazer uses a finger ring and bowl of water (Josephus *Ant.* 8.46-49; cf. Num R. 19.8); David is said to have used music (Josephus *Anti.* 6.166; cf. 1 Sam 16:15-17); in the Babylonian Talmud, amulets, palm tree prickles, wood chips, ashes, cumin, dog's hair and threads are used; Lucian tells of the use of iron rings, and the Magical Papyri tell of exorcists using amulets, olive branches, marjoram and special sounds. But all this seems extremely remote from: "Be bound, and come out of him" (Mk 1:25) or "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again" (Mk 9:25). According to Twelftree, the only thing near a mechanical aid was the use of pigs.

However, Twelftree (1992:168) argues that the pigs were not used to exorcise the demons, but to provide a habitat for the expelled demons. In this simple, unaided word of command to demons Jesus was operating in a way similar to some of the rabbis (*b. Me'il 17b*) and Apollonius of Tyana (Philostratus *Vit. Ap.* 4.20). Jesus never depended or involved himself in "ritualistic rigmaroles [in his exorcisms], but in his living word of infinite power" (Unger 1994:102). He spoke, and the demons obeyed him as Lord of the spirit world. Sometimes he would command the evil spirit never to return (Mk 9:25) and his own parable of the return of the evil spirit with others elucidates and emphasises the point (see Green 1981:130). In terms of his own self-understanding of his authority and mission, "Jesus most certainly believed that he was liberating the demonised person completely" (McClung 1990:197), unlike pagan exorcisms which are a trick by which Satan brings people increasingly under his power (Leahy 1975:103).

Though Jesus mentions the significance of prayer in the ministry that is related to exorcism (see Mk 9:29), it is surprising that, in contrast to some Jewish holy men, Jesus is not reported as praying when he performed an exorcism. Even though Hanina ben Dosa did not use incantations, he, like Abraham of the Qumran Scrolls, prayed to remove the demon (*b. Ber. 34b*; cf. *b. Ta'an 24b*; *1 QapGen 20*). In his exorcisms, Jesus dit not invoke any power-authority (Twelftree 1992:168). One frequent source of power-authority was a powerful name (cf. *PGM IV.3019*). The name of Solomon was often used (see *Testament of Solomon 1.5-7*; cf. *Antiquities* 8.46-49) and in Acts 19:13, the sons of Sceva tried to use the name of Jesus, which was a similar effort in the case of the strange exorcist (Mk 9:38-30; par. Lk 9:49-50). In the light of Matthew 12:28 (par. Lk 11:20), where Jesus declares his source of power-authority to be the Spirit (Luke - "finger") of God, Twelftree says we might expect that in dealing with the demons, Jesus would call upon the Spirit (or "finger") of God. But he does not; Jesus appeared to rely on his own charismatic personal force to subdue and expel the demons. Jesus did also not use the command *horkizo,* which in the context of first-century exorcism, meant "to charge", "adjure" or "bind" someone by another being, usually a superior power, in order to carry out the wishes of the exorcist (Mk 5:7; Acts 19:13). Instead Jesus says "I" *(ego)* command you ..." (Mk 9:25).

Although Jesus had a high reputation as an exorcist among his contemporaries (cf. e.g. "Behold I cast out demons and perform cures today, tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course" - Lk 13:22), Leahy (1975:104-105) insists that the expulsion of demons during Christ's ministry and that of his apostles, shows that such deliverance took place in an evangelistic context. It was never divorced from the preaching of the gospel. To isolate his exorcisms from the whole is to present an "emaciated" (see Bosch 1980:202f) view of his mission. Jesus never went about seeking for the demoniacs. On almost every recorded occasion, we read that they were brought to him by others (see Green 1981:130). Even the command to the twelve disciples "to cast out demons" (Mt 10:8), is part of a wider command which begins with the words, "As ye go, preach ..." (Mt 10:7). The exorcisms in the New Testament need to be seen in that context.

Twelftree (1992:168) also indicates that the exorcisms of Jesus ought to be seen in conjunction with the arrival of the *basileia* (kingdom) of God. In Christ, the kingdom of God has invaded the present age, the realm of Satan, the "god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4). When Jesus said that the kingdom of God had come in him, he claimed for himself the position of a divine invader (Wimber and Springer 1992:33) who binds the strong man and sets his fellow prisoners free (Lk 11:21-22; cf. Khathide 1999a:81). When Jesus cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead, performed other diverse miracles, he was announcing the arrival and presence of the *autobasileia* - the kingdom-in-person. In concurrence with this position, Twelftree (1992:168) writes:

> For Jesus his ministry of exorcism was not preparatory to the kingdom, nor a sign of the kingdom nor an indication that the kingdom had arrived, but actually the kingdom of God itself in operation (cf. Lk 11:21-22).

THE CROSS AND THE POWERS

The victory of Jesus over the powers of evil is something that is referred to by different scholars. Stewart (1951) has stressed this critical aspect in the cross of Christ, one to which Gustav Aulén has drawn attention in his *Christus Victor*. According to Green (1981:131), the cross was the critical defeat of Satan which

determined the ultimate outcome of the whole conflict. Thus, it became also the ground on which Christians can stand when facing the enemy. The connection between the defeat of Satan and the salvation of humans, is stated in clear terms in Hebrews 2:14-15, in which we are told that the purpose of the incarnation of Christ was "that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death". In the opinion of Page (1995:204), this portion of scripture suggests that Satan's power was broken or destroyed (*katargeo* - 'reduce to impotence' or 'make ineffective' - see Wilson 1987:62) as a result of what happened on the cross, so that those who had previously been enslaved could be liberated.

At the cross of Christ, an eternal sacrifice was made, so that humanity's sin might be forgiven and that Satan might be utterly defeated. Great power was released that day (Wimber 1992:57). God ordained victory through suffering as a way to provide for the salvation of humankind and the restoration of the whole creation. Ridderbos (1962:169) cautions, though, that the failure to do justice to the idea of suffering deprives the gospel of its power. Before Pilate and at the cross, Jesus inaugurated his kingdom by apparent loss rather than by obvious glory (see also Shenk 1983:210). Clark (1994:65) seems to catch the paradox of mystery of the victory in the cross, when he says, "The redemption of God is not revealed only in deeds of restoration and power, in speaking of an inspired and powerful word - but in the shame and misery of the crucifixion." For the church to engage the powers it needs to walk the path that Jesus walked: *via dolorosa* (see Khathide 1999a:82).

Perhaps the most obvious, yet difficult to interpret, portion of scripture referring to the defeat of powers at the cross, is Colossians 2:15. The preceding context speaks of God having raised believers from spiritual death (Col 2:13), and verse 14 reveals that this being made alive in Christ has involved cancelling the written code that attested to their guilt (see Yates 1990:248). Colossians 2:15 indicates further that it involved defeating the powers: "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross". Barclay (1975:133) translates it as, "He stripped the powers and authorities of all their power and publicly put them to shame, and through the cross,

led them captive in his triumphal train". This important text is the only place in the Pauline letters where the conquest of powers is explicitly connected to the death of Christ (see Page 1995:251).

Berkhof (1962:21), in his exegesis of this portion of scripture, says the world powers under which humankind was languishing, were confronted at the cross. According to Berkhof, these oppressive religious structures are spoken of as the way in which the principalities and powers rule over humanity. What is most significant, in Berkhof's view, is that by his cross, Christ unmasked and disarmed the quasi-divine authority of these structures. Wink (1992:141) states that, "The cross exposed ... humanity's complicity with the powers, our willingness to trade away our increments of freedom for instalments of advantage". As far as Wink is concerned, this shows us that we are now free to resist the claim of any finite being as absolute or any subsystem to be whole. Furthermore, Wink says that the powerful message of the cross is that it exposes the powers as being unable to make Jesus become what they wanted him to be or stop him from being who he was.

In expounding on Colossians 2:15, Page (1995:253) looks at different possibilities. He says if it refers to God, or preferrably to Christ's rendering the powers impotent, the question arises as to how this relates to the cancelling of the written code, which is mentioned in the previous verse. There is evidently some connection between the powers and the written code by which humanity stands condemned. Page says one possibility is that the powers exercised their influence over humanity through regulations, that is, by promoting the view that the way to please God is to conform to a set of religious and ethical rules. If this is the case, the disarming of the powers could relate to their losing their power to enslave people to a life of constant striving to reach perfection by following prescribed religious rituals and a strict code of conduct. Another possibility that is advanced by Page, is that the powers were seen as sharing Satan's role as accuser (see Job 1:9-11; Zech 3:1; Rev 12:10). In this view, Christ's death on the cross deprived the powers of their ability to demand a guilty verdict and its accompanying penalty for humanity. Page concludes that, since forgiveness is prominent in the immediate context, the latter explanation is preferable.

The mention of the disarming of the powers is followed in Colossians 2:15 by the statement "... he made a public spectacle of them". This seems to refer exposure to shame (see Arnold 1992:105; Page 1995:253; Barclay 1975:133; cf. Green 1981:95). Paul probably had in mind the contrast between appearance and reality with regards to the crucifixion of Jesus. When Jesus was stripped and hung on a cross as an object of public scorn, it looked as though the enemies of Christ had won. Paul asserts, however, that at the very moment when it seemed that the powers of evil had triumphed, they were actually suffering a humiliating defeat (see Page 1995:253). At the cross, their power to enslave humanity was decisively broken, and the basis was laid for the forgiveness of sin (see Arnold 1992:104-106). This paradox of what happened at the cross is also mentioned by Bornkamm (1985:158) when he says, "It would never have occurred to any man of the ancient world to exalt into a religious symbol the cross, of all things, the most shameful form of execution, used by Roman justice only for slaves and rebels."

In Colossians 2:15, Paul continues relating the defeat of the powers by using the imagery of the triumphal procession, a picture which also appears in 2 Corinthians 2:14. Paul uses an expression which was common in the context of a Roman military victory. Williamson (1968:317 f) argues that the verb *triambeuo* as followed by a direct personal object, as it is here, has a specific meaning "to lead as a conquered enemy in a victory parade". In such a procession, the defeated king, leaders and army would be paraded into the city in chains (cf. Versnel 1970:95). The successful general would lead the procession, followed by his army singing hymns of victory and jubilantly revelling in their conquest. The disheartened and vanquished enemies became a public spectacle for ridicule, with their subjugation paraded for all to see (see Arnold 1992:106). In a similar fashion, Christ has thus put the principalities and powers on public display. Dunn (1998:231) comments that in this imagery, we see the transformation of values: from the cross as the most shameful of deaths, to the cross as a chariot leading the defeated powers in chains behind it, and he concludes that this is as audacious as one could imagine. For such a metaphor to be coined, the sense of release from the oppressive powers now enjoyed by newly converted Christians, must have been almost palpable.

In Colossians 2:15, Paul makes the basic point that Christ defeated the powers through his death. When it appeared that Jesus was suffering terrible humiliation, he was actually winning a great victory over his enemies. As a result of what happened on the cross, the forces of evil have been conquered. Jesus destroyed the sovereignty of the powers over human beings by "utterly submitting to it all the way to the scaffold" (Green 1981:93). In submitting, Jesus conquered.

Yoder (1972:148) summarises the victory of Jesus through death over the powers in this manner:

> His very obedience unto death is in itself not only the sign but also the firstfruits of an authentic, restored humanity. Here we have for the first time to do with a man who is not the slave of any power, of any law or custom, community or institution, value or theory. Not even to save his own life will he let himself be made a slave of these powers. This authentic humanity included his free acceptance of death at their hands. Therefore it is his death that provided his victory.

THE RESURRECTION AND EXALTATION

The certainty of Jesus' resurrection permeates the whole of the New Testament with its bright effulgence (see Geldenhuys 1977:622). In each of the gospel narratives we receive the glad tidings that he, who as the sacrificial Lamb went down voluntarily and completely into death and hell to expiate the sins of humankind, arose from the dead as victor and is now the exalted head and Lord of his church and the cosmos. In the epistles of Paul and the other apostles, we see what a central place alongside the sacrificial death of Jesus, his resurrection and exaltation took up in the life of the church.

In terms of Christ's victory over the powers, the scriptures show that Jesus has always been supreme or superior to them because of his agency in their creation (see Col 1:16), but the resurrection and exaltation are offered as proof thereof (see Eph 1:20-23; 4:7-11; cf. 1 Pet 3:19, 22), as is the granting of the spiritual

gifts to the church, following his exaltation (Eph 4:11f; cf. Yates 1980:108). As a successful Roman general would show off victory in his triumphal procession by distributing gifts to people, Christ also gave gifts to his people (Eph 4:8-11; cf. Ps 68:18).

The conquest of the powers is also mentioned in the context of resurrection. In I Corinthians 15, a clear resurrection chapter, Paul refers to supernatural beings (see v. 24) and he appears to regard them as hostile powers that are presently being subjected to Christ and that will be totally vanquished before the *parousia* (see Page 1995:242). The mentioning of the destroying of all dominion, authority and power (see 1 Cor 15:24) assures of complete victory over the powers. This appears to be confirmed in 1 Peter 3:22 in which Jesus Christ is described as one "who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him". The mention of the imprisoned spirits in the immediate context (1 Pet 3:19-20), provides compelling evidence that the powers were primarily, if not exclusively, conceived as evil (Page 1995:255). As in Ephesians 1:20-21, the subjection of the rebellious powers is closely associated with the exaltation of Christ. The mention of Christ's position at God's right hand in 1 Peter 3:22, echoes the statement in Psalm 110:1,

> Sit at my right hand
> until I make your enemies
> a footstool for your feet.

According to Page (1995:255), it is natural to equate the subjugated enemies mentioned in Psalm 110 with the "angels, authorities and powers" of 1 Peter. The implication is that the death and resurrection of Christ have resulted in victory over the powers. Christ's death and resurrection mean that "any and all heavenly powers have lost any effective power over those who belong to Christ and any effective say in their destiny" (Dunn 1998:230).

2.7.3.3 PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF POWERS

(a) PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS

In addition to the passages in the epistles that use the same vocabulary for rebellious spiritual forces found elsewhere in the New Testament, are several passages that employ terms found only in the epistles. The most common of these are *archai* (plural of *archê*) and *exousiai* (plural of *exousia*), which generally occur together. The New International Version usually translates the resulting phrase "rulers and authorities". In the King James Version, the phrase is rendered "principalities and powers", an expression widely used by modern authors as a comprehensive designation for the spiritual powers that are denoted by *archai, exousiai,* and similar words (see Page 1995:240).

Some modern biblical scholars have devoted a great deal of attention to the New Testament teaching concerning the powers (see e.g. O'Brien 1984:111-128; Noll 1998; Wink 1998; Arnold 1989; Forbes 2001:61-88). There have been various approaches to the subject of powers in the New Testament. Most recent research in this area has favoured an interpretation of powers that identifies them with the impersonal social forces that determine human existence (see Forbes 2001; Berkhof 1977:18-24). Wink (1984:104) sees powers as inner dimension of the material. In his view, none of the spiritual realities have existence independent of the material counterpart. Wink (1984:82) also believes that the New Testament prefers to speak of powers only in their concretions, their structural inertia, and their physical embodiments in history. In a later volume on the powers, Wink (1986) carries his argument further by describing the devil as a "collective symbolisation of evil", "the collective weight of human fallenness". Interpreted in this framework, the powers tend to lose their personal identity. It cannot be totally denied that powers, according to Jewish belief, do have socio-political structural dimensions (see Arnold 1992:90; Ferguson 1984:151), as the incarnating tendency is part of their nature (see Khathide 2000:85), but to say that they are abstract and impersonal (Forbes 2001:62; Lee 1970:55) or that they do not exist independent of their material counterpart (Wink), would be an imposed western etic position to the understanding of the Middle Eastern persons of the first-century world (see Pilch 1996:135).

Page (1995:240) further states that to demythologise the powers, as is a case with Bultmann, and equate them absolutely with socio-political structures, fails to do justice to the historical context of the New Testament, in which belief in the spiritual realm was widespread, and to the explicit statements about these powers in the New Testament itself (see also O'Brien 1984:133-141; Arnold 1989:129-134). The consciousness of spirits and magic on the part of the first readers of the New Testament, strongly suggests that the powers were construed as personal and powerful. For Kraft (1995:60), belief in personal demons or powers and a keen interest in supernatural power were characteristic of the first century.

Having established our contextual bearings of how powers were understood by the readers in the first-century New Testament world, let us briefly focus on how Paul appears to have understood 'The Law, Sin and Death'. Forbes (2001:63) believes that Paul understood these in terms of personified abstract forces. In fact, Forbes states that Paul saw the law, sin and death as the primary powers confronting humanity and also primary forces defeated by Jesus. For Forbes, 'Law' is the only one of these powers conceived of as in any sense neutral. 'Sin' and 'Death', according to Forbes, are evil powers making use of 'Law' to destroy humanity (cf. Rom 5:20-21).

When it comes to the Jewish law, Caird (1956) shows that the principalities and powers were involved there as well, so much so that the law which was intended by God for the life of the hearers became their death warrant (Rom 7:10-14). Green (1981:88) writes that the law had ceased to be understood as the expression of God's love and faithfulness to his people and had "become their justification for nomism". In Green's view, to this extent the law given by angels had fallen under the hand of the enemy who encourages self-righteousness and self-seeking. The reference in Colossians 2:15 to Jesus having disarmed the powers and made a public spectacle of them in a context of the spiritual powers behind "the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and stood opposed to us," puts the law in its most negative Pauline aspect (see Forbes 2001:71). Also the clustering of the law with the *stoicheia* in Colossians 2:20 and Galatians 4:3 and 9 may further suggest the demonic dimension in the law (see Arnold 1996:71f; Dunn 1998:153). Martyn (1997:125-126) says, "At the minimum the elements

and the Law were functionally parallel entities: both enslaved, and God's sending of Christ has effected liberation from both ... If veneration of the Law is one form in which human beings venerate the cosmic elements, it is probable that in some fashion or other the Law is one of those elements."

Forbes (2001:72) sees the personification of the law as the easiest to understand and explain, because personifications of 'Law' are common in Jewish literature. Recently, an indepth study on this has been done by Röhser (1987). In that investigation, death is occasionally personified in Hebrew poetry (see Hos 13:14, for example, though 'Sheol' or 'the grave' are far too common).

The response of Van der Horst (1999:1612) to the debate of the personification of 'Law' 'Sin' and 'Death', is worth noting:

> Although one cannot say ... that death is in Paul's mind a full-fledged personal being, there can be little doubt that, just as in the case of 'sin' and 'law', Paul attributes to 'death' a superhuman and supernatural power that verges on personification (or rather demonification). The close connection between the powers of 'sin', 'death', and 'law' as co-operators in Paul's view of 'anti-salvation' history is a well-known feature of his theology.

The issue of the striking personification and/or hypostatisation of Law, Sin, and Death undoubtedly occupies a significant place in Paul's theology. Paul does treat the abstract forces of Law, Sin and Death as if they were in some respects personal; at the very least, personal language is appropriate for describing them (see Forbes 2001:74; Neyrey 1990:161-162). Dunn (1998:161) cautions, though, that, "The law as the ally of the powers of sin and death should not be regarded as itself a cosmic power".

But, still a major issue that presents itself, is Paul's understanding of "principalities and powers" - the origin of the cluster and the functions thereof. Most scholars believe Paul's vocabulary for the powers reflect the Jewish demonology of his own day. All of the terms Paul used for the powers can be found in Jewish

documents of the Greco-Roman period. The Judaism of Paul's time had a highly developed angelology. This is evidenced by the following citations from Jewish documents that contain many of the same terms used by Paul:

> And he (God) will summon all the forces [*dynameis*] of the heavens, and all the holy ones above, and the forces of the Lord - the cherubim, seraphim, ophanim, all the angels of governance [*archai*], the Elect One, and the other forces [*exousiai*] on earth and over water *(1 Enoch 61:10)*.

> And I saw there [in the seventh heaven] an exceptionally great light, and all the fiery armies of the great archangels, and the incorporeal forces [*dynameis*] and the dominions [*kyriotétes*] and the origins [*archai*] and the authorities [*exousiai*], the cherubim and the seraphim and the many-eye thrones [*thronoi*] *(2 Enoch 20:1)*.

> There with him are the thrones [*thronoi*] and the authorities [*exousiai*]; there praises to God are offered eternally *(Testament of Levi 3:8)*.

There are also other references to the powers in other Jewish sources, for example, the *Testament of Adam* 4:1-8, the *Testament of Abraham* 13:10, the *Testament of Solomon* 3:5-6; 20:15; *3 Baruch* 2:1-3 and *2 Maccabees 3:24* (see Forbes 2001:74-81). In the mentioning of the powers in the Jewish documents, it is of importance to note that not all the powers referred to there are necessarily evil.

Arnold (1992:91) rightly points out that, although Paul used many terms for the angelic powers known to Judaism, this does not mean that what he had to say about the powers of darkness would have been incomprehensible to the non-Jew (see also Berkhof 1977:16). According to Arnold, while "principalities" (*archai*) and "authorities" (*exousiai*) seem to be uniquely Jewish expressions for the unseen realm, many of the other words he used were also used by Gentiles to refer to the world of spirits and invisible powers. Words like "powers" (*dynameis*),

"dominions" (*kyriotétes*), "thrones" (*thronoi*), "angels" (*angeloi*), "world rulers" (*kosmokratores*), "demons" (*daimonia*), "elemental spirits (*stoicheia*) and "rulers" (*archontes*) were known and used by pagans, as evidenced in their magical and astrological texts.

Although there is some uncertainty about Daniel 7:27 as a source for Paul's use of "principalities and powers" (see Forbes 2001:74-75), the prevalent view among scholars is that this may seem to be the case. Noll (1998:137), among others, favours this interpretation. Noll illustrates this by his own rendering of Daniel 7:27 in this way:

> And the kingdom (*basileia*) and the dominion (*exousia*) and their greatness and authority (*archē*) over all the kingdoms he shall give to the holy people of the Most High. They shall reign in their kingdom (*basileia*) forever, and all dominions (*exousiai* [LXX]; *archai* [Theodition]) shall submit and obey them.

Noll interprets this as Daniel foreseeing a revolution in world affairs, the just but violent transfer of authority from the corrupt regimes of this world to the kingdom of the Son of Man and his saints. Noll goes on to show that for Paul, the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ have fulfilled Daniel's vision in a wonderful way. This insight, in Noll's view, moves Paul to break into thanksgiving to the Father "who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion (*exousia*) of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom (*basileia*) of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:12-14; cf. Acts 26:18). Noll, in congruence with Ladd's (1994:48) position, appears to be convinced that the palace revolution in the heavens has already taken place. Authority is now vested in Christ as head of all things (see also Prabhu 1994:158; Green 1981:49; cf. Col 2:10).

According to Paul's distinctive thought, "principalities and powers", stands for a world-wide web of human affairs grounded in a spiritual hierarchy (Noll (1998:138; see also Arnold 1992:90). The spiritual dimension was not originally evil but has been corrupted by sin and Satan. This is borne by a Pauline state-

ment in Colossians 1:16: "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities ...". The evidence, though, which is revealed in both the disputed and undisputed Pauline sources, tends to characterise the nature of the powers as evil. Despite the consistent argument by Carr (1981) for the tendentious thesis that the powers were not conceived by Paul as evil or hostile, his view has not enjoyed the majority support among scholars. Dunn (1998:106) says that in most cases where powers are mentioned in the New Testament, there clearly seems to have been in mind heavenly beings, subordinate to God and his Christ, with the potential to intervene between God and his creation and hostile to his purposes and his people. In Romans 8:38-39 a list of potentially threatening powers are mentioned. In the group, 'death', 'demons' and 'powers' are mentioned as part of forces that can intervene between God and his people. Paul states in categoric terms that nothing can separate the believer from the love of God. Echoing Psalm 110:1, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:24-27, speaks of the necessity of Christ's enemies being placed under his feet prior to the end. In verse 24, Paul says that the end will come when Christ "has destroyed all dominion [*archén*], authority [*exousian*] and power [*dynamin*]." Most scholars understand this to refer to the subjugation of rebellious supernatural powers, and in view of the parallels in Ephesians 1:20-21 and 1 Peter 3:22, this seems likely (see Page 1995:241). Cullmann (1949:58-62) believes that the idea of Christ as conqueror of the powers, was an important aspect of the early Christian faith. Moreover, the belief that fallen spiritual agencies will one day be punished, is found elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g. Mt 25:41; Rev 20:10). At the conclusion of the Christological hymn in Philippians 2:6-11, we read of Paul evidently describing the universal homage Christ is to receive from all creation, including the powers, though they are vaguely or indirectly mentioned. In the statement, Paul says that God exalted Christ, in order

> that at the name of Jesus every
> knee should bow,
> in heaven and on earth and under
> the earth.

In terms of how the believers should conceive the powers, Paul urges his readers to put on the armour of God, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:12). Obviously, this verse, which is really an expansion of the reference to "the devil's schemes" in the previous verse, closely allies the powers with the devil himself.

What is puzzling, though, in Paul's discussion of the powers, is the fact that not so much detail is given concerning them to the extent that a suspicion begins to mount in certain theological quarters that Paul himself did not have a very strong, or at least very clear, belief regarding these heavenly powers (see Schlier 1961:13-14). But that there were "real powers, supraindividual, suprasocial forces, spiritual realities which influenced events and conduct, he had no doubt" (Dunn 1998:109). In the understanding of Paul, there also appears to have been no doubt of Christ's sovereignty and supremacy over the powers. In his mind, Christ is both the founding principle (*archê*) of all that exists (Col 1:18) and the head (*kephalê*) of all worldly regimes (Col 2:10 - "*archés kai exousias*" [rule and authority]; cf. Eph 1:22); he is also head of the church (Col 1:18; Eph 4:15; 5:23).

Even though Satan is called the prince (*archon*) of the authority of the earth (Eph 2:2), Paul seems to acknowledge that the devil is a functionary in the fallen world by God's permission but definitely not a founder (Noll 1998:138). Far from being a sovereign power, Satan is but a created being (cf. Ps 148:2, 5; Col 1:16). Orthodoxy has always affirmed that Satan is a creature who is subject to the will of the Creator (cf. Ps 103:20-21). Hanegraaff (1993:133) argues that the whole notion of Satan as gaining ascendancy over the earth, is biblically unfounded because it is based on the false idea that human beings were given ownership of the earth, which they transferred to the devil at the Fall. Hanegraaff says that this is not true because in creation, the function of human beings was that of stewardship or a caretaking role and not ownership, because, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (Ps 24:1). Therefore, the dualism that says that there are two forces that are fighting it out for the control of the universe, with no one knowing who will eventually win, simply does not inspire confidence or represent what Paul says about the powers. Lewis (1960:47) says that Christianity

agrees with dualism that this universe is at war, but the Christian faith does not think that this is a war between independent powers - it is a civil war or a rebellion. Through his death and resurrection, Christ has defeated the powers of evil (see Col 2:15; Rev 12:11). "That Jesus is conqueror is eternally settled: the universe is his!" (Johann Christoph Blumhardt in Yoder 1972:161).

THE NEW COMMUNITY AND THE POWERS

The church, which is a new community of believers (cf. Bosch 1980:222f), is by its very nature, mission and allegiance to Christ, a target of hostile forces of evil. Foerster (1971:161) points out that in the New Testament epistles, the devil is mentioned predominantly in connection with his attack on the community. This takes place first in persecutions (see Rev 2:10; 12:17; 13:7; 1 Pet 5:8; cf. 1 Tim 5:14-15). In a specific way, the devil works against the community in temptations (1 Thess. 3:5; cf. Mt 4:1-11 par. Lk 4:1-11; 1 Cor 7:5). Satan works hard at deceiving the community (e.g. Acts 5:3) and he is particularly busy in snatching away the seed (the word of God) when it is sown (Mk 4:15 and par.). The devil is also depicted as hindering the apostolic mission (1 Thess 2:18) and constantly places the community in danger (Page 1995:186f). The conspiracy of the powers both at spiritual and socio-religio-political levels is shown in the treachery of Judas and the eventual death of Christ (Lk 22:3; Jn 6:70; 1 Cor 2:8). Lloyd-Jones (1977:56) describes the devil as "an adversary who is set against us, an opponent, a foe, the leader of an army set against us". He is also called the accuser of the community (Rev 12:11) and as someone who makes war with the saints (Rev 13:7; cf. Dan 7:21-22).

Naturally, the devil is not alone in the execution of his evil plots. The devil, 'the prince of the power of the air', who has a kingdom, also has servants, emissaries, followers whom the apostle Paul prefers to call 'principalities and powers and rulers' (see Lloyd-Jones 1977:57). Paul says that these are the enemies against which the community is wrestling. Paul reminds the new community:

> For we are not contending against flesh and blood,
> but against the principalities, against
> powers, against the world rulers of

this present darkness, against the
spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12).

To an editorially oriented mind, Paul seems to be using the word 'against' (*pros*), in a rather superfluous manner. But a closer examination reveals emphasis rather than superfluity. Lloyd-Jones (1977:48) says that Paul's emphasis is most essential in biblical and Christian understanding in terms of the cause of trouble in the world. Without exonerating human beings as responsible and accountable for their deeds, Paul also points to the colluding activity of the powers in the waywardness of humanity.

In reference to Ephesians 6:10-18, Longman and Reid (1995:168) believe that the language and imagery employed by Paul seem to have been refracted through Isaiah 11:4-5 and 59:17-18 (cf. *Wisdom 5:17-20*; see also Page 1995:247). This striking connection is significant in that it portrays Yahweh as the warrior against the powers and opposing forces of Israel (see also Verkuyl 1978). Yahweh, seeing that there was no one to intervene on Israel's behalf, brought victory by his own arm. With the armour Isaiah attributes to God or the Son of David (see 11:1), Paul outfits the church as the new humanity, the new Israel, in its battle against the powers of this age (see Bubeck 1984:64). Using the armour of God, believers can find strength in the Lord to wage their spiritual battles. The weapons of the church are both the defensive armour (Eph 6:13-17) and the offensive "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (6:17). The power of the church militant is found "in the Lord and in his mighty power" (6:10). Eadie (1955:456) says "no matter what armour is provided, how finely tempered, how highly polished, or how closely fitted it may be", it is ineffective without the strength of the Lord (see also Lowe 1998:62). Soldiers have an invincible courage when they have confidence in the skill and bravery of their leader and "the power of his might" in which they are strong. In the Lord's power, the new community can withstand or resist the devil and his forces (see 1 Pet 5:8-9; Jas 4:7) or rebuke them (see Jude 9). As an incentive to resisting the devil, James adds the promise that Satan will flee from those who resist him and "reminds his readers, not to form an inflated opinion of the devil's power" (Page 1995:208). Satan is not invincible, and Christians are not to think that they are powerless to defend themselves from the powers of evil. If the new community stands up to the devil, the

promise is that he will retreat. The idea that the faithful can expect the devil and his evil spirits to flee from them also appears in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (*T. Sim. 3:5; T. Iss. 7:7*; *T. Dan* 5:1; T. *Naph. 8:4*; *T. Ash. 3:2*; *T. Benj. 5:2*). An early Christian document, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, emphasises that believers can gain victory over the tempter as well (12:5). James reminds the new community that, in its fight against the devil and his forces, humility to God is of paramount importance (Jas 4:17), because he, that is, God, is supreme over the apostate forces (see Augustine, *City of God* Book XII ch. 3 p. 473).

Contrary to the belief that Christians are powerless or impotent in the face of attacks of the powers of evil (see Lowe 1998:62), in Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul talks about Christians being involved in war under their victorious and mighty Lord. In their fight "against rulers (*archas*), against the authorities (*exousias*), against the powers of this dark world (*tous kosmokratoras tou skotous toutou*) and against the spiritual forces of evil (*ta pneumatika tés ponërias*) in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:12), Christians are guaranteed victory because of the armour and the power of God. Even though the ideal of doing battle with Satan and his hordes may seem a frightening prospect, Ephesians 6:10-20 does not foster an attitude of fear (Page 1995:187). In addition, Paul tells the new community that "For though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war (*strateuometha*) as flesh does. The weapons (*hopla*) we fight with (*tés strateias*) are not weapons of the flesh. On the contrary, they have divine power to demonish strongholds" (2 Cor 10:3-4). In his personal experience and ministry, Paul tells of having "fought wild beasts in Ephesus" (1 Cor 15:32; cf. Mk 1:12-13). Though some commentators believe that by 'wild beasts' Paul might be referring to nations (see Wright 1991:23-25), Hanson (1987:120) says that Paul may have conceived of his struggle at Ephesus as being against spiritual enemies.

However, in his reference of the fight that Christians are involved in with the forces of evil, Paul leaves the new community in no doubt regarding the assurance of victory. In Romans 16:20 he assures his readers, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet". Again in 2 Thessalonians 3:3, he says, "But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one". Although the devil is a formidable enemy, God will enable the new community to triumph over him.

In conclusion, what appears to be a contradiction in terms between the defeat of the powers at the cross and the struggle of the new community with the forces of evil, may best be explained in the "now and not yet" theological schema in which the kingdom (*basileia*) that was inaugurated by Jesus (see Mt 12:28 and par.) is yet to reach its fulfilment. The kingdom is not present, but it is only visible to the eye of faith (Shenk 1983:208; cf. Padilla 1985:189). Burgess *et al* (1988:524) appear to explain the paradox in a more understandable manner. They say "while the kingdom of Satan has already been invaded by Jesus in the power of the Spirit, there yet remains a future eschatological consummation accompanied by the final destruction of Satan and the complete victory over all evil and its consequences". Interpreted in this framework, the defeat of Satan in the Christ-event, more specifically at the cross, did not entail annihilation or total destruction but that Satan is bound (Lk 11:21-22; Mt 12:28; cf. Ladd 1994:48; Page 1995:106; Khathide 2000:87) or that his work has been rendered ineffective.

According to Yates (1980:109), "the victory of Christ over evil is not realised in individual Christians in isolation, but only in the community of believers". The metaphors of "dying and rising with Christ" (Rom 6:1-11), and that of Christ being the head of the body, the church, demonstrate the relationship between Christ and the church in which his victory over the devil and all evil automatically becomes that of the new community. The decisive moment is that of baptism, when the new loyalty to Christ overrides all other allegiances (Rom 6:3; Col 2:12). The relationship between Christ and the new community shows a "new organic unity over which evil has no power" (Caird 1956:84).

Yates (1980:110) also draws attention to the fact that the victory of Christ in the new community is made visible by the new way of life by the believers. He points out that almost every reference to the powers of evil in the New Testament has ethical implications. He says that very often the main concern of the contexts where these references are found is with the good life to be lived by Christians, and with the reputation of the church in the eyes of the outsiders (Col 4:5). As Jesus was "tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb 4:15), his followers are expected to reflect such victory over the tempter in their lives. The unique insight that is given into the everyday problems of young churches in Paul's writings, shows that there was a constant temptation to fall back into some of the old

pagan ways that were inconsistent with the gospel which they were supposed to have left behind (Col 3:5-9). The other temptation was to accept additional religious obligations that were superfluous to the Christian faith (Col 2:8-10; Gal 4:8-10; cf. 1 Cor 8:1-13). These temptations are connected, according to Paul, with the subtle operations of the evil powers in their various forms (see Yates 1980:111). But the sufficiency of the gospel in meeting human needs and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ in resisting Satan, healing the sick, casting out devils and preaching the gospel, are to be characteristic of the new community. Thus, the Christian has the assurance throughout every difficulty and discouragement that there is no form of evil that Christ cannot handle. Christ has conquered and has heralded the defeat of all powers of evil.

2.7.3.4 CONCLUSIONS

The New Testament takes the spirit world seriously. The early church never questioned the origin and existence of Satan and the evil powers. Jesus and believers in ancient times simply engaged the kingdom of darkness. Surprisingly, though, the gospel narratives do not deal directly with the victory of Jesus over the powers of evil. The gospel writers, in relating the passion story, deal more with issues related to sin and the atonement. It is in the writings associated with Paul that we read about the victory of the powers that took place at the cross. We read in them that Christ is supreme over evil powers in creation, incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection and exaltation. In its struggle with the evil powers, the community of believers can depend on the victory of Christ and the power and protection of God in the Spirit for the assurance of victory.

2.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Jews, in the Old Testament times, shared the belief in demons and magic with the nations of the Near East. But in the Old Testament, as such, there seems to be limited demonology probably because of the strong presence of Yahwism. Prophets blamed sin and rebellion for the disobedience of Jews (humanity) against God. But the post-exilic or intertestamental literature reveals a different picture. In these writings, there is a proliferation in the belief in demons. The influence of the Persian religious thinking can hardly be denied. The belief in demons was

intensified to some extent by the suffering of the Jewish people under other nations. It should also be pointed out, though, that the belief in demons and the use of magic were characteristic of other nations in the Greco-Roman world. The New Testament seems to have inherited its teaching on demons and exorcism from Jewish and other nations of the Mediterranean world of the first century. But the major difference is that in the New Testament, the focus shifts from individual demons to the central figure, Satan, who is believed to be their leader. To confirm this, the New Testament begins to talk about 'the kingdom of darkness' under the rulership of Satan. Though the New Testament allows for the fact of the exterior collective force in the corruption of humankind, it does also state that humans are responsible for their sinful living. Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour, is presented in the New Testament as God's provision for evil in the world. Although there was influence of other nations in Jewish demonology in which there was an element of dualism, it should be acknowledged that among Jews it never reached the state of an ontological dualism. The powers of evil, according to Jewish teaching, have no standing on their own in an ultimate sense. God remains sovereign over all creation, including all evil. In order to illusrate the collision between the powers of good and those of evil in the first-century kingdom of darkness, we now turn to the two-volume work of Luke.