

**SPIRITS IN THE FIRST-CENTURY
JEWISH WORLD, LUKE-ACTS AND
IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT:
AN ANALYSIS**

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1.1 THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

1.1.1 THE IMPERATIVE OF THEOLOGICAL RECONSTITUTION

One of the striking results of 1300 years of Christianity in the hemisphere of the southern millennium, perhaps more than any period of church history, is to refer to the Christian message has been fully embraced by the majority of people who profess to be adherents of Christ in the world. Since 1945, in the words of Robert (2001:10), world Christianity has experienced an massive shift of geographic weight as 60m Protestants and 40m Catholics have joined the ranks of the southern hemisphere.

Such an observation is echoed by Mbiti (1965:10) who says "this is the challenge which modernity must face, as the focus of Christianity shifts away from the west towards areas, situations, cultures, contexts, traditions, languages and problems which are largely different from those which preoccupied or preoccupy the theological output of the church in the West over the 500 years of 'Christianity'". In the process of shift of the Christianity's centre of gravity in the modern world from the Northern continents to the South, Africa is playing a significant role. In the resurgence of the faith, it is, therefore, important for African theologians to identify some of the challenges which a post-colonialist Christian Africa must now face as an important flag-bearer of Christianity in the new century" (Tutu, 1995:ix).

SUMMARY

In many African traditional societies, the felt needs of people are usually met by the services of the shaman or other traditional medicine specialists. These needs vary and they could include the need for protection against witchcraft and evil spirits. Another need in Africa is for physical and psychological health. These needs are felt by many Africans inside and outside ecclesiastical structures. Despite centuries of western influence and teaching by missionaries, these felt needs have not gone away. The sensitivity to the spirit world and its impact on the human and material world still remains a firm belief in the African socio-spiritual reality.

In its missiological responsibilities in the past and now, the church in Africa continues to display a theological deficiency in addressing this vacuum in African spirituality. Consequently, many African Christians are trapped in the dual, two-tier or split-level Christianity. This shows itself in times of existential crises in which many committed and respectable African Christians revert to traditional religious practices as a means of meeting their spiritual needs, due to the church's inability to do so. This observed lack of traditional Christian theology and its irrelevancy to African life, has left many African Christians in a dilemma.

It is this lacuna in Christian theology and practice that the researcher seeks to address in this study. By analysing documents on spirits in the first-century Jewish world and the two-volume work of Luke-Acts, the researcher endeavours to show the relevance and possible appropriation of the New Testament message to African spiritual realities. This is based on the understanding that the world of the first-century Jews and other communities in the Mediterranean region at the time, has more in common with Africans than the extremely naturalistic, rationalistic and abstract-oriented worldview of the early western missionaries who initially brought the gospel to Africa. Central to the researcher's thesis, is the argument that, if early Christians, as exemplified by the Lucan audience, could respond to the fears, problems and realities of the spirit world by using God-ordained, spiritual and biblically acceptable means and not magical ways, African Christians, too, who find themselves in similar situations, can do the same. The contention in this study is that the rediscovery of the aspect of the spirit world of the New Testament message will go a long way towards resolving the problem of split-level Christianity in Africa. This task remains a theological imperative for New Testament scholarship in order for the church to present a holistic message to the masses of Africa and to demonstrate how the immanence of the Christian God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, relates to the daily needs of spirit-sensitive Africans - a message that Luke tried so hard to convey to his readers in the first century.

Key words:

- spirits
- possession
- demon
- exorcism
- magic
- Luke-Acts
- African Traditional Religion
- devil/Satan

CHAPTER 1

THE SCOPE AND ARGUMENTATION ON DEMONOLOGY : AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

1.1.1 THE IMPERATIVE OF THEOLOGICAL INCARNATION

One of the pressing needs of Christian theology at the beginning of the third millennium, perhaps more than any period in church history, is to reflect whether the Christian message has been fully embraced by the majority of people who profess to be followers of Christ in the world. Since 1945, in the findings of Robert (2000:50), world Christianity has experienced a massive cultural and geographic shift away from Europeans (and Americans) and their descendants towards peoples of the southern hemisphere.

Such an observation is echoed by Mbiti (1976:10) who says, “this is the challenge which theology must face, as the axis of Christianity tilts southwards towards areas, situations, cultures, concerns, traditions, religions and problems which are largely different from those which precipitated or necessitated the theological output of the church in the West over the 500 years at least.” In this process of shift of the Christianity’s centre of gravity in the modern world from the Northern continents to the South, Africa is playing a significant role in the resurgence of the faith. It is, therefore, important that African theologians “identify some of the challenges which a post-missionary Christian Africa may need to face as an important flag-bearer of Christianity in the new century” (Bediako 1995:ix).

Statistics taken from Barret and Johnson (2000:24-25) reveal that the numerical dominance of Euro-Americans of earlier times has been overtaken by the massive shift to Latin America, Africa and Asia. In the view of Robert (2000:56), there is no doubt that much of the dynamism within world Christianity is occurring below the equator and as Christianity shifts southward, the interpretations of Christianity by people in Latin America, Africa and southern Asia are increasingly coming to the fore. Whereas at the beginning of the twentieth century, Europeans dominated the world church, with approximately 70,6% of the world's Christian population, the typical late twentieth-century Christian was no longer a European man, but a Latin American or an African woman (see Barret and Johnson 2000:24-25).

Such a demographic shift in the Christian population in the world would naturally dictate also a change in the Christian theological reflection. But Mbiti (1976:8) maintains that, although the church is kerygmatically universal, it is still theologically provincial. In illustrating this point, he relates a story (which is incidentally appropriate to the present study) of an African theologian who had been trained in Europe where he attained a doctoral degree in theology. After nine and a half years of study, after getting his junior and senior degrees, he had to return home with the excess baggage which consisted of the Bible in the various languages he had learned, plus works by Bultmann, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Brunner, etc.

On arriving home, there was a big welcoming occasion of relatives, neighbours, old friends, dancers, musicians and many others. In the midst of the dancing and jubilation, and after he had related his experiences overseas, there was a sudden shriek. It was his older sister who had fallen to the ground. When the well-qualified theologian suggested that she be taken to hospital, he was told that the hospital was far. The theologian was then told that the woman was demon-possessed. When the African theologian tried to refer to Bultmann's explanation in the New Testament, he got a shock that Bultmann had demythologised spirit possession.

Although this episode is fictional, it carries a significant truth of what Christians in Africa and those in the Third World are confronted with, almost on a daily basis. Many Christians in the Third World have a perception that orthodox Christian

theology has failed to address burning issues facing them. In socio-political matters and spirit-sensitivity, orthodox (western) theology simply does not “scratch where it itches” (Kraft 1979:150). It is one of the reasons why Biyo laments the legacy that western intellectualism has had on theology in Africa, labelling it “too abstract and too academic ... on the whole remains élitist” (quoted in Tiéneu 1990:73).

This real (or perceived) “theological impotence” (Mbiti 1976:6), coupled with a feeling that “African theologians are no longer satisfied with starting points that portray Africans as passive victims in either the missionary or the colonial process” (Maluleke 2000:50), have, against the expectations of the traditional missionary or “older” churches of the west, led to the emergence of the local theologies in the Third World (see Schreier 1985). In congruence with this view, Bosch (1991:4) adds: “Western theology is today suspect in many parts of the world, (and) it is often regarded as irrelevant, speculative, and the product of ivory-tower institutions”. In many parts of the world, it is being replaced by liberation theology, Black theology, contextual theology, *minjung* theology, African theology, Asian theology, feminist theology, etc. These theologies came about precisely because “even the best of western theological thinking has been found by non-westerners to be answering questions that they (Africans) are simply not asking, while completely ignoring questions about which they are desperately concerned” (Imasogie 1983:8-9).

Realising the inadequacies of orthodox theology (see Khathide 1999a:1 f), and in response to the changing theological landscape in the Third World, there has arisen a need on both sides of the theological spectrum (i.e. orthodox theology and local theologies) to demonstrate the ability of the Christian faith to meet the different needs of the Third World people. This is aptly illustrated in the thesis of Boesak (1976:10) who maintains that “black theological reflection must take seriously precisely what Christian theology has hitherto ignored: the black situation”. To Boesak, Black theology seeks to interpret the gospel in such a way that the situation of Blacks will begin to make sense. It seeks to take seriously the biblical emphasis on the wholeness of life, which has always had its counterpart in the African heritage, trying to transform the departmentalised theology Blacks

have inherited from the western world into biblical, holistic theology (see Boesak 1976:13).

In their different emphases, local theologies have sought to make the Christian faith meaningful in the context of exploitation, degradation and human humiliation, thus reducing the notion of missionary work being viewed as “establishing and maintaining western spiritual colonies throughout the non-western world” or allowing Third World congregations to be “drab copies of the western religious experience” (Hillman 1993:38, 40).

Liberation theology, for example, is an attempt at reflection, based on the gospel and the experiences of men and women committed to the process of liberation in the oppressed and exploited of Latin America. According to Gutiérrez (1988:xiii), the goal of liberation theology “is rather to let ourselves be judged by the word of the Lord, to think through our faith, to strengthen our love, and to give reason for our hope from within a commitment that seeks to become more radical, total, and officious. It is to reconsider the great themes of the Christian life within this radically changed perspective and with regard to the new questions posed by this commitment”. While locating itself within the parameters of biblical revelation and spirituality (see Sobrino 1985), and church tradition, liberation theology seeks to interpret the faith in comprehensive terms to those ravaged by human indignities of sorts.

On the African continent, the relevancy of orthodox theology has also been questioned. Its failure to address what appears to be perpetual poverty, political upheavals, fear of spirits, witchcraft, etc., has persuaded African theological thinkers to begin to seek appropriations of the gospel of Christ in Africa. According to Bujo (1992:12), the goal of African theology is to discover a way in which Jesus Christ can be an African among the Africans according to their own religious experience. The deep concern in Africa is to emerge with a type of Christian faith that will be said to be African proper - holistic, engaging and relevant because “beneath the veneer of imported ecclesiastical institutions, African Christians remain African” (Mugambi 1989:9). The foreign image of the Christian faith needs to be replaced by a version of faith that is truly Christian and African at the same time. A perception has been left in African minds that in order to become Chris-

tian, a person must denounce or abandon their cultural heritage. In becoming a Christian, an African is not expected to become a pseudo-Westerner. The challenge to the African is to follow Christ in his call to discipleship, thus forsaking everything that is contrary to biblical revelation, and yet not losing the identity of Africanness.

The process in desiring to make the Christian faith accessible and meaningful to the people in the Third World can be summed up in one word: contextualisation. Contextualisation has taken various forms and terms like inculturation, indigenisation, adaptation, accommodation, etc. (see Bosch 1991:447). The contextualisation of Christianity is nothing more than a process of interpreting Christian truth in terms of, and applying it to the real life issues arising from the socio-cultural contest within which the interpreters live. It involves seriously both everyday human life and God's desire to be involved in it (see Imasogie 1983:7). Of course, it needs to be stated that by 'contextualisation' is not meant a movement towards syncretistic tendencies. Hesselgrave and Rommen (1989:xii) see the task of theology as that of "distinguishing between aberrant and valid contextualisation attempts, of reinforcing proposals that are scripturally sound and culturally viable, and of contextualising the gospel in ways that will contribute to Great Commission mission around the world."

On recognising the importance of inculturation or contextualisation, Pope John Paul II demonstrated his support for the process, by saying,

Missionaries, who came from other churches and countries, must immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those to whom they are sent, moving beyond their cultural limitations ... developing ecclesial communities, inspired by the gospel, (with the hope that they) will gradually be able to express their Christian experience in original ways and forms that are consonant with their cultural traditions, provided that those traditions are in harmony with the objective requirements of the faith itself (*Redemptoris missio*, 53).

The proponents of contextual theology view the inadequacy of western theology as caused by solely focusing on scripture and tradition. Contextual theologians, on the other hand, are persuaded that the human experience, in addition to scripture and tradition, should be taken as a serious informing source to Christian theology. The human experience is considered by contextual theologians as an epistemological break. Bosch (1991:423) correctly observes that “since the time of Constantine, theology was conducted *from above* as an elitist enterprise (except in the case of minority Christian communities, commonly referred to as sects), its main source (apart from scripture and tradition) was *philosophy*, and its main interlocutor the *educated non-believer*, contextual theology is theology *from below*, from the underside of history, its main source (apart from scripture and tradition) is the *social sciences*, and its main interlocutor the *poor*”.

In trying to find a biblical equivalent or referent, perhaps because contextualisation or inculturation appears to be foreign to biblical or theological language, the Vatican II council emerged from its deliberations with the emphasis on the primordial and unique principle of incarnation. The fact that God self-communicated himself in Jesus Christ to be the world and that the eternal Word (*Logos*) became flesh (Jn 1:14), means that the Christian faith (and also Christian theology) needs to take cognisance of the fact that “people exist only in limited historical periods, and within concrete cultural contexts, all with their respective symbol systems of communication” (Hillman 1993:31). Hillman, therefore, argues for a need for fleshy visibility, audibility and tangibility in particular historical and cultural forms capable of mediating the meaning of God’s Word in the respective times and contexts of each distinctive people. This incarnational theological tendency is derived from the scandalous belief that God in Jesus became one of us in everything except sin (cf. Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15). In the incarnation God not only came, he *became*. In the words of Kraft (1979:175):

God in Jesus became so much of a specific human context that many never even recognised that he had come from somewhere else.

The incarnation of Jesus spells tremendous implications for Christian theology. Hillman (1993:35) says that the missionary principle of incarnation, although vari-

ously formulated and frequently ignored throughout church history, may be traced back to its application in Paul's missionary ministry modelled on the mission of the divine Word spoken to humankind in Jesus of Nazareth. The apostle to the Gentiles was challenged, and indeed hounded until his death, by a party of Jewish Christians who had erroneously confused Christianity with their own ethnocentric conventions and cultural practices, which they wished to impose upon all non-Jewish converts to Christianity (cf. Acts 15:1-30; 17:22-28; Gal. 2:1-4). Vindicated by Paul, the principle of incarnation was applied generously in the Greco-Roman cultural world. By the end of the first century Christianity was no longer another offshoot of the Jewish religion, although born within a Jewish socio-cultural matrix.

The early church Fathers, in their numerous church councils (see Dvornik 1961) set up to formulate their understanding of Christ in the language and culture of the non-Jewish world, demonstrated their acceptance of the incarnational principle. Sanneh (1989:1) states that Christianity, from its origins, identified itself with the need to translate out of Aramaic and Hebrew, and from that position came to exert a dual force in its historical development - one was the resolve to relativise its Judaic roots, with the consequence that it promoted significant aspects of those roots. The other was to destigmatise Gentile culture and adopt that culture as a natural extension of the life of the new religion. The action to destigmatise complemented the other action to relativise. Thus the two subjects, the Judaic and the Gentile, became closely intertwined in the Christian dispensation, but crucial to the formative image of the new religion (see also Cole 1998:14; Conn 1978:40-41).

One would have thought that Christian theologians, especially those in Africa, would emulate their forebears in this regard. This was, unfortunately, not to be for many years until the International Missionary Council gathering in Willingen where it was agreed that,

while the church of Christ in any place and at any time must exhibit the marks without which it will not be a church, it has the responsibility to exhibit them in a distinct way, incorporating into the service of Christ whatever heritage

of cultural values it may have been given by God's grace
(quoted in Imasogie 1985:19).

Precisely because God became flesh (Jn 1:14) - not generally, but particularly - manifesting himself as "a human being in the person of Jesus, a Jew, son of Mary, a male ... it follows quite naturally that, if that message is to continue to touch people through our agency, we have to continue the incarnation process" (Bevans 1992:8). Imasogie (1983:19) maintains that no theology is authentic and universal if it does not meet the integrated needs of a particular people in a particular context. This is a view shared by Boesak (1976:12) who believes that Christian theology is, by expectation and nature, a living experience.

Perhaps more than any theological discipline, the incarnational tendency of Christian theology should have been seen in the New Testament studies because the dynamic of the New Testament literature consists of its life orientation. Rather than an abstraction of principles, ideas or dogmatics, it is the treasury of the experiences of the early church.

But New Testament studies have generally not seen a pressing need to contextualise. As a result of this ignorance and reluctance, many African Initiated Churches or independency movements tend to be attracted to the Old Testament, understandably because of the rituals and symbolism found there. What is perturbing, though, in spite of the fact that the New Testament sufficiently addresses the issue of the spirit-world (a problem of magnitudinal proportions in Africa and other spirit-sensitive communities), generally the Old Testament enjoys more preference among the African Initiated Churches. This relegation of the New Testament, instead of being blamed to the ignorance of Africans or AICs, should be laid squarely at the door of New Testament scholarship.

For the purposes of this inquiry, Ericson (1978:71f) gives five reasons that contribute to the rigid attitude of the New Testament to contextualise. Firstly, he cites the characteristic emphasis on the unity of Scripture. Though he agrees that the principle that God is never self-contradictory, and therefore neither is his inscripturated word, is valid, he, nevertheless, feels that this has been emphasised to the extreme with the danger that the distinctive features of the individual units

of literature can be lost. In support of this position, Hasel (1978:216) says that, since no single theme, scheme, pattern of thought or motif is sufficiently comprehensive to include within it all the varieties of the New Testament viewpoints, one must refrain from using a particular concept, formula, basic idea, etc., as the centre of the New Testament whereby a systemisation of the manifold and variegated New Testament testimonies is achieved. On the other hand, and quite rightly so, we need to affirm that as God is the centre of the Old Testament (see also Hasel 1974:65-82), so is Jesus the centre of the New Testament.

The second reason given by Ericson for the rigidity of the New Testament scholarship is the single-minded way in which evangelicals use canonical literature. Too often in evangelical circles a person hears the phrase, "The Bible is all you need". Ericson argues that, without denying a degree of truth in the statement, such a view fails to recognise the many factors which create distance between the modern reader and this ancient literature. The third reason advanced by Ericson, is the tendency to think of biblical literature as a programmed manual of operations. This tendency is known to issue in three-ring notebooks with all the Christian life neatly sorted out into categories and steps. Anything that falls beyond the set categories, is viewed with suspicion and scorn. Such systems use a mechanistic form of eclectic hermeneutics, making little, if any, allowance for the dynamic of the original context or the variables of the contemporary context.

Fourthly, Ericson says that another factor which impedes contextual studies of the New Testament or the Bible in its entirety, is the effort to extract and absolutise the teachings of the Bible. Ericson believes that, though we should admit that there are propositional statements of truth in the Bible, it must also be recognised that the systematising of Christian truth has two ever-active dangers: the first is the mould which the systematiser brings to the biblical propositions, be they philosophical, cultural or tagmatic. The second is that the abstracted statements tend to be sterile, thus making them divorced from real-life situations. These abstracted statements or the church dogmatic tradition formulations "come to be regarded, as it were, a fossilised distillation of the deposit of divine revelation" (Imasogie 1983:23). Such a concept of theological formulation, Imasogie contends, beclouds the dynamic nature of Christ who promises to continue being God to humankind in every situation or context through the continuing activity of

the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the lack of sensitivity to the dynamic nature of theological enterprise made most missionaries unresponsive to the worldview of self-understanding of the Africans they encountered, as well as the role of culture in perception that results from that worldview - thus marginalising African Christians. In tandem with this viewpoint, Kourie (1995:176-177) correctly observes that New Testament studies in the post-modern era witness a shift from a purely theological approach to a religious orientation, meaning that the interpretation of scripture is no longer predetermined by dogmatic and systematic theological considerations, with their noncomitant reluctance to accept psychological development and immanental hermeneutical devices. According to Kourie, while the postmodernist thought does not deny the historical-religious nature of scripture, with its roots in the past, there is a greater awareness of scripture as a contemporary agent. Kourie is convinced that the Bible cannot be seen as a purely neutral object, divorced from an engaged subjectivity. Therefore, Kourie is of the opinion that we can no longer be held hostage to the particularities and contingencies of biblical interpretation bequeathed to us by the Enlightenment and positivism.

Finally, Ericson (1978:73) concludes that the indifference to New Testament contextualisation has been brought about by too little emphasis upon hermeneutics. Ericson says that, while we agree to the general principle of the historical-grammatical method, the problem is that we quickly veer from this to a creed which itself is a contextualised expression of an ecclesiastical tradition (see also Imasogie 1983:23). Though the Bible is our firm foundation, Ericson argues that our hermeneutical methods must be scrutinised for the elimination of the blind spots.

This investigation intends to situate itself within New Testament theological contextual studies. This study seeks to address itself to the concerns and situations of (Christian) people below the equator, especially regarding the spirit-world in Africa. It is an area that has been neglected by New Testament scholarship. Perhaps, more importantly, this study seeks to rediscover the historical Jesus in his miracles of exorcism and the missiological implications for the church's mission in Africa (cf. Khathide 2000a).

1.1.2 RESURGENCE OF INTEREST IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD

The burgeoning fascination with spirits and associated topics is something that Christian theology cannot avoid indefinitely. This requires a response that is based on biblical revelation. Van Aarde (1987:22) observes that “demonology has become the subject of lively debate and, unfortunately a cult, as it was in mediaeval times”, and according to Kallas (1975:9), it is no overemphasis today to say that there is no topic as “widely discussed, enthusiastically endorsed and as generally recognised as true as Satan”. In another research finding, Petitpierre (1976:45) remarks, “Almost every parish priest of the Church of England is faced these days with a growing demand for his services in regard to the ministry of healing and deliverance.” Ministers of local congregations, of whatever ecclesiastical tradition are often confronted with the issue of spirits - something they were never equipped to handle. Concerning this challenge facing congregational priests, Joubert (2000:196) writes:

As dit aan die een kant waar is dat die duiwel binne intellektuele Westerse kringe min of meer van die toneel verwyder is, is dit aan die ander kant waar dat daar tans in kerklike kringe ‘n ‘nuwe belangstelling’ in die Satan is.

Joubert maintains that while the devil is relegated to the bottom in western thinking, in local churches there is a renewed interest in the devil. Joubert attributes this partly to the postmodern era which, among other things, is a protest against the authoritarian and fixed categories developed by modernism. Generally, there is now an openness to metaphysical issues - people are searching for answers and explanations of hitherto unresolved matters confronting individual Christians, including even those who do not profess the Christian faith.

In his book, *Satanisme: Die reg om te weet*, Seale (1991) shows how school-going children are increasingly becoming interested in the devil and evil spirits. Whereas in the past belief in Satan was discussed in hushed tones, nowadays it is an open talk as more and more people search for freedom of religious and human rights. Although occultism has been practised for thousands of years, its recent upsurge, especially among young people, is a cause for great concern

(see Khathide 1999b:38). To illustrate the popularity of the subject, Lindsay and Carlson (1972) have co-authored a book with the title, *Satan is Alive and Well in Planet Earth*. Green (1981:112f) also shows the popularity of the occult in our times.

Albeit scholars like Kallas (1975:13) may think that “modern demonology is negative, an escapist abandonment of the real world in which we find ourselves, a bailing out, a capitulation of our power”, others believe that the subject requires our urgent and serious attention. Joubert (2000:195) believes that, even though modern theological epistemologies tend to interpret early Christian views regarding the struggle between Christ and Satan in terms of a primitive, mythical worldview, the metaphysical worldview of the New Testament ought to be taken seriously. Joubert goes further to say that, as modern believing communities, we need to seriously consider the metaphysical worldview of the New Testament, including the reality of evil, if we still want to lay claim to legitimately being part of the apostolic tradition.

Silvoso (1994:100-101) remarks with dismay, with reference to Paul’s statement of “in the heavenlies” (Eph. 3:10), that the average church member in the western world has no idea of what the expression really means. Despite the fact that in western theological thinking belief in the angels and demons is still considered as vestigial survivals of antiquated mythology, the veil of ignorance is gradually being removed.

In the western world catastrophic events like the World War I & II, led to some theological experts to revisit what the Bible has to say about the reality of the powers. Wink (1992:8) writes that visitors to Nazi Germany in the late 1930’s spoke of the palpable evil in the air, of a pervading atmosphere that hung over the entire land, full of foreboding and menace. Berkhof (1962:32) tells that he himself experienced almost literally how such powers might be in the air and acted as if they were ultimate values, calling for loyalty as if they were the gods of the cosmos. Owing to the difficulties of the time, Theron (1992:177) writes that the church in Germany slowly began to realise that it had deluded itself in thinking that the principalities and powers were just in the heavens; they were incarnate on earth, as demonic forces within societal structures. Baigent, Leigh, Lincoln

(1996:198), as if they were though controversial, even allege, even though it cannot be proven beyond doubt, that Hitler was associated with occult groups.

Wink (1992:8) relates two other instances where powers were felt. He mentions that those who were leaving South Africa, in the pre-democratic era, that is, remarked on the sense of an enormous weight of anxiety and tension that dropped off their shoulders as the plane left the South African airspace. Another example Wink gives is that of people who remember the assassination of President John Kennedy, of how a feeling of darkness hung over the face of the nation for days. In the South African modern history, the assassination of Chris Hani, the South African Communist Party leader, was so explosive that many people almost 'smelt' the presence of the powers of evil and threatening civil war.

Nevertheless, it should be stated that it is possible to discount or dismiss the cited experiences from psycho-sociological disciplines (see Bodemer 1987:132f), or even theologically (see Gaybba 1987:96f), as misleading and non-existent. But, such a position paternalistically denies or excludes the epistemological framework of those people whose perspective is not only informed by the rationalistic worldview. In whatever way we look at it, there are dangers that C.S. Lewis (1992:9) in his book, *The Screwtape Letters - Letters from a Senior to a Junior Devil*, tries to caution against:

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.

This study presupposes the reality and existence of demons and seeks, therefore, to demonstrate the need of the church to be involved by biblically responding by way of spirit-discernment, healing, deliverance and exorcism (e.g. Acts 16:16-18; see Khathide 1999a:82-83; Wink 1992:134). Admittedly, there have been numerous religious gimmicks in the name of Christian exorcism, like, for example, a belief that human beings can, of themselves, do nothing wrong; if

anybody does an evil act, it is because they are ‘possessed’ of demons and, therefore, need to be exorcised (see Petitpierre 1976:35). But this investigation is intended as an argument that such negativities around Christian exorcism need not warrant the marginalising of such an important subject by Christian theology, especially the New Testament studies.

1.1.3 SPLIT-LEVEL CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

Perhaps, more than the two aforementioned points of the background of this study, the spirit-level Christianity links directly with the purpose of this inquiry. The phrase “split-level Christianity” comes from Father Jaime Bulatao, who referred to it in 1962, and later elaborated on the concept in *Split-Level Christianity* (1992).

The central concern of this study is the persistence of a two-tier Christianity or the schizophrenic religious personality seen in world Christianity, particularly in the Third World (see Hiebert, Shaw, Tiénou 1999:15). The persistence of the split-level Christianity in Africa and elsewhere occurs despite centuries of instruction and condemnation by missionaries and church leaders. One finds deeply committed Christians faithfully attending church services on Sundays, praying to God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ, but in time of need or existential crisis, they turn to a local shaman, *inyanga* for healing, a diviner for guidance and to an exorcist, traditional or ‘spiritual’, that is, for deliverance from spirit oppression. Commenting on the nature of the problem, Williamson (1965:158) writes:

Most Christians live on two unreconciled levels. They are members of a church and ascribe to a statement of faith. But below the system of conscious beliefs are deeply imbedded traditions and customs implying quite a different interpretation of the universe and the world of spirit from the Christian interpretation. In the crises of life and rites of passage the church is an alien thing.

Imasogie (1983:8, 9) believes that “the observed lack of total commitment of the average Christian to Christ is due to the lack of ‘fit’ between Christian theology

and African life ... In the absence of such an existential fit between theology and life, the African reverts to his traditional practices in times of serious problems". Ehusani (1992:159) also concedes that there is a wide gap, a split, or a dislocation between theory expressed in ecclesiastical documents and the practical life of many Africans converted to Christianity.

On reflection, some missionaries involved in spirit-sensitive communities, began looking for biblical answers in the face of the African perception that the western exported Christianity in Africa was powerless, as it were (see Khathide 2000:80). Even missionaries themselves felt the inadequacy in their theological training in dealing with spirits. Donald Jacobs, a Mennonite missionary, who in the process of doing missionary work in East Africa, felt that many of his Enlightenment-rooted presuppositions were challenged by the mission context. Jacobs (1992:147) was later to confess: "I distrusted any Christian movement that allowed for subjective learning". Kraft (1998:164) recalls an incident during his missionary stay in Nigeria, of a village shaman who began to come to church. The man soon dropped away, however, probably because there was no power there. But Kraft is convinced that the shaman dropped away also because most of the Christians came to him rather than going to Jesus or the pastor when the needed spiritual help.

Boer (1993:3), in his article, *Worldview: Enlarging the Reformed Tent*, relates a story of a young Nigerian Christian man, who was tormented by spirit-transmigration. Upon realising his inability to help the young man, Boer became miserable and he felt empty, helpless, powerless and ashamed. This, and other similar incidences, prompted the Reformed Ecumenical Council to sponsor a mission conference with the theme "Power Encounter", which was designed to help missionaries wrestle with the question of the spirit world better.

The theological impotence as seen in the western missionaries in dealing with spirit world related issues contributed, to a large extent, to the untenable situation in which the church unwittingly left the African converts "with two Gods in their hands and thus made them peoples of ambivalent spiritual lives" (Idowu quoted in Imasogie 1993:65).

The spiritual ambivalence or split-level Christianity in Africa can be attributable to possibly two factors. Firstly, it can be blamed on the inability (or reluctance?) of Africans to comprehend the requirements of Christian discipleship which proscribes any form of idolatrous behaviour (e.g. Ex. 20:3 - "You shall have no gods before me"). Secondly, it can be attributed to the inadequacy of the gospel-product which failed to address the African situation holistically - a situation that led African converts to Christianity, in view of the insufficiency of the missionary gospel, to revert to their traditional practices which, to a large extent, were not ecclesiastically acceptable.

The researcher hereby submits that the cause of the spiritual ambivalence in African Christianity is more a matter of the inadequacy of the missionary gospel-product than the reluctance (or inability) of African Christians to embrace fully the requirements of Christian discipleship. Admittedly, it is also a valid argument that many African Christians appear satisfied with ambivalent spiritual living whereby there is an exterior allegiance to the God of Jesus Christ, but with an interior and perhaps a mere profound allegiance to the belief systems of their forebears which, in some areas, are opposed to biblical revelation.

But, on the whole, the major contributing factor to the African spiritual ambivalence can be attributed to the people who first introduced the gospel to the continent of Africa. The missionary insensitivity to the self-understanding of the African inadvertently led to the two-tier Christianity on the continent. Understandably, the western missionaries were guided in their theological perception and praxis by the Enlightenment-rooted worldview - a worldview which understands the spirit world as of no consequence in daily life.

Although the spirit world is effectively addressed in the scriptures, the New Testament scholarship generally demonstrates a neglect on the subject - the very thing that made western theologically equipped missionaries fail to engage spirits, demons and witchcraft in Africa.

1.2 THE LITERATURE SURVEY AND THE DEBATE

1.2.1 NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Any Christian concern about spirits, their nature, functions, activities and destiny cannot overlook the New Testament perspective regarding the subject, if it hopes to be worthwhile. Such an inquiry should lead to the enrichment of the church's understanding of the historical Jesus. The present study seeks to sketch, inter alia, a picture of the historical Jesus in his ministry of exorcism.

A brief survey of the synoptic gospel writers reveals how important exorcism was for them. The synoptic gospels, though not attempting to discuss the origin of Satan and demons (see Khathide 1999a:69), are full of the exorcisms of demonised people. Luke, Matthew and Mark agree that exorcism was an important aspect of Jesus' ministry, and they go so far as to suggest that Jesus' dealings with the demon-possessed is of central significance in understanding Jesus and his ministry (Twelftree 1993:3). In the view of Ladd (1974:51), this background of satanic evil provides the cosmic backdrop for the mission of Jesus and his proclamation of the kingdom.

As exorcisms fall within the ambit of the miracles of Jesus, it is of significance to point out main trends in miracle research. The tendency in New Testament scholarship has been to give more attention to the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus than the *ipsissima facta* (cf. Engelbrecht 1988:42). The one factor that has been problematic to New Testament scholars, is the historicity of the miracles of Jesus. For some, the historicity of the miracles of Jesus is irrelevant, while others feel a renewed interest in this question. Brown (1984:vii), for example, is of the opinion that we cannot have Christianity without the miracle-working Jesus of the four gospel writers. Brown is convinced that the miracles of Jesus provide the key to understanding Jesus. The miracle stories are what enable us to make sense of the gospels as history. Brown goes on to say that the miracles of Jesus are not simply a question of the incarnation of the divine Son of God; they are a question of the Trinity, this referring to the prophecy of John the Baptist, "He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit" (Lk. 3:16).

To help us through the New Testament survey on miracles, Twelftree (1993:3f) observes that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the miracles of Jesus did not feature prominently, even though there were voices clamouring for the revisitation of the miracles in the ministry of Jesus. Among these, were people like Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), who believed that the specific object of faith is a miracle; faith and miracle are absolutely inseparable. However, Hermann Reimarus (1694-1768), though focusing on the principal articles of faith in the kerygma, concludes that miracles are not essential. The post-Enlightenment people, as exemplified by Heinrich Paulus (1761-1851), offered rationalistic approach in New Testament scholarship. The main interest and objective of Paulus' enterprise was to show that miracles need no longer be an obstacle for the intelligent person. Strauss (1808-1874) postulated that much of the New Testament, including the miracle stories, should be understood, and placed in one of a number of categories as myth. Adolf Harnack (1851-1930), albeit attaching some importance to miracles, felt that Jesus did not himself assign that critical importance to his miraculous deeds which even the evangelist Mark and the others attributed to him.

But, on the other hand, the endeavour, as exemplified by Harnack, to shrug off the problem of the miracle was thwarted by Bultmann in his denial that myth and the gospel could be separated. Bultmann (1984) believed rather that the myth had to be demythologised. This famous concept, if excruciatingly confusing phrase, to 'demythologise myth' means not to eliminate or demythicise the mythology, but, instead to extricate the true, existential meaning of that mythology (see Segal 1996:90). The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture as it is, but to express a human being's understanding of themselves in the world in which they live. For Bultmann, myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially.

Read literally, the New Testament in particular, describes a cosmic battle between good and evil anthropomorphic gods, angels and demons for control of the physical world. These beings intervene not only in the operation of nature but also in the lives of human beings. The beneficent beings direct humans to do good; the malevolent ones compel them to do evil. Demythologised, the New Testament still refers to the physical world, but now to a world ruled by a single,

non-anthropomorphic, transcendent God. Because God does not act directly in the world and because no evil powers exist, human beings are free rather than controlled like puppets. Demythologised, God still exists, but Satan and demons do not. Sin becomes one's own doing, and Satan symbolises only one's own evil inclinations.

Bultmann (1984:2-3) contends that, since New Testament mythology can be traced to contemporary mythology of Jewish apocalypticism and of Gnostic myth of redemption, there is a need to make the New Testament relevant to the rationalistic-minded people of the modern world. Insofar as it is mythological talk, it is incredible to men and women of today because for them the mythical world picture is a thing of the past. Therefore, contemporary Christian kerygma is faced with the question as to whether, when it demands faith from men and women, it expects them to acknowledge this mythical world picture of the past. If it is impossible, it then has to face the question of whether the New Testament proclamation has truth that is independent of the mythical world picture, in which case it would be the task of theology to demythologise the Christian proclamation. Since modern thinking is irrevocably formed by science, it is, therefore, impossible to reconstitute a world picture by resolve. A blind acceptance of New Testament mythology would be simply arbitrariness and to make such acceptance a demand of faith would be to reduce faith to a work (Bultmann 1984:3). Bultmann (1984:14) believes that "any satisfaction of the demand would be a forced *sacrificium intellectus*".

The demythologising tendency of Bultmann simply means that the mythological picture of the New Testament is finished, including also faith in spirits and demons. Likewise, illnesses and their cures have natural causes and do not depend on the work of demons and on exorcising them. Thus, the wonders of the New Testament were also finished as wonders; anyone who seeks to salvage their historicity by recourse to nervous disorders, hypnotic influences, suggestion and the like only confirm this (see Bultmann 1984:4).

Bultmann, perhaps more than we realise, has had a tremendous impact on New Testament scholarship, especially in the area of spirits. According to Da Silva (1992:4), large segments of New Testament scholarship have followed the course

laid out by Bultmann, accepting his conclusions as determinative for the question of how a person of the twentieth century and of later generations must read elements of the New Testament proclamation which do not fit into a secularised view of the world.

Although Bultmann was trying to contextualise the New Testament message for his rationalistic, Enlightenment-influenced contemporaries, his whole demythologising exercise has had tremendous negative missiological implications for the church in Africa and other Third World countries. The unfortunate part of Bultmann's approach to the New Testament, has been that it is generally taken as normative for New Testament scholarship. Any other supernaturalistic reading of the New Testament texts is labelled as uncritical and, therefore, marginalised. Such a non-supernaturalistic paradigm of the New Testament reading, has unavoidably rendered the New Testament scholarship unresponsive and, thus, powerless in the face of animistic beliefs and behaviours. Another factor that counts against Bultmann's demythologising understanding, is that he did not explain the outbreaks of irrationality in the rationality-dominated worldview of the western world (e.g. manifestations of the demonic and witchcraft in early modern Europe - see Clark 1997).

It is also true that the criticism of Bultmann's demythologising can be taken to an undesirable level. This is exactly what is pointed out by Nineham (1990:172) who, correctly so, maintains that Bultmann's starting point was the fact that any set of religious beliefs has to be expressed in terms of some cultural context, some particular way of understanding reality. If, for example, the message of the New Testament was to be intelligible at the time of writing, it had not only to be formulated in Hellenistic Greek, the only language most of the readers or authors understood; it also had to be stated in terms meshed in with the sort of worldview familiar to most of them. When a worldview is superseded as the New Testament worldview has been superseded, especially in the last two hundred years or so, any religious beliefs stated in terms of it ceases to be intelligible, or at any rate acceptable with integrity, by those whose thought is governed by new ways of understanding things.

Bultmann used the word 'myth' to bring out the obsolescence of the first-century worldview and, in the light of demythologising exercise, what the interpreter has to do is to release the essential message from its mythical framework, i.e. to demythologise it. What has been overlooked by New Testament scholarship, especially those who deny the existence and impact of evil forces on the material world, is the fact that Bultmann, more than anything else, was trying to contextualise the New Testament message for his contemporaries whose worldview was secular. But to maintain that Bultmann's demythologising paradigm should be normative and thus be imposed on the rest of the believing Christian world, would be paternalistic thinking on the part of orthodox theology, to say the least. Consequently, Christians, especially in the Third World, get denied the opportunity of the ownership of faith and originality in religious expressiveness.

The reason why we have interacted with Bultmann rather extensively is because of his influence on New Testament scholarship on the subject of the demythologising of the first-century 'mythical worldview' which, in turn, has a direct bearing on the topic under current study.

While some New Testament scholars have debated the validity of the exorcisms and other miracle stories in the gospel tradition, there have been also those who have taken demonology and exorcism in the New Testament seriously. Even as early as 1931, Fridrichsen of Uppsala, in his article, *The Conflict of Jesus with Unclean Spirits* (in *Theology* Vol. XXII p. 22), could speak of a growing realisation among New Testament scholars that Jesus himself assigned to the demonic powers a significance beyond the merely accidental, discerning in the background the mystery of the spiritual evil and the recognition that this fact can lead us towards a truer ideal of his interpretation of his own mission.

Another article relevant for this study appeared in 1951 titled, *On a Neglected Emphasis in New Testament* (*The Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 4 p.300), in it Stewart says, "My one concern has been to insist that, however we may interpret it, we must recognise that here we are dealing, not with some unessential apocalyptic scaffolding, but with the very substance of the faith". In the view of Stewart, the study of the demonic in the New Testament cannot be relegated

to the periphery of Christian theology. It belongs to the very essence of our understanding of the gospel and the mission of the historical Jesus.

Manson (1952) is also of the opinion that, “the supernatural demonological element in the gospel is not a mere veneer. It is not a temporary trapping which can be stripped away from the gospel. It is ingrained in its very substance. It is needed to bring out its sense” (*Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*, Bulletin III p.15).

Brunner (1952) says that in the New Testament this dark background - the existence of the powers of darkness (however this may be conceived), is integral to the story of Jesus Christ. To cut out this dark background is to deny the power of the gospel itself.

In recent times, there has been notable contributions to the study of the demonic in the New Testament. Despite the negative postulation about the spirit world by orthodox theology, some western-oriented theologians have started questioning the constant denial of the existence of the evil forces in the New Testament. The admission of Lewis (1960:47) may be appropriate here:

But I freely admit that real Christianity (as distinct from Christianity-and-water) goes much nearer to dualism than people think. One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a dark power in the universe - a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the power behind death and disease, and sin. The difference is that Christianity thinks that this dark power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees with dualism that this universe is at war. But it does not think this is a war between independent powers. It thinks it is a civil war, a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by a rebel. Enemy-occupied territory - that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.

Several aspects can be deciphered in this statement. Firstly, it acknowledges the fact that the devil and the demons do exist. Secondly, the devil is not an equal to the sovereign God of the Bible because he is God's creature. Thirdly, Christians participate in the struggle between God and Satan by deposing the usurper-king whose claim to kingship is illegitimate. In participating in the struggle, Christians proclaim the rightful Lord of creation - Jesus Christ.

Apart from Lewis, others have emerged with formidable arguments in favour of the existence and influence of powers. In support of this view, Wink (1986:6-7) acknowledges the fact that the whole thinking on powers is perceived by some as a scandal, a stone of stumbling, a bone in the throat of modernity. Berkhof (1962:15) feels that others view Paul's thoughts about angels and devils as vestiges of antiquated mythology. If a person wants to bring a discussion to a halt in shocked embarrassment, one should mention angels or demons or the devil (Wink 1986:1). In line with other scholars (e.g. Malina, Joubert, Van der Watt 1996:14), Berkhof (1962:28) holds the view that creation comprises a visible and an invisible, or an earthly and a heavenly part, or put differently, creation has a visible foreground, which is bound together with, and dependent on, an invisible background.

In his belief in the existence of powers, Wink (1984:104) goes further to say that powers have an incarnating tendency in that they exist as inner dimension of the material. In this conviction Wink's view is shared by Bosch (1980:209-210).

The authorities and cosmic powers in the Pauline letters allude to the way in which supernatural beings, as it were, incarnate themselves in structures - political, religious, intellectual structures (-ologies and -isms) - which hold man in bondage but over which Christ has triumphed and which now wants to employ in his service on earth.

But it is also important to notice that Wink (1984:82) believes that the New Testament prefers to speak of powers only in their concretions, their structural inertia, their physical embodiments in history. Wink (1986) carries his argument further by describing the devil as a "collective symbolisation of evil ... the collec-

tive weight of human fallenness". Though the view of Wink carries considerable force, it cannot be conclusive. There is a general congruence on the incarnating nature of the powers but not to the extent whereby the powers are completely subsumed in institutional structures. The consciousness of spirits and magic of the first readers of the New Testament suggests that spirits were construed as personal and powerful. For Kraft (1995:60), belief in personal demons and a keen interest in supernatural power were characteristic of the first century. The reality of the existence of personal demons and their incarnating tendency was an issue that was never doubted by the ancient people. Malina, Joubert and Van der Watt (1996:14) relate that ancient people regarded the invisible world as the real one, because everything was controlled from there. This is the reason why people were forever arguing about which gods ruled the invisible world. They also point out, though, that the New Testament has no doubt about the matter: God is in charge of everything and everyone (see Rev 4).

Most of the New Testament scholarly works on demons in recent times, even though they highlight the importance of demons and exorcisms in the ministry of Jesus, do not often succeed in pointing out the influence of the powers in the modern world. This is evident in several books and articles on the subject. Kallas (1961) recognises the central significance of the miracle stories in the gospels and has, in turn, seen the importance of the exorcism stories in Jesus' cosmic struggle. Nevertheless Kallas does not critically examine the exorcism stories, nor does he clarify our knowledge of the historical Jesus as exorcist. In a later work, Kallas (1975) sees modern demonology as negative, an escapist abandonment of the real world in which we find ourselves. Though in principle Kallas agrees on the exorcistic activities of Christ in the gospel tradition, he apparently struggles to acknowledge the role of the demonic in the modern world.

Hull (1974) gives considerable attention to the exorcism stories in the synoptic gospels. He uses Hellenistic magical traditions in an attempt to throw light on the synoptic evangelists' portrayal of Jesus, especially as a miracle worker. However, Hull's concentration on the Hellenistic magical traditions to the virtual exclusion of the Jesus' tradition, does not give a complete picture of the background of ministry of Jesus.

Mills (1990) calls into question writing off the tradition of Jesus' command of spiritual forces as the views of ignorant and undeveloped humanity. Her concern is not so much with a detailed historical investigation into the traditions of Jesus as an exorcist but with the control of the cosmic forces and their significance for Mark and Luke.

Green (1981) takes a close look at the biblical account of Satan: his origin, his strategies and above all his defeat. It urges Christians to take seriously the spiritual battle to which they are called, and encourages them to be confident in the knowledge that Christ has won the supreme victory over evil and that the culmination of all history will demonstrate this fact.

Leahy (1975) endeavours through his study to help missionaries on the foreign mission field. With strong emphasis on scripture, and on the Holy Spirit and his work, Leahy's book gives positive guidance to Christians as well as warnings against approaching this subject either from the standpoint of theological liberalism or from an unhealthy subjectivism which panders to the sensational.

Arnold (1992) seeks to provide an in-depth look at Paul's letters and what they teach on the subject of powers. For perspective, he examines first-century Greek, Roman and Jewish beliefs as well as Jesus' teaching about magic, sorcery and divination. Arguing against many interpretations that have seen principalities and powers as impersonal, social, economic and political structures, Arnold contends that the New Testament's view is that such powers are organised, personal beings which Jesus defeated at the cross and will bring into full subjection at his return.

Page (1995) offers a comprehensive exposition of every biblical reference to the demonic and analyses historic and modern views on the subject of powers. In examining the relevant scriptures on demons, Page seeks to show the implications for the believer's stand in Christ.

Böcher (1972) presents a socio-descriptive analysis of demons in the New Testament, the anti-demonic magic employed in New Testament times and how Jesus and the early church handled the demonic in their exorcist ministries.

Russel's (1986) book is a historical treatment of the devil. For Russel, the existence of the devil cannot be meaningfully approached by science, because science is, by definition, restricted to investigating the physical and can say nothing about the spiritual. For science to try to prove or disprove the existence of the devil is the result of a muddle in which science is called upon to pass judgement in matters unrelated to science. The idea of the devil is an important concept in understanding the nature of evil, and as much, it points toward the truth. Russel concludes that the devil exists historically as a long-lived and immensely influential concept aimed at the truth about evil. In this work, Russel makes no attempt to prove the existence of the devil biblically (see also Russel 1977).

Pagels (1995) traces the social background of the origin of Satan in the Old Testament and in the gospel tradition. Pagels shows how God's people, as represented by Israel and the church, demonstrated a tendency to demonise their enemies whether they be other nations, heretics or any group opposed to them. The power relationships among various groups often led to some groups dressing their opponents in satanic garbs.

Twelftree (1993) examines the stories of exorcism in the gospels in his attempt of a search for the historical Jesus, especially in his ministry of exorcism. Twelftree seeks to answer the three-part question: If Jesus was an exorcist, what did the first reports of his activities as an exorcist contain? How would he have been viewed by those who saw him at work? And, how did he understand his ministry of exorcism? According to Twelftree, the sayings of the historical Jesus cannot be understood apart from his miraculous activities, including exorcisms.

Kelly (1968) comes to a conclusion that the vast majority who believed in evil spirits have not believed in the spirits as they are described in the Bible but rather as they have been recreated by post-biblical speculation. Kelly is of the opinion that a great deal of demonology that evolved in the name of Christian teaching can only be characterised as "untheological levity". The representations of the spirit world in scripture betray signs of simple folkloristic origin, and the modifications that these images and myths underwent when they came into contact with later cultures and philosophies are no longer convincing, however satisfying they may have been in past ages. Kelly believes that a continued adherence to these

views, as if they constituted an essential part of divine revelation, runs the risk of exposing the Christian mission to ridicule. Whether or not evil spirits exist, it does not appear to be necessary to believe in them in order to cope with the problems of human life. Given the evils that belief in demonology has caused in the past, and given also the uncertainty of its claim to a place in Christian revelation and theology, it would seem best to act as though evil spirits did not exist, until such time as their existence is forced upon us. Kelly says that, far from constituting an essential teaching of Christian revelation, demonology is an accidental feature that has proceeded, and is a product of a number of serious aberrations in the understanding of revealed religion.

Ferguson (1984) gives a scholarly inquiry that investigates demonology in the first-century world. By going into the apocryphal, pseudepigraphal and Greek writings, Ferguson endeavours to present a background of demonology in the first century world - a background against which the exorcist stories in the New Testament should be interpreted. The goal of Ferguson's study is to show the significance of the study of demonology for the modern-day church. Though Ferguson's work is closer to the current study, he understandably does not indicate the relevance of first-century world demonology to people of animistic background. This oversight is as a result of the fact that his target is the western audience.

Other works that are important for the study of demonology in the New Testament are those of Yates (1980) and Joubert (2000), who argue that the powers or evil spirits in the New Testament need to be taken seriously in order for Christians of today to be able to deal adequately with the spirit world (see also Wink 1984, 1986, 1992). The study of demons has also received a prominent scholarly focus by the combined effort of Van der Toorn, Becking and Van der Horst (1999), entitled, *The Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. This contribution, without which the study of demonology would be poorer and incomplete, is both unique and comprehensive on the subject covering almost every detail that is necessary for a clearer picture of demonology in the Bible.

In summary, there is generally a consensual view among New Testament scholars that the exorcist stories are important in understanding the mission of Jesus

Christ. Although in the past the subject of demonology was neglected in New Testament scholarship, it is encouraging that there is a gradual interest in it. Most New Testament scholarship appears comfortable in dealing with demonology in biblical times but it also shows intellectual reluctance (or spiritual phobia?) in addressing the modern demonology in today's world. In the process, people in spirit-sensitive communities, especially in the Third World, are left without a biblical response to the spirit world.

1.2.2 THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE PARADIGM

The perceived inadequacy of New Testament scholarship in dealing with the manifestations of the demonic has caused some Christians to start looking for answers in the Bible. Orthodox New Testament theology seems not to have categories in dealing with the demonic in modern times. The spiritual warfare paradigm, on the other hand, seeks to fill the lacuna that is revealed in the survey of New Testament scholarship.

The spiritual warfare school takes the spirit world seriously. The approach of Christians involved in spiritual warfare is that Christ has given authority to believers (cf. Lk 9:1; Mt 10:1, 7; Mk 16:17) to engage the powers which often want to hinder the work of the church and the mission of Christ. According to the conviction of the proponents of the school of spiritual warfare, there is a battle for the human soul and the cosmos. Tozer (1996:4) believes that it is still solid Bible doctrine that tremendous spiritual forces are present in the world, and humanity, because of its spiritual nature, is caught in the middle. Wimber and Springer (1992:52) maintain that any system or force that must be overcome for the gospel to be believed, is a cause for a power encounter. Wagner explains power encounter as a visible, practical demonstration that Jesus Christ is more powerful than the false gods or spirits worshipped or feared by a people group (quoted in Wimber and Springer 1992:53). Putting it in militaristic terms, Wimber and Springer (1992:38) are convinced that Christians need to take note that the enemy follows no rules of war and they (Wimber and Springer 1992:40) go on to say that

in our battle with Satan there are no demilitarised zones.

There is never a lull in the fighting. We are born into the

fight, and unless the day of the Lord comes, we will die in the fight.

The contention of the spiritual warfare block is that the orthodox (western) theology does not address the middle level of the cosmic understanding of the universe i.e. spirits of this world - ghosts, ancestors, demons etc. In what has become the ground-breaking piece of work for evangelical missions, Hiebert (1982:43) in his article, *The Flaw of the Excluded Middle*, admits that “as a scientist I had been trained to deal with the empirical world in naturalistic terms. As a theologian, I was taught to answer ultimate questions in theistic terms. For me the middle zone did not really exist ... for me these [spirits] belonged to the realm of fairies, trolls and other mythical beings. Consequently I had no answer to the questions they [Indian villagers] raised.”

The proponents of spiritual warfare teach that there are three levels in the universe: the cosmic layer which includes in its category heaven, hell, God and the devil. Then there is the middle layer which is occupied by angels, demons and intermediaries. This is followed by the empirical world of our senses (see Hiebert, Shaw & Tiéno 1999:45f, 81). The unique tendency of western society has been to ignore the reality of the middle zone. Dickason (1978:65) observes that “many believers recognise our warfare with the flesh and the world; but when it comes to direct warfare with demons, they consider that rather remote or unreal.”

Central to the thesis of the spiritual warfare paradigm is the conviction that the biblical portrayal of the world filled with spirits is more accurate than that given by western assumptions. Kraft (1995:ix) says that the Bible very clearly presents a world where spiritual powers exist, and struggle and tensions between good and evil are in focus. God is clearly a God of power, often revealing himself through power encounters with “wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age” (Eph 6:12).

Based on the notion that God is a God of power and that, as Christians we are involved in power encounter with the evil forces, the spiritual warfare proponents focus on how Christians should tackle demonic influence in one’s life, family and the country. Christians are encouraged to resist other demonic influences

considered to be variants of the demonic in the form of generational sins and curses (the transference of sins and curses of one's foreparents), occult involvement and the oppression by spirits of evil. All these are said to contribute to the demonic bondage or affliction of the believer (see Dickason 1987:244f; Wagner 1992b:129; Robinson 1991:53-72; Koch 1961:203-222). Deliverance from demonic affliction is achieved by commanding Satan to leave the afflicted with all his demons. This is coupled with prayer to God (see Dickason 1987:269f; Bubeck 1975:140-141). The believer may tear down what is termed 'strongholds' of the devil and plans of Satan formed against his or her mind, emotions and body (Bubeck 1975:143-144). The believers may also renounce and repudiate the sins committed by their ancestors and verbally cancel any demonic activity, and any curse, coming along the blood line (Dickason 1987:278-279). In the process of exorcising demons, questions can be posed to them in order to find out what their names are, their ranks in Satan's hierarchy and what gave them the right to enter the afflicted person (Bubeck 1975:147). If a believer has given Satan and his demons legitimate ground for them to harass him or her, such ground can then be reclaimed by proclaiming it covered with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, after first having asked God for forgiveness of sins, committed by oneself or one's ancestors (Bubeck 1975:86-87; Dickason 1987:162-163).

Perhaps the more outstanding form of spiritual warfare is spiritual mapping. A term coined by Otis (1993:32), the concept of spiritual mapping has extended the minds of most western evangelical Christianity. Spiritual mapping can be said to be about sincere Christians who are trying to discern and overcome those invisible realities that influence the visible world, especially those that may hinder the success of evangelism and mission (Priest *et al* 1995:19; cf. 1 Thess 2:18). Jacobs (1993:77), a well-known leader in the field of spiritual mapping, sees spiritual mapping in terms of researching a city to discover any inroads Satan has made, which prevent the spread of the gospel and the evangelisation of that city for Christ (see also Wagner 1991). In this context, special attention is given to territorial spirits which are considered to be demonic forces, under the command of Satan, which keep a territory in spiritual darkness (Wagner 1989:278). The territorial spirits are able to keep a territory in bondage, because there is a legiti-

mate reason, a right, for them to do so due to atrocities, evils or sins committed in the territory concerned (Dawson 1989; 1994:34; Frangipane 1991:55).

Demons are also believed to gain control through curses that have been proclaimed (Sjöberg 1993:108-109; Wagner 1992b:130f), or through the (past) worship of idols, other religions or ideologies (Caballeros 1993:145). These elements, or demonic entrances, need to be discovered and mapped out, through historical, cultural and sociological, charismatic inspiration (Frangipane 1991:168; Arnold 1994:47), and at times by questioning demons who are in the process of being cast from individuals (see Tippett 1973:89-90; Priest *et al* 1994:28-29). Equipped with spiritual weapons (Eph 6:10f), such as militant intercession (see Kiesling 1994:26), the quoting of scriptures, indentificational repentance (Kraft 1995:119; Sjöberg 1993:108-109; Mostert 1998), proclamation of forgiveness or deliverance, and by verbally breaking curses or telling demonic forces to go, spiritual mapping is followed by spiritual warfare in an attempt to overcome the demonic powers that hinder the progress of the gospel in that area (cf. Van der Meer 2001:50-51). The proponents of spiritual mapping and strategic high level spiritual warfare, in support of their approach, report an increase in converts, openness for the gospel, church growth, miracles and other spiritual successes (Kiesling 1994:26-27).

Needless to say, the claims of success by the spiritual warfare movement have drawn sharp criticism from segments of the church, particularly the evangelical wing. In response to the claims of the suggestion that God is doing much at present because of the work of the spiritual warfare movement, Lowe (1998a:115) tends to question the fact that not all evidence cited by the proponents and practioners of the spiritual warfare paradigm is of the same value: some is irrelevant; some is inherently dubious; some, beyond confirmation; some simply erroneous. In the view of Lowe, much of the empirical evidence presented by the spiritual mapping group is unconvincing simply because it is haphazardly collected or cited.

Another criticism comes from Van der Meer (2001:63-64), who maintains that, while we may admit that there is some merit and biblical justification for some of the aspects of spiritual warfare (see Page 1995:179f), we may discover that the

church, in the area of spiritual warfare, has become a captive itself, rather than setting the captives free. Van der Meer is of the opinion that we may well discover that the church has become captive to the Indo-European concept of the battle between good and evil. In the wake of World War II, people have been desperately looking for power amidst a general feeling of powerlessness in the face of modern warfare, nuclear threats and technological and environmental disasters (see Russel 1986:253; Hinde 1999:55; Clark 1997:558). Such powerlessness led people to the revival of magic in search for power to control the otherwise radarless world. Van der Meer says that, instead of being a transforming power in our societies today, the church has succumbed to the patterns of this world, which provide us with a mindset other than the mind of Christ and a biblical worldview. Instead of confronting the real powers that are at work in the world, including the powerful dominant modern scientific worldview with its sins and evils, much of the evangelical church keeps its spirituality in the unseen realm of private experiences without any real bearing on the realities of our context.

Newbigin (1986:132) thinks that the dichotomy between the private religious experience and the realities of the public world, is actually part of the dominant ideology of pagan western culture. Consequently, faith has become a private matter concerned with personal salvation, an inward righteousness, morality and peace, without concern for justice, righteousness and peace in the socio-economic and political realm (see Van der Meer 2001:64-65). Yet, Newbigin (1986:95) asserts that Christianity has always addressed the demon-inspired structural evils in its mission to the world. For the sake of a balanced perspective, it might be true that the spiritual warfare movement might be guilty of making faith a private matter concerned with personal salvation (Van der Meer 2001:64), but the assertion that Christianity has always addressed demon-inspired structural evil might not be entirely true. The body of considerable historical evidence would militate against such an assertion (see Sider 1990).

In trying to dispel misunderstandings about spiritual warfare, Kraft (1993:31f) lists several myths which are worth noting - an exercise which is beyond the scope of this study. Another work by Otis (1997) is intended for believers to question the narrow-minded rationalism of some evangelicals and the simplistic pop culture that has grown up around certain charismatics, especially in the mat-

ters of spiritual warfare. An author that we intend to interact with in the course of this study, somewhat briefly, is Wagner (1996), who makes a serious attempt in examining biblical references in regard to the evil spirits.

In summary, it can be concluded that the emergence of the spiritual warfare movement has highlighted the need of the forgotten ministry of the church - that of engaging the spirits that (depending on which side of the debate a person stands) torture and torment humanity. Coupled with this, is the assertion of the authority of the believer in Christ who feels no longer a pawn or victim in the cosmic struggle, but a participant in the triumphant procession in Christ's victory. Another important factor that can be said in favour of the spiritual warfare movement, also noting their haphazardness in data collection and reporting, including some missiologically questionable practices, is the fact that the movement believes that biblical revelation is not static but dynamic which makes it able to address different situations and contexts. Rather than being satisfied with archaic, sterile dogmas that have little relevance to modern people, the spiritual warfare movement seems to have an intention, whether genuine or superficial, to help instil vitality in the religious experience in many Christians that have apparently grown cold. The passion of the spiritual warfare movement for world evangelisation can hardly be brought into question.

As a relatively new movement, as can be anticipated, the spiritual warfare movement also shows gaps that may sabotage the very good work they intend to do. Firstly, generally the movement shows less interest in biblical investigation in the historical Jesus, especially in his ministry of exorcism. This makes the movement lack a proper biblical basis and guidance in what it purports to do. Secondly, the overly dualistic thinking and tendencies inadvertently depict the devil as a completely independent power, something that is contrary to biblical revelation. In such an attitude, the sovereignty of God, which is so central in dealing with powers, becomes trivialised. The usurpation of God's sovereign power by human power becomes a real threatening possibility. Thirdly, too much preoccupation with the devil and demons unfortunately leads to a situation whereby almost everything is demonised - people, places, food, clothes, etc. Instead of people living in the freedom of the victory that Christ has attained for them, they begin to live a life of fear of, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch" (Col 2:21; cf. 1

Tim 1:7 - “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control”).

1.2.3 THE THIRD WORLD (AFRICAN) PRIMAL RELIGIONS

Albeit the debate on spiritual warfare is a useful one for this study, it, to a large extent, still remains a western issue. The spiritual warfare movement has, to its credit, drawn a marginalised subject of demonology to the centre of Christian theological debate. Even though there is still some resistance to regard the matter of spirit engagement as vital for Christian theology in general, and missiology in particular, the debate on the importance of the spirit world for human existence can no longer be shunned or ignored.

The gradual interest in demon studies by the New Testament scholarship and the debate on spiritual warfare have benefited, though not much, the cry for theological contextualisation in spirit-sensitive communities in the Third World. This whole theological trend has opened a wider opportunity for the discussion and engagement of the spirit world in Third World Christian communities. Whereas a few decades ago the subject of belief in spirits and superstitions was considered as appropriate within anthropological studies, it is gradually becoming clear that Christian theology cannot marginalise it if the gospel of Christ is to deepen its roots in spirit-sensitive communities.

The focus on primal religions by Christian scholars with the express purpose of understanding them for the sake of cross-cultural communication is remarkable. As a guide into the phenomenology of the world’s primal religions, Turner (1977:27f) proposes a six-feature framework for understanding primal religions as authentically religious, rather than a merely epiphenomena of the social organisation of simple or preliterate societies. Firstly, there is a sense of kinship with nature, in which animals and plants, no less than human beings, had their own spiritual existence and place in the universe as interdependent parts of the whole. Any object of the natural environment may enter into a totemic spiritual relationship with human beings or become tutelary and guardian spirits while the environment itself is used realistically and unsentimentally but with profound respect and reverence and without exploitation. Turner considers this ecological

aspect of primal religions to be a profoundly religious attitude to a human being's natural setting in the world.

Secondly, Turner describes the second feature of the primal religions as the deep sense that a human person is finite, weak and impure or 'sinful' and stands in need of a power not his/her own. Turner links this feature to the notion in Rudolf Otto's (1950) *Idea of the Holy* that "man's basic reaction of the Holy is in terms of a sense of creaturehood". Thirdly, a feature complementing the second, is the conviction that a human person is not alone in the universe, for there is a spiritual world of powers or beings more powerful and ultimate than himself or herself. The universe of primal religions is thus a 'personalised' universe, in which the appropriate question is not "what caused this or that?" but "who did it?" A human being, therefore, lives with an awareness of the presence of transcendent powers which are, however, ambivalent. Not only is there a hierarchy of benevolent ancestors, and of spirits, divinities and high gods, but there is also the range of evil spirits, of demons and malevolent divinities and the lesser, more earth-born occult powers of wizards and witches. The fourth feature which, in turn, completes the third, is the belief that a human person can enter into relationship with the benevolent spirit world and so share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces by these transcendent helpers. For Turner, this feature, which reveals the profound emphasis on the transcendent source of true life and practical salvation, goes contrary to all the neat projectionist theories that explain religions away as 'man-made' and ignore the primary testimony of so much of the data about religions.

The fifth feature, which Turner sees as an extension of the fourth, relates to the acute sense of the reality of the afterlife, a conviction which explains the important place of ancestors, or the 'living dead' in many primal religions. In the majority of these regions, the ancestors or the 'living dead', remain united in affection and in mutual obligations with the 'living living'. Indeed, the ancestors figure so prominently in the first level or region of the spirit world that they seem to create an ancestor cult and to obscure the spirit beings before whom they otherwise serve as mediators between the transcendent and the human.

The sixth feature is the conviction that a human person lives in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. Accordingly, the physical acts as a vehicle for spiritual power while the physical realm is held to be patterned on the model of the spiritual world beyond. Even where there is a clear ethnical dualism with respect to good and evil, nevertheless, one set of powers, principles and patterns runs through all things on earth in the heavens and welds them into a unified cosmic system.

Following this interpretative framework and analysis of primal religions, Turner (1977:32) then makes a number of valuable comments which are relevant to the current study. Firstly, he notes that his proposal may be used for the understanding of other kinds of religions besides the primal and can be found readily applicable to the Christian tradition. Then, going on to argue for educational importance of primal religions in religious studies within the Christian tradition, he draws attention to a 'special relationship' of primal religions with Christianity, which arises from the fact that in the history of the spread of the Christian faith, its major extensions have been solely into the societies with primal religious systems (see also Mbiti 1976:10; Robert 2000:56; Barret and Johnson 2000:24-25). These societies were, according to Turner, the Mediterranean world of the early Christian centuries, and tribal peoples of northern and western Europe and finally the primal societies of Africa, the Pacific and parts of Asia.

Bediako's (1995:96) response to Turner's otherwise stimulating analysis is two-fold. Firstly, whilst affirming the six-feature structure that Turner outlines, Bediako feels that the sixth and final feature - that of a human being living in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual - provides the real key to the entire structure. Secondly, Bediako is rather surprised that Turner does not state that this 'special relationship' of the primal religions with Christianity and the existence of 'affinities' between the primal and Christian traditions could have a far-reaching significance for our understanding of the nature of the Christian faith itself. If, as supposed, there is only a minimal 'paradigm shift' as we pass from the spiritual universe of primal religions into the spiritual environment of the Christian faith (- 'this is what we have been waiting for' -), then, Bediako argues, one would want to pursue the matter by asking how the primal imagination might bring its own peculiar gifts to the shaping of

Christian affirmation. Bediako (1995:96) seems convinced that “this issue becomes even more pressing of Christian thought which has hitherto been moulded by a worldview from which the living forces of the primal imagination seem to have been expelled”.

Apart from Turner’s six-feature structure of primal religions, others have realised the importance of the study of these religions for contextual purposes of the Christian message, and we go on to mention but a few. Thorpe (1992) presents an introductory, descriptive review of primal religions worldwide. In it, he concludes that an adequate theoretical stance towards primal religions can only be taken if a person is acquainted with the descriptive nature of the various traditions. Only subsequent to such a review can a valid theoretical stance towards primal religions in general be adopted (see also Steyne 1990; Burnett 1988). Van Rheenen (1991) explores animism not merely as the religion of tribal societies but as a prevalent phenomenon in every continent and which is, in varying degrees, part of every culture. Hiebert, Shaw and Tiéno (1991) examine theories of religion and develop a model for use in analysing folk religions. They also look into the key questions asked and answers provided by folk religions, thus helping an outside observer to explore behavioural manifestations that express folk religious beliefs. This book, furthermore, examines key biblical principles that Christians can use in dealing with the folk religions around them and suggests missiological processes for helping Christians move from where they are to where God calls them to be.

Bediako (1995:97) observes that African Christian scholars who have examined the spiritual universe of African primal religions, have done less than full justice to the complexity of the African primal world. To Bediako’s mind, the African Christian scholars in their keenness to show the relationship of continuity between the pre-Christian religions and Christian belief, have stressed, particularly and rightly so, the continuity of God. However, by stressing the centrality and uniqueness of God in African tradition, African theology, Bediako contends, has left the wider spirit world of African primal religions - divinities, ancestors, natural forces - unaccounted for. In other words, African theology has answered to only part of what has been described as the “unity and multiplicity of Divinity” (Leihardt 1961). In this category of African Christian scholars who examine the African religions,

Bediako (1995:97-98) takes two such representatives - Bolaji Idowu (1962) and John Mbiti (1969). In analyzing their perspectives on the African spirit world, Bediako feels that their classifying of divinities and ancestors in one category might not necessarily be a true reflection of the actual situation in Africa. This difference in perspectives, including those of others will find more attention in chapter 4 when a detailed discussion on the African spirit world is entertained.

Several other African scholars have made their voices heard on the subject of the African spirit world. Others have gone to the extent of writing on the African spirit world in the light of what is revealed in the Bible. Among these, to quote a few, are Mugambi (1989), Nyirongo (1997), Sundkler (1961). In as far as demon- or spirit-possession in Africa is concerned, few have ventured into documenting their views. Of those who have done so, the names of Lagerwerf (1987) and Kiogora (1993) and Salala (1998) immediately come into focus.

In summary, it can be said that there is an increasing awareness of the importance of investigative studies in primal religions for Christian theology in order to avoid the mistakes of missionary practices of the past. Understandably, most of these studies have been done or written from a taxonomical approach, i.e. looking at the different kinds of spirits, powers, divination and ancestors found around the world. These studies introduce the reader to the bewildering array of beliefs in primal religions, but little is offered in terms of understanding why many people who profess the name of Christ persist in turning to traditional practices in times of crisis. In Africa, the two-tier allegiance of many people who profess to be Christians brings into question the often exaggerated statistics of the growth of Christianity on the continent.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In many African traditional societies, the felt needs of people are usually met by the services of the shaman. These needs vary and they could include the need for protection against witchcraft and evil spirits. Another need in Africa is for physical and psychological health. These needs are felt by many Africans who are inside and outside the church. Despite centuries of western influence and teaching by

missionaries, these felt needs have not gone away. The sensitivity to the spirit world remains something embedded in the African soul.

When western missionaries came to Africa and other regions of the world where primal religious imagination was prevalent, in many situations they could not touch the crux of (African) people's religiosity, in spite of the heroic and laborious efforts by the missionaries to do so. Oftentimes, the extremely naturalistic, rationalistic and abstract-oriented gospel-product was introduced by western missionaries into supernaturalistic, intuitive and concrete-oriented societies. The uncritical transplanting of the gospel by orthodoxically equipped missionaries oftentimes (if not always) and inadvertently, produced split-level Christianity in Africa and other places. An emasculated western gospel could not possibly have filled the social and spiritual void experienced by African people. The rationalistic theological presuppositions of western missionaries made them unable to respond positively and biblically to the felt needs of indigenous communities. Instead, missionaries responded psychologically and philosophically to otherwise spiritual problems. They did this with the hope that such spiritual needs would vanish with the passage of time which, contrary to expectation, did not happen.

This study seeks to investigate the possibility of looking for solutions for the debacle of African split-level Christianity in the biblical worldview of the New Testament which appears to be akin to that of the African spirit world. The similarities, if any, of the supernaturalistic tendencies of the two worldviews (New Testament and African) could possibly be of help to provide the key to resolve the African religious ambivalence. The response of Jesus Christ and the early church (as represented by the Lucan community) to the supernaturalistic worldview of the first-century world is, therefore, of critical importance to this study. This investigation presupposes that the life, ministry and passion of Jesus Christ were, and remain, of fundamental significance to the life of the church (in Africa).

1.4 APPROACH AND PURPOSE

The present study is an attempt to make a contribution to our understanding of the historical Jesus and to sketch a picture of the historical Jesus in his ministry of exorcism. This study seeks to address a three-part problem:

Firstly, this study is intended to give a picture of demonology and exorcism in the first-century Jewish world. In order to do this, biblical data, as well as apocryphal and pseudepigraphal materials are employed. This is done because the proliferation in the belief in spirits gains prominence both in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings.

Secondly, an attempt is made to show how Jesus, in his exorcism miracles, interacted with the 'spirits-inhabited' first century world and, also how the ancient church comprehended, continued and practised the ministry of exorcism. This is done by examining some relevant scripture portion in Luke-Acts.

Thirdly, this investigation seeks to present a picture of the African spirit world with the intention to discover whether parallels can be drawn between the African spirit world and the first-century Jewish world.

1.5 VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF DEMON POSSESSION

1.5.1 THE MYTHICAL THEORY

The basic ideal of this hypothesis, advanced by Strauss (1836:21 f) and the mythical school (cf. Bultmann 1984), is that the whole narrative of Jesus' demon expulsions is merely symbolic, without actual foundation of fact. Demon possession, so called, is but a vivid symbol of the prevalence of evil in the world, and a casting out of demons by our Lord, a corresponding figure of triumph over evil by his doctrine and life.

Unger (1994:90), in response to the mythical theory, argues that in the gospel accounts, the plain prosaic narration of the incidents as facts, regardless of what might be considered as possible in highly poetical and avowedly figurative passages, would make the position of the mythical school lack a factual base.

1.5.2 THE ACCOMMODATION THEORY

The proponents of the accommodation theory say that Jesus and the evangelists, in making reference to demon possession, spoke only in accommodation to the

prevalent ignorance and superstition of their audience, without making any assertion as to the actual existence or non-existence of the phenomena described, or truth or falsity of current belief (cf. Hodge 1891:257). It is concluded that, since the symptoms were often those of physical disease (as blindness and dumbness, Mt 12:22; epilepsy, Mk 9:17-27), or those appearing in common dementia (as in Mt 8:28; Mk 5:1-5), and since the phrase “to have a demon” was apparently used as equivalent to “to be mad” (Jn 7:20; 8:48; 10:20), and since it is erroneously assumed that cases of demon possession are not now known to occur in our day, therefore, our Lord spoke, and the evangelists wrote, in adjustment to the common convictions of the time, and with a view to being clearly understood, especially by the patients themselves, but that the ‘demonised’ were merely persons afflicted with uncommon diseases of body and mind.

The accommodation theory with its ingenious intention of trying to resolve the improbability of demon possession in the first-century world, creates a greater problem than the one it purports to solve. The body of datable evidence in the gospels and few other scripture portions in the New Testament (Acts) would render the accommodation theory grossly unrepresentative of the miracles of Jesus. Also, the employment of the popular fallacy that demon possession does not occur today is contrary to the testimony of modern missionary history (cf. Gonia 1993:24f; Boer 1993:3f). But even if it were granted that it does not occur today, that would not at all prove that it never existed (Unger 1994:91).

1.5.3 THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

The hallucination theory explains demon possession as a mere psychological delusion on the part of the victim, who, diseased and distraught, becomes psyched up to such a high pitch of emotional frenzy or mental excitement, that he/she imagines himself or herself possessed and controlled by another and more powerful being (cf. Owen 1859:119f; also Nevius 1968:147-150). Under the suppression of human consciousness the dethronement of reason, the person speaks in the character of the fancied demon (Mk 5:7).

According to Unger (1994:92), the hallucination theory fails to explain how a person, so bereft of reason, can in the same instant, manifest a knowledge of

Jesus' deity and sonship (Mk 5:7) far in advance of the most pious and enlightened people of the whole nation. Nor does it explain the violent effect of the entrance of the demons into the swine (Mk 5:13), which alone is enough to demonstrate the absurdity of supposing the possession to be only an imaginary one.

1.5.4 SUMMARISING CONCLUSION

From the foregoing review of theories on demon possession, it is clear that any other explanation except the factual evidence, given by the evangelists, is too vague to inspire confidence. The version of the evangelists on the episodes of demon possession and exorcism still hitherto outweigh the arguments advanced by the proponents of the different theories.

1.6 EXORCISM: A WORKING DEFINITION

It is obvious that all attempts to explain cases of demon possession other than as actual occurrences, and in the simple and plain sense in which they are portrayed in the biblical data, are weak and totally inadequate. It is, therefore, necessary to present the "scriptural view, which is the natural and literal interpretation of the biblical narratives, viewing possession as an actual state of inhabitation and control by one or more demons" (Unger 1994:93). Unger goes on to explain that as wicked, unclean, and vicious spiritual personalities, willing subjects of their leader Satan, demons were divinely permitted a special activity and manifestation during the days of our Lord and his disciples, to exercise a direct influence over certain persons by residing in them, and thus deranging both mind and body (Unger 1994:93). The state of the demonised is such that the affected people are incapable of separating their own consciousness and mental processes from the influence of the demon, and their own identity and free volition are merged, and to that extent lost, in that of their invaders (cf. Nevius 1968:144-145; Unger 1994:95). During the ministry of Jesus and afterwards there were afflicted people whose symptoms were diagnosed as different from ordinary illnesses, by their contemporaries, by Jesus and his disciples and by the evangelists. They diagnosed possession by one or more evil spirits (see Wright 1978:474).

Thus when the word ‘exorcism’ is used of relief from demonisation, it pictures the inhabiting demons as coming out from within the person and moving out to where Jesus sent them upon his command (cf. Dickason 1987:270). Hence *exhorkozo* means to expel a spirit by a solemn adjuration. In the New Testament the usual verb is *ekballo*, to cast out (a demon). But the phenomenon of exorcism is much more widespread than the infrequent use of the cognate noun and verb suggest. In the explanation of Wright (1978:473), exorcism is now used as a general term of driving out an evil spirit, described in the New Testament as a *daimon*, or *daimonion*, demon, or a *pneuma akatharton*, unclean spirit, or *pneuma poneron*, evil spirit.

Twelftree (1993:13) explains that “exorcism was a form of healing used when demons or evil spirits were thought to have entered a person and to be responsible for sickness and was an attempt to control and cast out or expel evil spiritual beings or demons from people”. By his own admission, Twelftree notices that his definition omits the specific techniques and also the exorcism of evil spirits from places. But for the sake of our investigation, the definition given by Twelftree will suffice.

1.7 LIMITATIONS

The focus of this study is the impact and interaction of the invisible world with the material world. Taking a cue from the reaction of Christ and the early church to the spirit world, the modern church, especially in Africa need to learn how to positively and biblically respond to the world of spirits. This study, however does not purport to argue the origin of evil in the world, which is assumed. This study does not also question the existence of the devil and evil spirits, which is presupposed. Also, the spirits of good (i.e. angels) are not discussed seeing that the majority of Christians and theologians (including those in the western world) do not demonstrate a lack of faith in their existence and operations (see Graham 1975).

1.8 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1 as an introduction discusses the scope and argumentation on the study of demonology. A survey of representative studies and perspectives in the area of spirits is given and explored.

Chapter 2 is a reconstruction of demonology in the first-century Jewish world. This chapter looks into demonology in the Old Testament, apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature and in the New Testament in an endeavour to present a more comprehensive picture of demonology in the first-century Jewish world.

Chapter 3 begins with a study of the theology and distinctive features of the two-volume work of Luke-Acts. As an illustration of the interaction of Jesus and the early church with the demonic and the magical world, this chapter focuses on the Baalzebul controversy, the confrontation with Simon Magus (Acts 8), the conflict with a magician on Cyprus (Acts 13), the exorcism in the story of the Philippian slave-girl (Acts 16) and the non-Christian exorcistic and magical practices in Ephesus (Acts 19).

Chapter 4 gives an overview of the spirit world in Africa and how Africans respond to the world of spirits. An investigation is also made into the African concept of the devil and spirit possession.

Chapter 5 deals with the hermeneutical issues, drawing parallels, differences and similarities in the understanding of the spirit world in the first-century Jewish world, Luke-Acts and in the African context. A critical evaluation is presented in the light of the comprehension of Jesus and the early church of the spirit world and magical practices. Areas of further research are also mentioned.

CHAPTER 2

DEMONOLOGY IN THE FIRST-CENTURY JEWISH WORLD

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the light of the purpose of this study and in order to establish the proper significance of the New Testament demonology within the whole context of the biblical revelation, it is necessary to examine its antecedents and its development to the stage at which it appears in the New Testament. Such an effort, hopefully, will provide a reconstruction of demonology which is the background against which Jesus' ministry of exorcism would have been viewed by his contemporaries.

2.2 THE DYNAMICS OF THE FIRST-CENTURY WORLD-VIEW

Craffert (1999:12f) describes the first-century world as inhabited by people who believed in a small, three-storied universe in which a flat earth is vaulted by a dome, heaven, which houses the sun, moon and stars. Somewhere underneath the earth is a region called the underworld, which was some kind of place with gates and bars. Heaven was a vast expanse, only a few hundred metres above the earth, where gods dwell in their homes. The whole universe was believed to be densely populated by an enormous number of agents - among them being gods, demons, spirits of the dead and angels. Most of these agents could influence human affairs in some way. They were responsible for the well-being and misfortune of human beings while sickness, negative weather patterns and the like were influenced by them also. Most of these beings could be manipulated, bribed, persuaded or controlled (Craffert 1999:13). Even the least of gods had the supernatural powers and people who could intervene or call into effect such powers, were in great demand. What was needed, was the necessary or access to stronger and more effective power.

The first-century, like any other conception of the universe, operated in very specific ways. According to Craffert, the most important principle operative in

that world is apathy described as the great chain of being (see also Riley 1999:236). Everything is linked to everything else, both above and below. Nothing happens by chance - it happens by design where some power is involved or responsible. (cf. also Malina *et al* 1994:14; Lloyd-Jones 1977:44). Not only the extraterrestrial beings (divine agents) but also substances (such as minerals) could influence the elements of agents higher in the chain (Craffert 1999:13). The essential element was power or access to power which could control this chain.

Power was an intrinsic feature of this world and without a proper balance of power, the universe would lose its distinctive character and without access to power or proper protection against malignant forces, a person was vulnerable. In this world people or objects with alleged power were in great demand (Craffert 1999:13). Not only human beings but also agents (gods, demons, angels and the like) and 'natural' elements (such as crops and the weather) could be influenced and affected. Given the harsh conditions and circumstances (Craffert 1999:14) and the inadequate medical services (Green 1970:227), healers, healings and exorcisms played an incalculable role in the cope-mechanism in the people living in the first-century world. But before we continue with this chapter, it is of importance to examine what materials and which dates, period and times are relevant for the present study in order to reconstruct the background against which the exorcism ministry of Jesus should be interpreted.

2.3 MATERIALS AND DATES

Twelftree (1993:14) points out, and rightfully so, two problems in our desire to reconstruct the literary background of the exorcism of Jesus, namely, the materials and dating. Firstly, the question that confronts us is whether to use only Palestinian or Jewish material. The tendency among scholars is to concentrate on either the 'Hellenistic' or the 'Jewish' milieu of Jesus and earliest Christianity. Twelftree believes that such a rigid approach is now seen to rest on doubtful premise. There is ample evidence to support the ideal that Palestine, and not least Galilee, was far from insulated from the outside world (see Safrai 1974; Hengel 1974:104). In the opinion of Ferguson (1993:375), the traditional distinction between Palestinian Judaism and Diaspora Judaism is often only a geographical one, not a language or religious description, for there were Diaspora

Jews who maintained the Hebrew language and, like Paul, received a strict Pharisaic upbringing. Ferguson maintains that there were strong Hellenistic influences in Palestine, even in conservative rabbinic circles. According to Ferguson (1993:375), the Jewish matrix of early Christianity was itself Hellenised.

However, Millar (1978:9) cautions that we cannot conclusively just speak of Hellenistic Judaism because we need to be aware of the uniqueness of the phenomenon of an original and varied non-Greek literary activity developing in a small area only a few miles from the Mediterranean coast. Twelftree (1993:15) also adds that there is not only a distinction between Palestinian culture and the rest of the Hellenistic world but the Galilean culture had its own distinctive characteristics. The Maccabean Revolt and the attitudes and practices of the Qumran Essenes and the Pharisees are clear signs that not all Palestinian Jews so readily accepted imported cultures. For the purposes of our construct, this means that the material we use to provide the background to Jesus' ministry of exorcism cannot be limited to that of Palestinian origin or even to Jewish material alone. Nevertheless, it also means that we need to pay particular attention to Palestinian material and traditions that may help to understand exorcism in the first-century Galilee. As a broad generalisation, subject to many qualifications of course, one can say that Palestinian Judaism is the most important background for the ministry of Jesus and the gospels, and the Judaism of the Greek Diaspora is the most important background for the ministry of Paul and his epistles and the book of Acts (see Ferguson 1993:375).

The second problem that Twelftree (1993:15) points out relating to the question of what material we should use, is that of dating. In Twelftree's view, it is essential that each story, ideal or body of tradition which is of potential value in contributing to our study can be reasonably established as part of the intellectual currency of first-century Palestine. This applies to material that antedates and is contemporary with Jesus as well as later literature. For this material often contains themes and ideas that predate the literature in which they are now found. Vermes (1983), on the other hand, correctly reminds us that the problem of using material as Twelftree suggests, is that of ascertaining which ideas belong to the time of publication of the literature and which ideas can be traced back to the times referred to in the literature.

In response to these problems of suitable material and dating, Twelftree (1985), in *Christ Triumphant*, argues that 1 Enoch, Tobit, Jubilees, the Qumran Scrolls, Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB), the magical papyri, Lucian of Samosata, Apollonius of Tyana and rabbinic literature can, with varying degrees in case of reliability, be used to provide material to reconstruct first century understandings of spirits, demons, possessions, magic, healing, healers, exorcism and exorcists (cf. also Twelftree 1993:16-17). On the broader spectrum of understanding customs in the first-century Jewish world, Vorster (1998:376) in addition to the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha (see also Du Plessis and Lategan 1983:16f), also includes both the talmudic literature, that is, the Mishnah, Tosephta and the Talmuds, as well as the Midrashim. Twelftree (1993:17f) is also of the opinion that other bodies of material, namely the Prayer of Nabonidus (*4QPrNab* or *4QsNab* - see also Dupont-Sommer 1961:322f; Knibb 1987:206), the Testament of Solomon (see also Lowe 1998a:82) and data from the New Testament Apocrypha are generally thought to be useful for the reconstruction of demonology in the first-century Palestine.

From the foregoing review of evidence, it is clear that the Jewish literature which forms part of the background of the New Testament can be of help for the purposes of our study. It is important also to look at the post-biblical (for the lack of a better term) data, for example, the rabbinic literature, for the purposes of our study. It is agreed that the rabbinic literature was written later than the New Testament, but it often preserves teachings and traditions earlier than the time of writing. Thus, the rabbinic literature deserves consideration here, both as part of the possible background of the New Testament times and as a completion of early Jewish thought on the subject of demons.

2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF DEMONOLOGY IN JEWISH THOUGHT

2.4.1 THE INFLUENCE OF THE NEAR EAST

The Biblical idea that God and the righteous angels confronted the opposition of a great spiritual enemy, the devil backed by the army of the demons, had a long history and development in the ancient world (see Riley 1999:244f; Nel 1987:1f). Very old stories of conflict among the gods are found in each of the cultures

which influenced the biblical tradition, and these stories (known among scholars as Combat Myth) coupled with dualism encountered during and after exile, contributed to the concept of the devil. To cite but a few examples, in the Babylonian story, Enuma Elish, Marduk combats Chaos in Tiamat, the great primeval sea, conceived of as a monstrous sea serpent or dragon. Tiamat is defeated, and out of her body Marduk creates the cosmos. In the creation myths the chaos and the powers of evil were seen as being in ontological opposition to created order or cosmos (see Jacobsen 1976:97).

In similar, though not identical fashion, the Canaanite storm god Baal, son and agent of the highest god El, facing opposition in the council of the gods, is forced to battle Yam (the sea). He defeats Yam (and also Lotan [Leviathan], the dragon in the sea) and obtains a palace from which he thunders forth against the enemies in the council and on earth. Next he faces Mot (Death), the ruler of the underworld, a monster with a huge mouth and appetite who swallows the dead, swallowing evil Baal for a time. He is nevertheless rescued from Mot and gains supremacy.

The stories of Yahweh in pre-exilic Israel draw upon these and other myths (e.g. the battles of Zeus; see also Nel 1987:3) to describe the conflicts against his enemies, both divine and human (Riley 1999:245), and his gaining of sovereignty over other gods of the nations in the council (cf. Yahweh and the council - Dt 32:8-9; Ps 29:1; 89:5-8; his mountain palace - Ps 18:6-15; 68; 48:1-2).

The ancient Babylonian myth of a combat between the divine Creator and the great sea monster is echoed in a number of passages in the Old Testament where the monster is variously described as the dragon, Leviathan, Rahab or the serpent (Dragon - Job 7:12; Ps 74:13; Rahab - Job 9:13; Ps 89:10; Is 30:7; 51:9; Serpent - Job 26:13; Is. 27:1; Amos 9:3). In Babylonian and Hebrew forms alike, the great monster symbolises the chaotic deep or cosmic ocean (Hebrew *Tehòm*, Babylonian *Tiamat* - cf. Russel 1960:98), which is regarded as the place of mystery and evil. In the Bible, the power of God over the chaotic deep is unquestionable (cf. Ps 33:6-8; 93:1f; 107:23-32; Jonah 2:2-9). In Genesis 1:2, God the Creator saves the world from the power of chaos in the form of the primeval ocean (see Müller-Fahrenholz 1995:passim - “annihilative powers of chaos”).

In the pre-exilic period the world was conceived as a unified whole, with each member, divine and human, fulfilling a proper function. There was no devil, and the lesser spirits fulfilled their appointed roles. Demons were terrifying but legitimate spirits of calamity, disease, and death, who served the will of the greater gods (Riley 1999:245). However, during and after the Babylonian exile, Israel was influenced by the cosmological dualism of Persian Zoroastrianism (cf. Green 1981:24; Hume 1959:211; Riley 1999:238; Boyce 1975). This cosmology postulated two warring spiritual camps controlled by their leaders, the Zoroastrian god and the devil, and commanded by archangels and archdemons and their descending ranks of lesser spirits. They fought over the loyalty of human beings, expressed in righteous or unrighteous behaviour and eventuating in eternal life or fiery destruction. The old gods of the nations and their servant divinities, the lesser spirits of nature and cosmos, were 'demonised', demoted to the class of wicked spirits, tempting humans to sin and enticing them from the true faith by the false doctrines of the other religions.

The historical link of the biblical belief in the devil and demons with the cosmological dualism of Persian Zoroastrianism has led skeptics to submit that, since the concept of the devil has roots in pagan mythology and in religious traditions, such as Mazdaism, biblical demonology should be taken as extraneous or foreign to biblical demonology. The argument goes that the post-exilic Hebrews injected the devil into their tradition in an effort to shift responsibility for evil from the Lord to another being. Kelly (1968:125), therefore, is persuaded that we must conclude that a great deal of demonology that has evolved in the name of Christian teaching, should be characterised as untheological levity. For Kelly and others, the representations of the spirit world in scripture betray signs of simple folkloristic origin, and the modifications that these images and myths underwent when they came into contact with later cultures and philosophies are no longer convincing, however satisfying they may have been in past ages. In the view of Kelly, a continued adherence to these views, as if they constituted an essential part of divine revelation, runs the risk of exposing the Christian mission to ridicule.

Against indications in the New Testament that Jesus took the devil seriously, the skeptics respond variously, for example: Jesus did not himself refer seriously to

the devil, for the evangelists merely put such words in 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 believe in the devil, 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 (cf. Van Aarde 1987:34f; Crossan 1994:85).

However, in the opinion of Russel (1986:263), the suggestion that Jesus' belief in the devil was only part of the primitive worldview poses serious dangers. Each culture and each age seems determined to believe its worldview the absolute truth, but if history shows anything, it shows that worldviews shift and that all are equally precarious. Russel says that there is no reason to assume that either the first- or the twentieth view is the true one. He points out that the fallacy of chronocentrism is dangerous for all scholars, but for scholars of a Christian persuasion it is particularly odd to maintain that Jesus and the apostles were primitive people who were not as enlightened as we are. Russel goes on to say that, since belief in the devil permeates the New Testament, it follows that, if belief in the devil is rejected, any other belief expressed by the New Testament, including belief in the incarnation and the resurrection, is subject to the same treatment, and some theologians have not shirked this implication.

In the face of intensive intellectual scepticism about the existence of the devil, believers in the sixteenth century responded by saying "*nullus diabolus nullus redemptor*" (no devil, no redeemer). Believers suspected that if the devil, the second best-known figure in Christianity, could be excised from the Christian tradition, then any other figure might be eliminated as well. If Christ did not come to save us from the power of the devil, as the New Testament says, then he did not come to save us at all (cf. Russel 1986:33). Since Christian epistemology is primarily based on scripture and tradition (cf. Joubert 2000:197), and to some degree reason and experience (see Russel 1986:299), it makes little sense to call oneself a Christian while affirming a view contrary to these bases of Christian understanding, namely scripture and tradition (Russel 1986:299).

2.4.2 ETYMOLOGY OF ‘DEMON’

2.4.2.1 FROM PRE- TO POST-EXILIC PERIOD

Riley (1999:235) defines ‘demon’ as a rendering of the cognate Greek words *daimon* and its substantivised neuter adjective *daimonion*; post-classical Latin borrowed the words in the forms *daemon* and *daemonium*. The original meaning of the term *daimon* from the time of Homer (cf. Ferguson 1993:139) onward was ‘divinity’, denoting either an individual god or goddess. The word could designate one’s ‘fate’ or ‘destiny’ or the spirit controlling one’s fate or one’s genius. Commonly the word designated the class of lesser divinities arranged below the Olympian gods, the *daimones*. Hesiod described them as the souls of those who lived in the Golden Age, who now invisibly watch over human affairs (Erga 122-124; cf. Ferguson 1993:146 - for the African equivalent in ancestral mediation and worship refer to Khathide 1999a:74).

As nearly all the deities in the classical period were morally ambiguous, the *daimones* could be described as either good or evil, and the same *daimon* could bring both good or evil according to one’s piety or fate. Not until post-exilic times in intertestamental literature, with the rise of dualism and the concept of the devil, did the word begin to display the meaning ‘evil demon’ in league with the devil and take on an entirely negative connotation (e.g. 1 Cor 10:20; cf. LXX Ps 105:37). Christian writers use it almost entirely in the negative sense (e.g. Augustine in the *City of God* book xxii ch 10; Justin Martyr - cf. Benko 1994:115).

The related term *daimonion* in the classical period meant similarly ‘divine power’ or divinity (Plato, *Rep.* 382e; cf. Acts 17:18). It could mean the class of lower divine beings between gods and mortals, who mediated between the human and divine sphere. In *Symposium*, Plato writes that, “the whole of the demonic is between the divine and the mortal ... interpreting and conveying human things to the gods and divine things to men; prayers and sacrifices from below and ordinances and punishments from above. Being midway between, it makes each to supplement the other, so that the whole combined in one. Through it are conveyed all divinations, and all soothsaying and sorcery. God with man does not mingle; but the demonic is the means of all association and converse of men with

gods and gods with men, whether waking or asleep” (Plato, *Sym.* 202e-203a; *Epinamis* 984e). So, it designated the famous daimonion of Socrates (Plato, *Apol.* 24b, 40a). Plato may have drawn this idea from Pythagoras, but the source which attributes a similar view to him may have been describing the Neopythagoreans who were active at the beginning of the Christian era (cf. Arnold 1992:46; Ferguson 1993:360-361).

Again, after the Jewish exile and the rise of dualism, it came to be used for Satanic demons, especially among the Jewish (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 8.2.5; *Shabbath* 67a), Christian writers (cf. Justin, *Apology* 2.5; 1.5; Origen, *Against Celsus* 7.69; Tertullian, *Shows* 13) and in non-Christian magical texts (cf. Plutarch, *Table Talk* 5; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4.20; Lucian, *Lover of Lies* 16). The New Testament writers, almost without exception, use ‘demon’ in a negative sense.

2.4.2.2 PHILO AND JOSEPHUS

Hellenistic Jewish authors of the first century who wrote in Greek show an awareness of the Jewish ideas on demons, but their terminology reflects Greek usage. Hence our consideration of the writings of Philo and Josephus will serve as a review of the material on the meanings of the words for demons in Greek as well as providing a more immediate context for New Testament teaching (see Ferguson 1984:81).

One of the most important, “if not the most important representative of Jewish-Hellenism” (Vorster 1998:399), was Philo of Alexandria (20BC - 45AD), a contemporary of Jesus and Paul. He lived and wrote mainly in Egypt. Educated in the Alexandrian philosophical thinking as well as the synagogal interpretation of scripture, with Greek as his mother tongue, he was simultaneously Jew and Greek. He is especially known in theological circles on account of his allegorical way of interpretation. However, he was much more than an allegorist. In the last few decades New Testament scholars are increasingly giving special attention to his work.

It was especially the Pentateuch that stimulated Philo’s thinking, and as someone

who was not only a defender of faith, he went to a lot of trouble, particularly to make the Pentateuch understandable. Philo was simultaneously a philosopher, exegete (theologian) and an apologetic historian. His philosophical writings, among which there are works such as his *De aeternitate mundi* (=Concerning the everlasting world) and *De providentia* (=Concerning providence), are strongly influenced by Greek philosophy. Philo was convinced that Jewish history had to be interpreted and did everything in his ability to make the Jews and their religion, although in Greek philosophical garb, to be acceptable to the contemporary world (Vorster 1998:399-400). His religious books on the Law (*De specialibus legibus I-IV*), Genesis (cf. *Legum allegoriae I-III*) and the Decalogue (*De decalogo*) display an extensive use of his allegorical interpretation. Philo also produced a number of writings about the persons in the Bible, among whom are Moses (*De vita Mosis I-III*) Abraham (*De Abrahamo*), Joseph (*De Josepho*) and Cain and Abel (*De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*). With a view to the study of the New Testament, Philo's writings are of particular significance regarding the religio-historical information they offer (cf. Vorster 1998:400).

Of special interest to our study, Philo used 'demon' as did pagan authors, in reference to deities. Certainly there was nothing negative when Philo was quoting a Greek author's reference to "a certain demon or a god" (*Every God Man is Free* 130). The most distinctive use of 'demon' in Philo and the meaning which apparently was significant to him, was an equivalent to the biblical word 'angels', further equated by him also with souls (cf. Arnold 1992:83). Thus Philo speaks of two kinds of bodiless souls: some enter bodies, but others exist on high. The latter, he explains, were called by the Greek 'heroes', and Moses called them 'angels' (*Life of Moses* 1.276).

Philo's treatise, *On the Giants*, gave him the fullest opportunity to correlate the Jewish and Greek ideas on demons. He does so in commenting on Genesis 6:2: "It is Moses' custom to give the name of angels to those whom other philosophers call *daimonas*, souls, that is, which fly and hover in the air" (*On the Giants* II.6). But he avoided taking the "sons of God" in Genesis 6, however, as angels who had intercourse with women (*On the Giants* xiii.58).

Philo accepted an intermediate class of spiritual beings which might be good and serve God or be bad and oppose (*On the Giants* iv.16). Philo testified to the ordinary usage at the beginning of the first century by which demons might refer to either or both kinds. However, Philo's synthesis did not prevail because Christian usage came to apply angels to the good beings in God's service and demons to the evil rebels. Occasionally, Christians made reference to bad angels, as when the New Testament speaks of "the devil and his angels" (Mt 25:41).

Another person of similar importance to our study of the first-century Jewish world is Flavius Josephus (37-95AD). The writings of Josephus may be regarded as the most important source for the study of the history of the Jews during the time of the origination of the New Testament (see Vorster 1998:401). Josephus was born in Jerusalem from a family of priests who descended from Hasmonaeans. From a young age he studied the Jewish intellectual currents, specifically those of the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes and eventually, after an ascetic existence of three years in the desert, he joined the Pharisees. In 64 AD he went to defend a group of priests in Rome who had been arrested by procurator Felix and who were sent to Rome. Through the mediation of a friend, he won the favour and help of the empress, Poppaea. Because of the favour that he enjoyed from the Flavian emperors Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, he was known as Flavius Josephus. He even obtained Roman citizenship. During the Jewish war he was the commander of Galilee. He was captured by Vespasian and predicted that the latter would become emperor of Rome. When this happened, he was freed and was granted Roman citizenship. After the fall of Jerusalem, he established himself in Rome, where he wrote his works.

Four works by Josephus survive, preserved and much read by Christians. He originally wrote *The Jewish War* (*Bellum Judaicum*) in Aramaic and then translated it into Greek with the assistance of collaborators; it was published between 75 and 82. *The Jewish War* follows the tradition of military and political history represented by Polybius.

The second voluminous writing by Josephus, *The Jewish Antiquities* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*), deals with the history of the Jews from the earliest

times until the outbreak of the war against the Romans in 66 AD. It consists of twenty books, and it was published in 93 or 94. The first ten books are a retelling of the biblical data. The rest deals with the time between Cyprus and Nero. It was firstly intended for the Greeks and the Romans, and written when Josephus no longer enjoyed the protection of his guardians. This work bears an apologetic character and its intention was to propagate the Jewish religion and history.

Besides his extensive history, Josephus also wrote a biography (*Vita*) as well as an apology about the image of the Jewish people (*Contra Apionem*). The first is not a complete description of his entire career, but it mainly deals with the era (66/67 AD) when he was the commander of the Jewish army in Galilee. In his description of this war, Justus of Tiberius described Josephus as the organiser of the insurrection in Galilee. Josephus had to correct this image in the light of his relationship with the Romans, and for this reason, had to reject Justus' version of his role.

Contra Apionem (Against Apion) consists of two books. It is not directed against Apion only, but against all who, like Apion, tried to break down the image of the Jews. This work, like his *Vita* and *Antiquitates*, is dedicated to one Epaphroditus, who possibly was a secretary of Nero's, or the linguist who lived in the period between Nero and Nerva.

As touching the topic under study, it can be stated that Josephus has, if anything, an even more varied usage of the 'demon' family of words but lacks a distinctive explanation comparable to Philo (see Ferguson 1984:84). He can use *daimonion* to mean "the deity" or "the divine" (*War* 1.69). This divine power is particularly the dispenser of fate - "In truth the divine power (*daimonion*) had given (Herod) a great many instances of good fortune, even more than he had hoped for, in external affairs, but in his home it was his fate to meet with his greatest misfortune" (*Antiquities* xvi.76). Or, the word may mean the destiny, fate or misfortune itself (*War* 1.233). Often it is difficult to decide whether one should translate in the personal sense, 'the deity', or impersonal, 'fortune' (see Ferguson 1984:84). Josephus says, "My victory that day would have been complete, had I not been thwarted by some demon, or should we say misfortune?" Thus it is surprising

that the word was also used for a demonic, evil spirit without any qualification (*War* 1.613; *Antiquities* xiv.291).

Josephus could use demon for personal good spirits, but perhaps it is significant that when he does he qualifies them as ‘good demons’ (*Antiquities* xvi.20). His most frequent usage of demons is in reference to the souls of the departed (*Antiquities* xiii.317; 415; 416; *War* 1.521; 599; 607), and popular belief is shown in that the reference is usually to avenging spirits.

Evil spirits could enter a person and take possession of him, but they could also be driven out. Thus Josephus uses *daimonia* to interpret ‘evil spirit’ that tormented Saul and that was driven out by David’s music (*Antiquities* vi.166, 168, 211; cf. 1 Sam 16:14-23). Josephus knew of the so called *daimonia*, in other words, the spirits of wicked men which enter the living and kill them unless aid is forthcoming (see Ferguson 1984:85).

From the above evidence, it is clear that the value of the Jewish-Hellenistic literature cannot be ignored as reliable informing sources in our understanding of the linguistic literacy, historical and theological milieu in which the New Testament is founded (cf. Vorster 1998:403). In our understanding of New Testament demonology the Jewish-Hellenistic writings remain indispensable.

2.4.2.3 ‘DEMON’ IN THE SEPTUAGINT

Commonly denoted by ‘LXX’, the Septuagint is the most important Greek translation of the Old Testament, and the oldest known influential translation in any language (see Gunner 1962:1258). The translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek made the Old Testament faith available to Greek speakers and it was thus the beginning of the conceptual translation of biblical thought into the Greek view of reality (see Ferguson 1993:580). Jews who lived in the Greek world had begun the process of defending biblical religion, propagating its virtues, and making intelligible its central affirmations. The synagogues in the Diaspora provided a base of operations for Christian preachers in the early years of the church. Moreover, they attracted many Gentiles who proved to be prime prospects for the Christian gospel the beachhead into the wider Gentile world (see Ferguson 1993:580).

By the time of Jesus, the Septuagint held the place of ‘the Authorised Version’ and as such is so often, although freely, quoted in the New Testament (see Edersheim 1971:23). Nor need we wonder that it should have been the people’s Bible, not merely among the Hellenists, but in Galilee, and even in Judea. In the words of Edersheim (1971:29), “in such manner the LXX version became really the people’s Bible to that large Jewish world through which Christianity was afterwards to address itself to mankind.”

Against this background it is understandable that we mention a few examples of ‘demon’ in the LXX, especially in relation to idols. Idols in Hebrew become ‘demons’ in the dualistic sense found in the LXX (see Riley 1999:238). In LXX Psalm 95:5, the national deities of other peoples, said to be idols (‘*ezizim*’) in Hebrew, become demons (- “All the gods of the nations are demons”); in LXX Deuteronomy 32:17, the foreign divinities whom Israel worshipped, properly described in the Hebrew text as *édîm* (tutelary spirits), are called ‘demons’ (- “They sacrificed to demons and not to God”; cf. LXX Ps 105:37; *Bar.* 4:7); in LXX Isaiah 65:11 *daimon* renders the Hebrew name of the pagan god of Fortune, where the Israelites are said to have been ‘preparing a table for the demon’. This concept of table worship with pagan gods which in reality are demons, carries over into the New Testament (cf. 1 Cor 8). The author of Revelation identifies the worship of idols with the worship of demons (Rev 2:14, 20).

Undoubtedly, the term ‘demon’ assumes a negative meaning in the LXX due to the influence of dualism. Even the *šātān* of the Hebrew Bible becomes the devil (rendered *diabolos* in LXX) who is the archenemy of God at war over the loyalty of humanity.

2.4.2.4 CONCLUSIONS

The concept and word ‘demon’ underwent fundamental change in antiquity caused by the rise of dualism in the essentially monistic cultures of the Near East. Though Jewish Hellenistic thinkers might have used ‘demon’ to denote good and bad spirits, by the time of the New Testament, the word had developed a wholly negative connotation, and it is in this sense that it is used in the New Testament.

2.4.3 CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS TO DEMONIC BELIEF

A sharp increase of interest in the realm of angels, spirits and demons is observable in Jewish literature during the two centuries leading up to the time of Jesus. This preoccupation with the spirit world can be traced in virtually all facets of its literature - The Old Testament apocryphal writings, the Qumran literature, the pseudepigraphal testamentary literature and particularly in the Jewish apocalyptic writings. Jews of this period give details of numbers, names and hierarchies of powers or angels. Where the Old Testament was silent about the rebellion of the evil angels, Jewish writings of the second temple period provided a full account. There is also much discussion on the nature of angelic influence over the destiny of nations as well as over the daily life of the individual.

Several factors can be cited as contributing to the burgeoning curiosity about the spirit realm among the Jews. Firstly, there was a growing tendency to distance God from direct involvement in daily life (see Arnold 1992:64). God's perceived transcendence led many Jews to begin postulating the intermediary role of angels. Secondly, the silence of prophecy - an intermediary channel between God and his people - could have led to the increased inquisitiveness about the spirit world (cf. Russel 1964:73f). Israel needed something for her sustenance and revival (Arnold 1992:65). As a spirit-sensitive community, like other Greco-Roman communities in the first-century world, Israel sought to get answers by focusing on the spirit world.

Thirdly, perhaps the most significant factor leading to the heightened interest in the spirits was the problem of suffering. The illegitimate rule of Palestine by Roman usurpers could now be explained from a demonological perspective; the kingdom of Satan had gained temporary victory (see Arnold 1992:65). But this did not start in the period of the Roman occupation. The dualistic thinking, based on Zoroastrianism which postulated different myths of origin for the great spirits of Light and Darkness: the first being that the two were co-eternal twins without sources, essentially two opposite gods; the second claiming that Time (Zervan) as source generated the two in eternity past as opposing aspects of the original and ambiguous One, provided an explanation for the sufferings of the exile among the people who saw themselves as (relatively) righteous and undeserving of their

plight (see Riley 1999:245; cf. Ps 44:17; Jer 31:29-30; Ezek 18:25). The people of God believed that it was the devil who persecuted the innocent and brought disaster as a trial of faith and character, attempting to turn them from God and goodness. The belief was that there were malevolent forces in the universe that exercise a baneful influence in the socio-political realm, especially where the people of God are concerned (cf. Page 1994:64; Pfeiffer 1959:121f).

According to some scholars, among these Rofé (1988), Koester (1980) and Pagels (1995), there is belief that it was the sectarian group of Essenes who took the idea of the holy or eschatological war forward and thus contributed largely to our present understanding of the devil/Satan and his cohorts. These passionate sectarians saw the foreign occupation of Palestine as evidence that the forces of evil had taken over the world, and in the form of Satan or the prince of darkness, infiltrated and taken captive God's own people, turning most of them into allies of the evil one (cf. CD 1:13-20). The Essenes saw themselves involved in the war of the "sons of light" against the "sons of darkness" (1 *QMi*). The "sons of light" are the "exiles of the wilderness"; the "sons of darkness" are the traditional enemies of Israel in the Old Testament, plus their Jewish allies ("the wicked of the covenant", "the congregation of traitors") and the *kittim* (probably a coded epithet for the Romans or the Greeks - cf. Ferguson 1993:442; Pagels 1995:58; 4*QpNab*). The Essenes retold the whole history of Israel in terms of the cosmic war (cf. Freyne 1980:108). Even in earliest times, they say "the Prince of Light raised up Moses" (CD 5:18) but the evil one, here called Beliar (or Belial), aroused opposition to Moses among his own people. Individual angels are often named, some of whom are Michael, Gabriel, Sariel and Raphael (1*QM* ix.15-16) and it is assumed that the angelic army is hierarchically structured. Belial, "the angel of darkness", stands opposed to the forces of good. Belial is both the enemy of God and the tempter of the human race (see Khathide 2000:82). His angels or spirits are called "spirits of wickedness" or "spirits of error".

Pagels (1995:58) correctly observes that, "had Satan not already existed in Jewish tradition, the Essenes would have invented him". It is also noticeable that in their sacred books, such as the great *Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*, they are assured of victory and that God had given them

the Prince of Light as their supernatural ally to help them contend against Satan, and against his human allies.

The Prince of Light thou has appointed to come to our support: but Satan, the angel Mastema, thou has created for the pit; he rules in darkness, and his purpose is to bring about evil and sin (1 *QM* 19:10-12).

The “sons of light” eagerly awaited the day of judgement, when they expected that God would come with all the armies of heaven to annihilate the corrupt majority along with Israel’s foreign enemies (cf. Pagels 1995:58).

Thus, the suffering of God’s people in Palestine by Roman usurpers could be cited as one of the critical reasons that led to the proliferation of demonic belief in their quest to seek for answers in explaining their predicament. The persecution literature of the intertestamental period attests to this fact.

2.5 DEMONOLOGY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

2.5.1 YAHWISM AND EVIL

Nel (1987:4) maintains that the monotheism of Yahwism brought a peculiar problem about the notion of evil to the fore. According to Nel, the closed paradigm of mythological thinking could easily accommodate the existence of evil alongside order (cosmos) without any essential contradiction in belief. Israel shared mutually the mythological cosmology with her neighbours, but - and this created a problem - the advocates of Yahwism deliberately opposed the religious implications. Consequently, Nel (1987:5) writes that certain harmful phenomena of existence which were attributed to demons within the mythological context had to remain unexplained or had to be imputed to Yahweh himself. The character of Yahwism tolerated no rivals (see Ling 1961:4; Nel 1987:5).

The intolerance of Yahwism towards opposing gods can be clearly discerned in the way it addressed itself to the two types of Zoroastrianism which postulated different myths of origin for the great spirits of Light and Darkness: the first held

that the two were co-eternal twins without source, essentially two opposite gods; the second claimed that Time (Zervan) as source had generated the two in eternity past as opposing aspects of the original and ambitious One. The latter concept of an original One melded most favourably with developing ideas of monotheism and the sovereignty of God in Israel (see Riley 1999:245). The eternal dualism of the former view is rejected by Second Isaiah (- Isa 45:5 - "I am the Lord and there is no other; besides me there is no God"), and the God of Israel is seen as was Zervan, the source of both opposites: "I form light and I create darkness; I make wholeness and I create evil" (Isa 45:7). This idea that God created two divine spirits, good and evil, is clearly expressed in texts from Qumran (cf. 1QS 3:25 "[God] created the spirits of Light and Darkness").

That God should be the source of evil, however, or was in competition with another power, was difficult given the old view of God as sovereign and righteous (Dt 32:4; 1 Jn 1:5). Consequently, Yahweh became responsible for illness and suffering (Nel 1987:5; cf. e.g. Ps 6, 51, 88; Ex 12:23; 2 Sam 24:16ff; 2 Ki 19:35). Yahweh's activity was sometimes seen in conjunction with hostile forces (e.g. Gen 32:23-33; Ex 4:24-26; 12:21-23) and evil spirits could be in his service (e.g. Jdg 9:23; 1 Sam 16:14f; 18:10f; 19:f; Isa 19:14; 29:9-10). At times Yahweh almost became the cause of harmful forces in human existence (e.g. 1 Sam 2:6-7; Isa 45:7; Lm 3:38; Am 3:6; 1 Sam 26:29 and the prologue of Job 1-2). Despite the possibility of a justified logical deduction by which Yahweh himself would become the sole source of evil and in fact evil itself, such an assumption nevertheless did not occur (Nel 1987:5; cf. Lindstrom 1983:239f).

The innate contradiction that arose from an assumption that an all-good Yahweh was also responsible for illness and suffering, was left unsolved (Nel 1987:5). Other creative thinkers produced an alternate view which melded dualism with the old traditions of the Combat Myth which took Yahweh as El, head of the heavenly council (see Riley 1999:246). In all versions of the Combat Myth (see also Mavromataki 1997:13) and Zoroastrian doctrine, the upper world forces of Light ultimately defeat the forces of Darkness; the enemies, the formidable, were weaker and lesser beings. Thus, the one God, the God of Israel, could stand as the sovereign God of light, presiding over the lesser divine beings of the heavenly council (the angels), some of whom were righteous, others of whom (as Baal's

enemies in El's council), by their own choice, were sources of evil. This allowed the origin of evil in heaven to be removed one stage from God: evil was the result of some feeling in lesser divine beings (see Riley 1999:246). These were led by a great opponent similar to the great enemies in the Combat Myth. The devil, followed by his hosts of demons, assumed characteristics of the mythic opponents of the heavenly gods destined for defeat. He could be opposed by a great champion of righteousness, the Angel of the Lord (Zech 3:1; Jub 17:15 - 18:16), or Michael, the archangel (cf. Jude 9), or in later Christian thought, by Jesus.

Nel (1987:5) is of the opinion that one could, therefore, assume that the binary opposition of good and evil without essential conflict (typical of the mythic context), might still prevail over the logical consequences of a monotheism in the Old Testament in explaining the existence of both good and evil. Consequently, Nel concludes that Yahweh never became all-evil. Although Yahweh allowed evil, he himself did not become evil. The manipulation of evil forces were still for the sake of good ends. Nel also concludes that it is also evident from the Old Testament that the poles of binary opposition had not yet developed into metaphysical and ontologically opposed entities, in other words, into an absolute dualism in cosmological conception. The maintenance of the binary opposition of good and evil had effective and heuristic powers to explain the existence of both good and evil in human existence without hampering the individual's responsibility of choice (cf. Nel 1987:5). In the context of Yahwism, "Man himself is to blame that he is overtaken by the consequences of evil" (Van Aarde 1987:24).

2.5.2 SATAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

2.5.2.1 REFERENCES TO SATAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In this subsection, our interest is not an elaborate discussion on the origin, and etymology of *śātān* but rather on the functional meaning where it appears in the Old Testament (more specifically the Hebrew Bible). In her monograph, *An Adversary in Heaven: śātān in the Hebrew Bible*, Day (1988) investigates in a somewhat intensive way the meaning of *śātān* in the Hebrew Bible and comes to some conclusions which are of interest to this study.

The problem with Day's findings is that she does not see a link between the Old Testament texts on *śātān* and the Judeo-Christian view on Satan (see Day 1988:63). In fact, she adopts a negative opinion towards the idea of the development of the *śātān* concept. For Day, the notion may be said to have evolved on its own soil and within its own thought-world, and may be said to evolve in Judeo-Christian thought after its introduction. Day contends that it cannot be said to have developed in Israel prior to the time it was introduced into the biblical stream of consciousness. While Day's argument is both a formidable and attractive one, it cannot be said to be totally convincing because it does not take seriously the non-canonical Jewish literature on the subject and especially the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament. Perhaps, to be precise, the unity of the scriptures does not seem to appeal that much to Day in her discussion on *śātān*. On the other hand, such criticism may be labelled as unfair and unjustified, as it may fall beyond the scope and purpose of her study.

The thing that most scholars on the subject agree on is that of the ideal of a heavenly council that Israel shares with the nations of the Near East (cf. Mullen 1980). The consensual view is that the concept of *śātān* in the Old Testament needs to be understood against the backdrop of the divine council in the nations of the Near East (cf. e.g. Page 1995:25; Day 1988:79; Robinson 1944; Wright 1950; Cross 1953).

The first appearance (chronologically, that is) of a heavenly *śātān* is found in the story of Balaam. In this episode (Nm 22:22-35), Balaam sets out with his two attendants on a journey, an act which incurs God's wrath. God responds by dispatching a messenger, the *mal'ak yhw*, described as a *śātān*, who stations himself on the road upon which Balaam is travelling. Balaam is blissfully ignorant of the sword-wielding messenger, but Balaam's ass sees the danger and avoids the messenger by going off the road and into a field for which Balaam beats the animal. The messenger moves further along the road and takes up a position in a hollow between two walled vineyards. Balaam's ass once again sees the messenger and presses against one of the walls to avoid him, thus crushing Balaam's foot against one of the walls and earning another beating. Foiled yet again, the *mal'ak* moves ahead to a place in the road that affords no way to circumvent him; perceiving this, the ass lays down, for which she receives another beating.

At this point Yahweh gives the ass the power of speech (see Day 1988:46), and the ass asks Balaam why he has beaten her. Balaam responds that she has been sporting with him, and that if he had a sword in his hand, he would kill her. The ass points out that she has been his mount since time immemorial and she has never behaved like this before. Balaam admits that she has not. At this juncture Yahweh uncovers Balaam's eyes so that he can see the sword-wielding messenger standing in the road, and Balaam falls down to the ground. The messenger asks Balaam why he has struck the ass, and asserts that he has come forth as a *šātān* because Balaam's journey was taken as contrary to God's will. The ass had seen the messenger and avoided him; had she not done so, the messenger would have killed Balaam. Balaam then admits his guilt, stating that he did not know that the messenger was standing in the road; if the messenger judges the journey to be wrong, Balaam offers to turn back. The messenger gives Balaam permission to continue, but adjures him to speak only as instructed. Thus Balaam proceeds with the princes of Balak (Nm 22:35). Reading the episode of the Balaam cycle, it is clear, according to Day (1988:147) that the *šātān* of Numbers 22 that he is the *mal'akyhwh*, who was dispatched because Balaam piqued divine anger by embarking on a journey against Yahweh's will. Kluger (1967:39) also remarks that *šātān* as used in Numbers 22 is a functional concept and not a mythological figure.

Day (1988:25) also briefly investigates the meaning of *šātān* in the context of I Samuel 29:1-5. In this chapter, the Philistines are mustering in preparation for battle against Saul. When David and his troops pass in review before the Philistine commanders, they object to David's participation in the upcoming combat on the basis that David would become a *šātān*, turning against them on the battlefield in order to ingratiate himself to Saul. Day comes to a conclusion that the noun *šātān* in this episode must be understood to mean an adversary, in this case referring to David.

In another episode in II Samuel 19:16-23, David is enroute to Jerusalem, after the rebellion of Absalom had been successfully put down. Shimei, a Saulide who cursed David on his initial flight from Jerusalem (II Sam 16:5-8), meets David and his entourage at the Jordan with the purpose of seeking legal pardon for his crime of cursing the king. Abishai, a member of the royal court, insists that Shimei

be put to death for cursing Yahweh's anointed. To this, David responds by calling Abishai a *šātān*. In Day's (1988:26) view, given the clearly forensic context of both Shimei's plea for pardon and Abishai's formal charge against him, *šātān* should be best understood here to mean "legal accuser" (see also Day 1987:543-547). Day draws attention to the fact that Abishai, a member of the royal court assumes the role of the accuser in this specific situation and therefore the term *šātān* does not designate an office, but rather is a function that Abishai performs. Abishai's accusation is completely justified; Shimei did in fact curse David. Hence *šātān* here has no slanderous connotation (Day 1988:26).

When we read 1 Kings 5:2-6 we are presented with a message sent by Solomon to Hiram, King of Tyre requesting skilled labourers to assist in the temple-building project. Solomon states that David was unable to build a temple for Yahweh because he was engaged in numerous battles against the surrounding peoples. To Solomon, however, Yahweh has given peace; there is neither adversary nor misfortune - there is no *šātān*, and therefore Solomon is able to undertake the building project. Again in this passage *šātān* means "adversary", and like 1 Samuel 29 the context is military (see Day 1988:26).

The next context in which the term *šātān* is used of human beings is 1 Kings 11. At the beginning of that chapter we are told about Solomon's many foreign wives who, when Solomon had grown old, turned his ear away from Yahweh (v. 1-6). As a result of this apostasy it is announced that Yahweh will tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hands, all but one tribe (v. 9-13). Yahweh raises up Hadad of Edom as a *šātān* against Solomon (v. 14) as well as Rezon in Damascus in the same capacity (v. 23, 25).

Day (1988:27) is of the view that both 1 Kings 5 and 11 must be set within the Deuteronomistic understanding of history as a vehicle through which divine judgment is expressed. After ridding himself of royal rivals and other nuisances and thus establishing his grip on the kingdom (1 Ki 2), Solomon settles into a reign of peace and prosperity. As an introduction to his reign, it is stated (1 Ki 3:3) that Solomon kept the covenant stipulations of Yahweh, and thus the theological ground is established for a period of stability and prosperity (1 Ki 4:24-25). Indeed, it is not until Solomon's old age, when he is portrayed as being corrupted by the

worship imported by his foreign wives (IKi 11:1-8) that the purported tranquility is broken. Because Solomon had done evil in the eyes of the Lord (IKi 11:6), Hadad and Rezon were raised up by Yahweh to harass Solomon. While Solomon had remained faithful to Yahweh, there had been no *šātān* to disturb his peaceful reign (IKi 5:4).

Although noting that *šātān* in I Kings 5 and 11 may simply be translated “adversary” (see Day 1988:28), Von Rad (1964:73) suggests that there also be a legal dimension to the Deuteronomist’s use of the term in these two chapters. Solomon had sinned, and because of this sin Yahweh raised up Hadad and Rezon as adversaries against him and are, therefore, according to Von Rad, concrete illustrations of divine judgement and thus *šātān* has been drawn into the Deuteronomist’s legalistic conception of sin and punishment. Day (1988:29) questions whether it is on this basis correct to characterise Hadad and Rezon as accusers. In spite of the observation of Von Rad, the adversarial function of *šātān* appears to be the best interpretation within the context of I Kings 5 and 11.

Another context in which *šātān* has a terrestrial referent is Psalm 109. Psalm 109 is an imprecatory psalm in which the psalmist prays that his enemy may be brought to trial and found guilty (see Page 1995:23-24). In connection with this, he says:

Appoint a wicked man against him; let an accuser (*šātān*)
stand at his right hand (v. 6).

What presents a problem in this psalm is the abrupt change from a plurality of enemies in verses 1-5 to a single opponent in verses 6-19, followed by a return to the plural in verses 20-31. Scholars differ as to the actual meaning and identity of the *šātān* in Psalm 109:6 (see Leahy 1975:77-79; Page 1995:24; Day 1988:30f). Page comes to a debatable but yet reasonable conclusion that the context of the psalm suggests a temporal court scene, and the psalmist probably used the word *šātān* in this instance to refer to a human prosecutor (cf. Day 1988:31).

The five contexts in which the noun *śātān* is found (one celestial - Nm 22 and four terrestrial referents - I Sam 29; II Sam 19; I Ki 5, 11; Ps 109) give a broad and general understanding of how the word was used in the Old Testament. But it needs to be said that the debate on the historical development of the personal devil/Satan is focussed on the three passages, namely, the prologue of Job; Zechariah 3:1-2 and I Chronicles 21:1. In these texts, the word refers to a celestial being, and it is primarily from these that the Jewish and Christian conceptions of Satan developed (see Page 1995:24) and to these passages of scripture we now turn.

2.5.2.2 THE SATAN IN JOB

The focus of our interest in the book of Job is not to discuss whether the book is a hypothetical situation, folktale or factual. Our focus is the role of *śātān* in the that book. The word *śātān* occurs in Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-4, 6-7. In each of these verses, it appears with the definite article, so that it could be translated “the satan”. At this stage, the word was not used as a proper name, rather it described function (Page 1995:24).

Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-6 describe two scenes in which Satan, along with other supernatural beings, presents himself before Yahweh. The setting is that of a heavenly council or divine assembly (cf. Nel 1987:6), a familiar feature of ancient Near Eastern religion (see Mullen 1980; Page 1995:25). In Israel, however, the concept differs significantly from that found in the mythology of its polytheistic neighbours, since the members of Yahweh’s court are represented as subordinate beings who simply carry out his will (see Page 1995:25). Satan appears as an angel, “son of God” (*ben elohim*), a term that, in Hebrew idiom, often means “one of the divine beings” (see Pagels 1995:41). Clearly the phrase refers to celestial beings who are subservient to God.

According to the storyteller, Satan accompanied the angels when they came to present themselves to Yahweh (Job 1:6). Whether Satan’s presence was thought to be usual is unclear. Some think that Satan is represented as a regular member of Yahweh’s entourage, perhaps a member of particularly high standing (cf. e.g. Jacob 1958:71). Others think that the way Satan’s presence is described implies

that he did not usually join the other angels for the divine assembly, and is, therefore, an intruder on this occasion (cf. e.g. Ball 1922:103). In the two accounts of Satan's appearance in the celestial council, Yahweh opens the conversation by asking from whence he has come. Satan responds in both cases with, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it" (Job 1:7; 2:2). Some think that "roaming" indicates Satan's exercise of greater freedom than the angels, who generally are represented as entering the human realm only to execute specific, divinely given tasks. Though wandering may express the idea of aimless wandering, it is generally agreed that here it refers to purposeful activity (cf. Page 1995:26). Pagels (1995:41) perceives the storyteller in Job as playing on the similarity between the sound of the Hebrew *šātān* and *shūt*, the Hebrew word "to roam", suggesting that the *šātān*'s special role in the heavenly court is that of a kind of roving intelligent agent, like those whom many Jews of the time would have known - and detested - from the king of Persia's elaborate system of secret police and intelligence officers (cf. Tur-Sinai 1957:38-45). Known as "the king's eye" or "the king's ear", these agents roamed the empire looking for signs of disloyalty among the people (see Pagels 1995:41).

In the first meeting of the divine assembly in Job, Yahweh boasts about one of his most loyal subjects: "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is no one like him on earth, a blessed and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" (1:8). Significantly, it is God, not Satan, who singles Job out for consideration (Page 1995:26). That the initiative comes from God immediately establishes that he is in control and creates a difficulty for the view that God and the devil are the eternally co-existent forces opposing each other. In his response, Satan claims that Job worships God because God ensures his material well-being by encircling Job with the protective hedge. It is only when Yahweh agrees to remove that protective hedge and allows *šātān* to touch Job's family and possessions that Job is plunged into suffering. Yet in chapter 3, Job attributes his suffering to the fact that God hedges him around. Because Job is not privy to the celestial machinations, like a modern reader - a process that set into motion his fall and prosperity; thus his statement in 3:23 cannot be said to contradict 1:10 (see Day 1988:74).

That Job 1:6-13 and 2:1-7 portray meetings of the divine council is clear. The image of Yahweh surrounded by the celestial court is the traditional setting for council scenes (e.g. I Ki 22:19; Is 6:2-3; Zech 3:4, 7). In Job, the notion is fostered that the council has gathered with the purpose of determining human fate, specifically the lot of Job (1:8; cf. Day 1988:80). In the opening verses (1:1-6) the audience has been introduced to Job as a paragon of human piety. The scene switches to the heavenly assembly, with Yahweh touting Job's outstanding virtues. But, instead of acquiescence, Yahweh's testimony is met with an atypical challenge (1:9-11). Yahweh is charged by a celestial accuser with protecting Job, his family and his possessions. The response of the celestial accuser implies that God is wrong in thinking so highly of Job and he was wrong to reward Job's piety with prosperity. If, Satan suggests, there would be a reversal in Job's fortunes, the hypocrisy of his professed piety would become apparent. God has only to remove the blessings that prop up Job's faith, and it will collapse and be revealed as a sham. Not only does Satan assail Yahweh's confidence in Job, he also proposes a test whereby it may be demonstrated that such confidence is misplaced. While questioning God's assessment of Job, Satan implicitly acknowledges that Job's fate is in God's hands and Satan himself has no power to do anything independently of God's will (cf. Page 1995:27).

In proposing a test for the piety and righteousness of Job, Satan is implicitly challenging Yahweh's blueprint for world order (cf. Day 1988:80); if the righteous always prosper, how can it be ascertained that their behaviour is not motivated by material gain? Satan is not accusing Job, or at least not directly. He is attacking the problem at its source, by accusing the Creator of perpetrating a perverse world order (cf. Day 1988:80-81). In Job 1:12, Yahweh consents to the test proposed by Satan (the *šātān*) and grants him permission to attack Job's possessions, but Yahweh lays down the condition that Satan is not to touch Job's person. Here we see that Satan does not merely dispute Job's integrity; Satan is the one who puts it to the test by inflicting Job. The condition put by Yahweh implies, moreover, that Satan might get carried away with this task if clear limitations are not prescribed. The text portrays Satan as one who brings about human distress; in addition, it suggests that he takes pleasure in doing so and thus must be restrained (Page 1995:27).

When Satan (the *šātān*) appears again among the sons of God on the appointed day, Yahweh points out that “Job still holds fast to his integrity, although you incited me against him, to harm him without cause” (2:3b). Then the *šātān* asks that he increase the pressure:

Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But
put forth your hand now, and touch his flesh and his bone,
and he will curse you to your face (2:4-5).

According to the story, Job withstands the test, the *šātān* retreats, and “the Lord restored the fortunes of Job ... and he gave him twice as much as he had before” (42:10). In the story we learn that Satan (the *šātān*) terrifies and harms a person but he remains an angel, a member of the heavenly court, God’s obedient servant (cf. Pagels 1995:42). Yahweh’s granting of permission to Satan to wreak havoc in the life of Job and insisting on limits further reinforces how circumscribed the sphere of Satan’s influence is. There is no metaphysical dualism. Unmistakenly, Satan is subject to Yahweh’s will (cf. Page 1995:28). At the most, Satan’s role is limited to the mediation of evil in the natural realm (Page 1995:30). As far as the author of Job is concerned, Yahweh exercises absolute control over his creation. Nothing falls outside God’s dominion - on earth or in heaven. The use of the definite article (“the” *šātān*) also helps us to realise that during the period of the writing of the book of Job, the devil concept had not yet developed into the Satan we know in modern times.

At least three characteristics of the Joban Satan reappear in the New Testament. Firstly, the thought of Satan as one who roams the earth bringing affliction is found in I Peter 5:8, where the devil is said to prowl around “like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”. Secondly, the description of the devil as one who accuses Christians before God in Revelation 12:10 goes back to the role of Satan as Job’s accuser. Thirdly, Jesus’ comment in Luke 22:31 that Satan desired to sift Peter like wheat recalls the testing of Job’s loyalty to Yahweh (cf. Page 1995:30).

2.5.2.3 THE SATAN IN ZECHARIAH

The reference of Satan in Zechariah 3:1-2 is found in a vision that the prophet had in the second year of Darius (Zech 1:7), which can be dated quite precisely to 520 or 519 B.C. (cf. Page 1995:30). The Babylonian captivity had come to an end, and the returned exiles were now being led by the governor Zerubbabel and a high priest named Joshua. Joshua was the son of Jehozadak and a descendant of Seraiah, who had been the high priest at the time of the destruction of the temple and had been taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8-11, 18). Joshua was probably born in Babylon, but he returned to Judah with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2), and they worked together on the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 3:2, 8).

Zechariah 3:1-10 describes the fourth in a series of eight visions revealed to the prophet. In this particular vision, Zechariah sees Joshua, dressed in filthy clothing, “standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him” (v. 1). It is generally thought that the scene is another example of a meeting of the heavenly council, though not all scholars concur (cf. Page 1995:31). Nel (1987:6), in support of the heavenly council idea in Zechariah, says that the *šātān* was part of a heavenly tribunal where the justification and sanction of Joshua as high priest was at stake. In Zechariah’s vision, Satan (the *šātān*) is rebuked before he has an opportunity to speak (v. 2) and Joshua is assured that his sin has been removed (v. 4). His filthy clothes are taken off and replaced with clean clothes and the angel of the Lord (*mal’ak yhw*) says to him, “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here’” (v. 7).

This passage of scripture (Zech 3:1-7) has received different interpretations by different biblical scholars. Some scholars who have worked with Zechariah 3:1-7 maintain that Joshua is a cypher for the restored community and that his change of clothes represents the change in the community’s status from impure to pure (or sinful to forgiven) in the eyes of Yahweh (see Page 1995:31; Day 1988:117). Joshua’s filthy clothing, it is asserted, represents the people’s sin and guilt, which led to exile. The *šātān*, they say, is objecting to this change in the community’s

status. Yahweh wishes to pardon his people; the *śātān* is opposed. The *śātān*, therefore, represents the strict observance of legality that precludes pardon; he is the relentless accuser who rigidly interprets retributive justice. He is opposed to the plan of salvation (cf. e.g. Kluger 1967:144). The *śātān* is, in this instance, seen as the justice of Yahweh as contrasted by Yahweh's grace (e.g. Mitchell 1912:151).

Another interpretation of the Zechariah portion as represented, among others, by Hanson (1977:195-233) and Pagels (1995:43f) is that of seeing the *śātān* as inciting factions among the people. Zechariah's account is said to reflect the conflicts that arose within Israel after thousands of Jews, many of them influential and educated, whom the Babylonians had captured in war and exiled to Babylon, returned to Palestine from exile. Cyrus, king of Persia, having then recently conquered Babylon, not only allowed these Jewish exiles to go home but intended to make them his allies. Thus he offered them funds to reconstruct Jerusalem's defensive city walls, and to rebuild the great temple, which the Babylonians had destroyed. Those returning were eager to re-establish the worship of "the Lord alone" in their land, and they naturally expected to re-establish themselves as rulers of the people. But, they were not warmly welcomed by those whom they had left behind. Many of those who had remained saw the former exiles not only as agents of the Persian king, but as determined to retrieve the power and land they had been forced to relinquish when they were deported. Many resented the returnees' plan to take charge of the priestly offices and to "purify" the Lord's worship. In this line of thought, the prophet Zechariah is said to be siding with the returning exiles in this heated conflict and recounts a vision in which the *śātān* speaks for the rural inhabitants who accuse the returning high priest of being a worthless candidate. Here the *śātān* speaks for a disaffected, and unsuccessful party against another party of fellow Israelites. In Zechariah's account of factions within Israel, the *śātān* takes on a sinister quality and his role begins to change from that of God's agent to that of his opponent (see Pagels 1995:44).

The majority of scholars understand the scene presented in Zechariah 3:1-7 as one of investiture (cf. e.g. May 1938:179; Day 1988:118). That priestly consecration involved a change of clothes is demonstrated by Exodus 29:4 and Leviticus 8:7; it is also accompanied by the donning of a turban (*misnepet* Ex 29:6; Lv

8:9). Furthermore, Zechariah 3 is drawing on a genre of the prophetic call, a genre which implies a change of role and status (cf. Day 1988:118). Proponents of this line of thinking draw parallels between Zechariah 3:1-7 and Isaiah 6. Both passages depict a human being at a meeting of the divine council. Both human beings are impure and both are cleansed by a heavenly intermediary. As a result of this action, both characters acquire authority. Isaiah is empowered to deliver God's message, and Joshua gains ongoing access to the divine council. Both Zechariah 3:1-7 and Isaiah 6 show parallels that are too close and too abundant to be accidental; Zechariah 3:1-7 must be purposely drawing on the call genre (Jeremias in Day 1988:119).

Having established the contextual bearings of the passage under focus, an endeavour can be made in understanding the role of the *śātān*. Day (1988:121) proposes that the *śātān* in the passage is depicted as objecting to Joshua's investiture because in fact his assumption of office was not univocally supported within the restoration community (cf. Vanderkam 1991:553f). Zechariah 3:1-7 proclaims that the divine council itself has sanctioned Joshua's appointment as high priest, and presents his exercise of office as a divine commission (v. 7). The presence of a celestial *śātān* tells us that the objections to Joshua's candidacy had been aired even in the heavenly assembly, and had been overruled. The *śātān* is described as standing at Joshua's right hand, a position which conforms to that of the prosecutor in Psalm 109:6. The text itself does not delineate the precise charge(s) brought against Joshua in the heavenly court, either the original audience knew them well enough that they did not need to be repeated, or the author is being intentionally vague (cf. Day 1988:121). In the passage (v.1) the reason is identified for Satan's presence - to accuse Joshua - but Satan is not given an opportunity to do so. We are left to infer what the substance of the charges might have been (cf. Page 1995:32). In any case, before Satan could speak, he is silenced with the words: "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" (v. 2). The account then goes on to describe the removal of the high priest's filthy clothes and the replacement of them with clean ones. This is then followed by the recommissioning of Joshua and the promise of a successor who will bring greater blessing in the future (vv. 8-10).

In conclusion, it is noticeable that the role of the *śātān* in Zechariah 3:1-7 is very brief and somewhat obscure. The main focus of the vision in the changing of Joshua's clothing or status, the *śātān* is mentioned only incidentally. In this passage the role of the *śātān* is that of a prosecutor or accuser. Though the *śātān* might have had legitimate accusations to make, in that function of prosecutor/accuser, he is rebuked by the *mal'ak yhw* - a celestial intermediary who acts both as intercessor and witness (cf. Day 1988:123). Appearing in Zechariah 3 as one who seeks to remind God of human sinfulness, the *śātān* is antagonistic to God's gracious disposition towards his people. Although the *śātān* is hostile to God, he is also completely subordinated to him. Satan does not even utter a word before he is rebuked for being opposed to the divine will regarding Joshua. The image of Satan as accuser of God's people found in the prologue of Job and in Zechariah 3:1-7 is also found in Revelation 12:10. In all these instances the ultimate authority and sovereignty of God is not in question.

2.5.2.4 SATAN IN 1 CHRONICLES

Another reference to Satan in the Old Testament is found in 1 Chronicles 21:1. The whole narrative in 1 Chronicles 21:1-22:1 is paralleled in the Deuteronomistic history by 2 Samuel 24. The narrative describes a census ordered by David during his reign, an ensuing plague and an altar built on the threshing floor of a Jebusite named Araunah. Day (1988:132) draws our attention to the fact that the introductory verse in 2 Samuel 24 links with 2 Samuel 21. In 2 Samuel 24:1, the story begins, "Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them saying, 'Go and take a census of Israel and Judah'". In 2 Samuel 21, another natural disaster is related that occurred during the reign of David, namely a three year famine. The historian in 2 Samuel attributes this famine to bloodguilt incurred by Saul's treatment of the Gibeonites, and thus the two chapters taken together originally functioned as an apologetic, exonerating David from any blame for the respective catastrophes (see Day 1988:133).

In her observation, Day (1988:133) thinks that the Chronicler included the census plague story in his history of the reign of David because he understood the altar built by David in response to the plague to be the altar of the Solomonic temple (1 Chr 22:1). In his narrative, the Chronicler was highly selective in terms

of the material he chose to transmit concerning the reign of David. On the one hand, he generally deleted material (such as the Bathsheba incident, Nathan's rebuke and the revolt of Absalom) as counterproductive to his goal of demonstrating that David was an ideal monarch. On the other hand, he rearranged the order of his source material, for instance to give the impression that David's first act after securing Jerusalem was to attend to the ark. Day goes on to state that the Chronicler had three primary objectives in his treatment of the reign of David: to show that David was the legitimate king for all Israel, to smooth over any reference to internal opposition (e.g. Bathsheba, Nathan, Absalom), and to portray David as the founder and organiser of Israel's cultic life (1 Chr 23-27). It was for the third reason that the Chronicler included the story of the census, plague and altar building (cf. Day 1988:134; Fohrer 1983:90-91).

In both 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles, it is to be recognised, the census is represented as a sinful act that brings punishment upon the nation. However, neither book explains what makes it so reprehensible. Biblical scholars have proffered a variety of hypotheses to account for the negative assessment of the census. Some suggest that the census might have been perceived as a threat to the liberties of the various tribes under David's control (cf. McKane 1963:302). Gaster (1969:483f) speculates that David's census was opposed because of the superstitious fear that knowledge of the exact number of things gives the one who knows power over these things. Another view is that David took the census for the purpose of instituting taxation which aroused vehement and immediate opposition (cf. Pagels 1995:42-43). More attractive than these suggestions is the view that taking a census represented reliance on human military might, rather than on Yahweh (Mauchline 1971:332; cf. Page 1995:34-35; Myers 1965:71). This hypothesis seems attractive and reasonable because a census was normally a vehicle for military conscription. Indeed, 1 Chronicles 21:5 indicates that, after completing the census, Joab reported to David the number of fighting men. What made the census so heinous was that David was abandoning the complete trust in Yahweh (cf. Jer 17:5; 2 Chr 32:7-8) that characterised his early victories over the Philistines, as described in 1 Chronicles 14:8-17, and instead was placing his confidence in the size of his army (cf. Page 1995:35).

Of special interest to our study is the reason why the court historian slips “satan” into an account concerning the origin of census taking. It is said in 1 Chronicles 21:1 that *šātān* incited David to the sin of taking a census. In the Deuteronomistic counterpart of this episode (2 Sam 24:1) it was the “wrath of the Lord” that caused the national census to be undertaken by David. Although the notion that God could cause evil and sin (cf. Jdg 9:23; 1 Sam 2:25; 16:4; 1 Ki 12:15; Isa 6:10) was not altogether alien to Old Testament belief, it was in direct conflict with the theological viewpoint of the author of Chronicles who emphatically emphasised the transcendence of the Lord as well as human responsibility and accountability for one’s conduct (cf. Nel 1987:7; Haag 1974:207). By replacing the reference to the “wrath of Yahweh” (2 Sam 24:1) with a reference to *šātān*, the Chronicler (1 Chr 21:1) has altered his source in a surprising way. In the view of Page (1995:35), probably this emendation reflects a growing awareness that God is not the immediate instigator of evil. Page says the change also reflects a developing conception of Satan, which sees him as one who directly encourages human sin. Nel (1987:7) also draws our attention to the fact that it is important to note that *šātān* does not substitute for Yahweh himself, as proposed by Page (1995:35), but for the “wrath of Yahweh” (2 Sam 24:1). Satan was, therefore viewed as a kind of demon which personified or substituted for the “wrath of Yahweh” (cf. Von Rad 1964:73; Nel 1987:7).

The major problem, according to Nel (1987:7) and Day (1988:127) arises from the fact that one cannot be absolutely sure whether *šātān*, without the definite article in 1 Chronicles 21:1, is a proper noun or not. The major English translations of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. KJV, RSV, etc.) interpret the lack of the definite article to mean that *šātān* in 1 Chronicles 21:1 is being used as a proper name, and the vast majority of modern commentators concur (cf. e.g. Myers 1965:145; McCarter 1984:509). There have been dissenting voices, though. Tur-Sinai (1957:44-45) and Kaupel (1930:105f) have maintained that *šātān* in 1 Chronicles is an indefinite noun referring to a human adversary, while Gaster (1976:225) and Lemke (1963:61) take *šātān* to mean an unspecified celestial adversary. Haag *et al* (1974:214) note in passing that the noun *šātān* in 1 Chronicles 21:1 may be indefinite, but develop their treatment of the passage with the understanding that it is a proper name. Day (1988:128) disputes the fact that *šātān* in 1 Chronicles 21:1 may be referring to a proper name, citing the earliest datable

evidence that Satan as a proper name comes from Jubilees 23:29 and *Assumption of Moses* 10:1, both of which can be dated to the persecutions of Antiochus.

Our focus, though, limits itself to the role of *šātān* in 1 Chronicles 21:1. Day (1988:143) says that the alternative to understanding the Chronicler's *šātān* as a human military adversary is to understand the term as referring to an unspecified member of the celestial assembly. Day postulates that understood in this manner, this celestial *šātān* could be construed either as an unnamed adversary who, like the *ruah šeqer* of 1 Kings 22 who proposed to the divine assembly a plan whereby Ahab could be lured to his death, rises up against Israel and provokes David to take a census, or as a divine accuser who brings an unspecified charge against Israel to the heavenly assize. Day comes to a conclusion that, given the extreme terseness of 1 Chronicles 21:1, it is difficult to choose between these two possibilities. However, in Nel's (1987:7) view, one fact seems to be beyond doubt: This *šātān* acted as Yahweh's instrument (cf. the version of 2 Sam 24:1) and not his antagonist or rival. Page (1995:36) concurs with this view when he concludes that, "Although Satan plays the part of the tempter in 1 Chronicles 21:1, he does not act independently of the will of God."

In conclusion, it can be stated that nothing in the text suggests a metaphysical dualism. Satan appears to be part of the heavenly entourage, playing an accusing or prosecuting role. By altering the tradition, the Chronicler made certain that Yahweh's sovereignty and transcendence were secured. Furthermore, David takes full responsibility for his sinful behaviour (cf. 1 Chr 21:8, 17). Finally, the divine judgement following the census demonstrates that God held David accountable for his actions.

Unlike the other instances where *šātān* is mentioned, the Chronicler presents us with a more developed angeology (cf. Day 1988:138); In 1 Chronicles 21 and 2 Samuel 24 Yahweh has retreated to a higher heaven, and his will is carried out through intermediaries. The *mal'ak yhw* plays a larger role in 1 Chronicles 21 than in 2 Samuel 24. The specific fact that the *mal'ak yhw* in 1 Chronicles 21:16 is described as hovering in mid-air (as opposed to standing on the ground) and this has been used widely to support the contention that the Chronicler had an advanced notion of angels.

Having completed our survey of the Old Testament passages related to Satan, we can go on to draw some conclusions. Satan, as a product of the Jewish and Christian interpretation of the Old Testament *šātān* texts, is not a figure of major importance. An investigation into the scriptural references to *šātān* in the Old Testament does not reveal Satan as a distinctive demonic figure, opposed to God and responsible for all the depravity of humankind. Although the Septuagint (LXX) renders the last three post-exilic occurrences (i.e. Zech 3:1; Job 1-2; 1 Chr 21:1) with *ho diabolos*, it nevertheless does not confirm the notion of a superhuman being who is absolutely antagonistic of God. Even the mentioning of *šātān* in 1 Chronicles 21:1 in the Hebrew Bible without a definite article does not shed conclusive evidence that Satan had acquired a proper name in the Old Testament. In the instance where there is a *šātān* referent in the Old Testament he appears to be playing sometimes a role of the *mal'ak yhw*, executing divine punishment as in Numbers 22. At some other times he assumes a legal-adversarial role in the heavenly tribunal, accusing the righteous before God, trying their faith by afflicting them with misfortune and enticing them to commit sin. Throughout the references of Satan in the Old Testament he is subordinated to God and he is never depicted as capable of thwarting God's purposes. Nor is Satan's influence over humankind such as to cause any human person to deny responsibility for sin.

2.5.3 DEMONS (POWERS) IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

According to Verkuyl (1978:95), in what he calls the "motif of antagonism", the whole Old Testament (and the New Testament as well) is filled with descriptions of how Yahweh-Adonai, the covenant God of Israel, is waging war against these forces which try to thwart and subvert his plans for his creation. He battles against those false gods which human beings have fashioned from the created world, idolised and used for their own purposes. To illustrate this Verkuyl quotes the Baals and the Ashtarothe, whose worshippers elevated nature, the tribe, the state, and the nature to a divine status. God fights against magic and astrology which, according to Deuteronomy, bend the line between God and his creation. The whole of the Old Testament, according to Verkuyl, burns with a feverish desire to defeat those opposing powers.

However, Ling (1961:3) correctly notices that the references to hostile evil powers as far as the Old Testament is concerned are remarkably few. On the other hand, Langton (1949:35) makes a case for saying that there are more allusions to evil spirits in the Old Testament than is commonly supposed and he points out that when these separate allusions are brought together and studied in relation to each other, they become much more impressive and significant. In his list of demons in the Old Testament, Langton mentions the seraphim, which he takes to be demonic serpents (see Langton 1949:35). In this belief of viewing the seraphim as demonic, Langton does not seem to garner much support. In the Old Testament foreign gods are called *shedim* (Dt 32:17; Ps 106:37; cf. 1 Cor 10:20), rendered “demons” or “devils” in most translations. The word is related to Akkadian *šēdu* (“demon”, good or evil - see Hillers 1971:1523). In concurring with this, Page (1995:66) says that the word appears to have been borrowed from Assyro-Babylonian religion in which *šēdu* could denote both good and evil spirits. Its meaning is uncertain, though it may come from a root that means “rule” (see Unger 1994:59; Brown, Driver and Briggs 1906:994). When the word is used in the Old Testament it is definitely in the negative light.

The list of creatures mentioned with the *se'irim* (“hairy demons, satyrs” - see Hillers 1971:1523) in Isaiah 13:21f, some of which are mentioned in Isaiah 34:14, all of which, as Langton (1949:35) suggests, share the same character, and are conceived to be either demons or incarnations of demons. The word *se'irim* is applied contemptuously to foreign deities (Lv 17:7; 2 Chr 11:15). The *se'irim* are said to haunt ruins, along with Lilith (Isa 13:21; 34:14).

The description of the ultimate desolation of Edom in Isaiah 34:14 includes at least two words with demonological associations. Edom is portrayed as being the habitation, not only of the *se'irim* but also of *lilit*. The latter is rendered “night creatures” in the New International Version (RSV - “night hag”; NASB - “night monster”), but it would probably be best simply to transliterate the Hebrew word as “Lilith” (see Page 1995:72), as the Jerusalem Bible does. The word is generally understood as the name of a female night demon. Lilith appears to have been a familiar figure throughout the ancient Near East. In post-biblical times, Lilith became the object of a great deal of speculation in Judaism. Lilith was originally said to be a succubus, believed to cohabit with mortals, but in the

Arslan Tash incantation she is identified with the child-stealing demon, a character she retains in later folklore. The tradition that the name means “screech-owl” (in so many translations) reflects a very ancient association of birds, especially owls, with the demonic (see Hilliers 1971:1523).

Mavet or *mawet* is an ordinary Hebrew word for death but it is also used as the proper name of a Canaanite underworld god (Mot), the enemy of Baal in a Ugaritic epic (see Hilliers 1971:1524). The proper name, not the common noun, in Hilliers’ view, should probably be understood in Isaiah 28:15, 18 in the following manner: “We have made a covenant with Death” and Jeremiah 9:21: “Death has come in through our windows.”

Resheph is another major god of the Canaanite religion which becomes a demonic figure in biblical literature. Resheph was known as the god of plague over much of the ancient Near East, in texts and artistic representations spanning more than a millenium from 1850 BC - 350 BC (see Hilliers 1971:1524). In Habakkuk 3:5, Yahweh on the warpath is said to be preceded and followed by Dever and Resheph. Just as some other names of deities are used as common nouns in biblical Hebrew (Dagon, *dagon* - “grain”); Ashtaroth (*ashtarot*, “increase [of the flock]” etc.), so Resheph (*reshef*) has come to mean simply “plague” (Dt 33:29; Ps 78:48), and the fiery darts of the bow (Ps 76:3; cf. Hilliers 1971:1524).

Dever or *deber* (“Pestilence”) is another demonic herald who inexplicably is mentioned as marching with Yahweh to battle (Hab 3:5). Dever or *deber* is also mentioned in Psalms 91:5-6.

“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror (*pahad*) by night;
Nor for the arrow (*Hez*) that flieth by day;
Nor for the pestilence (*Dever*) that walketh in the darkness;
Nor for the destruction (*Ketev*) that wasteth at noonday.”

Not only Dever but also the other words italicised above have been plausibly identified as names of demons (see Hilliers 1971:1524).

Az'azel which occurs in the ritual for the Day of Atonement (Lv. 16:8, 10, 26) is regarded by Langton (1949:35) as a Semitic god of the flocks and was later degraded to the level of a demon. In the Old Testament, Aaron casts lots over two goats, and the one for *Az'azel* is presented alive before the Lord, and then released into the wilderness. Most of the rabbinic commentators and some moderns take Azazel as the name of the place to which the goat is driven. The great majority of moderns regards Azazel as the personal name of a demon thought to live in the wilderness (cf. Hillers 1971:1524). *Alukah* ('*alukah*') mentioned in Proverbs 30:15 may be explained as a vampire-like female demon of the Lilith type (see Langton 1949:35) which had two daughters, crying "give, give" (see also Hillers 1971:1525). In the Old Testament we find that demons live in deserts or ruins (Lv 16:10; Isa 13:21; 34:14). They inflict sickness on human beings. They afflict the human mind. This is illustrated in the Old Testament narrative that mentions an evil spirit that afflicts Saul. Appearing in the account of the transfer of power from Saul to David, references to the spirit are found in 1 Samuel 16:14-16, 23; 18:10; and 19:9, Saul had been the first king of the united kingdom. In connection with his assumption of power, there are two occasions when the Spirit of God came upon him (cf. 1 Sam 10:6, 10; 11:6). Saul did not, however, live up to the promise of these early experiences. Because of his failure to obey the command to destroy the Amalekites, he was rejected by Yahweh as king of Israel (1 Sam 15:26). Samuel subsequently anointed David and then the Spirit of Yahweh came upon David (1 Sam 16:13). The Spirit of Yahweh left Saul and an evil spirit came upon him (1 Sam 16:14). For Page (1995:75), the coming of the evil spirit was not a capricious act, for the narrator clearly represents it as a consequence of the departure of the Spirit of God from Saul and his coming upon David. The narrative indicates that the evil spirit came upon Saul repeatedly and that it tormented him. The experience obviously caused Saul a great deal of anguish, for he sought relief from its distress. Ironically, David, who had been selected as Saul's successor, was brought in to play the harp in an effort to alleviate his suffering (1 Sam 16:15-23).

In ancient times, music was regarded, as it is today, as having therapeutic value for those with psychological afflictions, and it did have a beneficial effect. When David played, Saul experienced relief, and the evil spirit left him. Not only was

Saul's condition distressing to him personally, but on two occasions he became violent and made attempts on David's life (1 Sam 18:10-11; 19:9-10). It has been suggested that Saul displayed symptoms of both paranoia and a manic-depressive condition (see McCarter 1980:280-281). But Page (1995:76) contends that it would be a mistake to reduce Saul's ailment to the psychological level. In Page's opinion, there is an important theological dimension to Saul's experience that is highlighted in the biblical account. The contrast between the Spirit of Yahweh and the evil spirit, according to Page (1995:77), demands that the evil spirit be understood as an external power that existed independently of Saul. Some have even suggested that the story of Saul's affliction should be taken as an Old Testament account of demon possession (see Alexander 1902:20; Payne 1962:290).

Another activity of the evil spirits in the Old Testament appears to be that of deceiving (see 1 Ki 22:19-23; 2 Chr 18:18-22). These passages record a vision of the prophet Micaiah in which he saw a "lying spirit". Ahab, the king of Israel, was seeking to form an alliance with Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, in order that together they might attack Ramoth Gilead and wrest it from Aramean control. Jehoshaphat insisted that they seek the counsel of the Lord before going into battle. Ahab brought together four hundred of his prophets, who advised proceeding with the attack, assuring Ahab of victory. Jehoshaphat asked whether there was a prophet of Yahweh who could be consulted. Eventually Ahab called Micaiah. Micaiah told of a vision he had had of a meeting of the divine council. In the vision, Yahweh asked who would go to entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead, where he would be killed. A spirit, not necessarily an evil one, came forward and offered to do so by being a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets. Yahweh agreed to this plan, and so it was that Ahab's prophets urged him to engage in the battle that cost him his life.

In both cases, namely, in the narratives of the evil spirit tormenting Saul and the lying spirit to the four hundred prophets, the spirits appear to be agents of divine punishment. The spirits do not act outside God's control. Even in the reference to an evil spirit found in Judges 9:23, the evil spirit is in subordination to God. What makes the spirits evil in these episodes is not that they are inherently wicked but their function makes them evil.

Some features of the Israelite religion bear resemblance to apotropaic measures employed in other religions (see Hillers 1971:1523). Thus, the bells on the robe of the high priest (Ex 28:33-35) recall the use of bells in other cultures in the belief that their tinkling keeps demons away. So, also horns (Ex 19:16; Lv 25:9), incense (Lv 16:12-13) smearing of doorposts (Ex 12:7), the colour blue (Nm 15:38), written scripture-texts (phylacteries; cf. Dt 6:8; 11:18) - all have parallels elsewhere as devices to ward off evil spirits (see Hillers 1971:1523).

The Old Testament teaching on (evil) spirits or powers would be incomplete if there is no reference to “supernatural rulers” over nations. Green (1981:79) observes that sometimes in the Old Testament we read of the *kedoshim*, or “holy ones”, a heavenly court presided over by the Lord himself (Ps 89:6, 8; Job 15:15; Dt 33:2; Zech 14:5). Frequently God is called *Yahweh Sabaoth*, “Lord of the powers”, and here the gods of polytheism are seen as captives under his suzerainty. We also read of the *bene elohim* or “sons of God” in Job, the Psalms, and Genesis 6:3. But perhaps the most important passage of all is Deuteronomy 32:8 where we read that God fixed the bounds of all the peoples according to the number of the *bene elohim*, the sons of God. As for the children of Israel, they were the Lord’s portion. Green (1981:79) sees the meaning as given more elucidatively in Deuteronomy 4:19 which speaks of the moon, stars and hosts of heaven which the Lord has allotted to all the peoples under heaven, with the exception of Israel whom he had appointed for himself. Thus, “He appointed a ruler for every nation, but Israel is the Lord’s own portion” (Ecclus 17:7).

Green (1981:79), among others, believes that the nations which ruled the ancient world were under the supervision of their angel-princes, who in turn were under the ultimate control of Yahweh, the Lord of heaven and earth, who had entered into a covenant relationship with his people Israel. In an endeavour to support this position, Page (1995:54f) cites two examples, namely, the gods of Psalm 82 and the powers in the heavens above in Isaiah 24. In the Isaiah 24:21-22 passage we read:

In that day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens

above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut in prison and be punished after many days.

By his own admission, Page (1995:60) believes that the identification of “the powers in the heavens above” is one of the exegetical conundrums of Isaiah 24:21-22. Despite some dissenting voices, a widely held view of Isaiah 24:21-22 identifies the powers as suprahuman beings allied with the kings of the nations (cf. e.g. Delitzsch 1892; Young 1969; Clements 1980:205f). The powers may have been viewed as gods by these nations, but from Israel’s perspective, they were fallen angels (cf. Page 1995:61; Oswalt 1986:454). Also, there is a rabbinic tradition that Isaiah 24 refers to patron angels (cf. Urbach 1987:138).

According to Page (1995:63), the clearest Old Testament references to angels who exercise influence over specific nations are found in Daniel 10:13, 20-21 and 12:1 (see also Jub 15:31). Daniel had a vision of a man dressed in linen (ch. 10-12). From the description in 10:5-6, it is obvious that this man was an angel. The unnamed angel’s message to Daniel includes information about the “princes” of Persia and Greece and one named Michael, who is identified in 12:1 as the prince who protects Israel. Michael also occupies the role of the prince of the people of God in the Qumran *War Scroll* (1 QM 14) and has a similar function in Revelation 12:7. Apparently, these princes are not human, although the word by which they are designated (*sar*) can denote human rulers (Dn 9:6, 8 - see Green 1981:79; Page 1995:63). There appears to be similarities between the princes in Daniel and the patron angels mentioned in Deuteronomy 32:8 and Isaiah 24:21. Although this is a general view of many scholars on the “princes” in Daniel, especially among the spiritual mapping school, there are others who dispute the fact that “princes” in Daniel may have any references to (fallen) angels (see Shea 1983:225f).

On the issue of princes, Page (1995:64) believes that the fact that Daniel’s three-week fast coincides with the three-week struggle between the unnamed angel and the prince of Persia demonstrates a relationship between human intercession and what happens on a higher plane. Daniel’s prayers to God appear to influence angels who play a significant role in shaping the destiny of nations (Otis 1997:182;

Page 1995:64). It is the conviction of Page that the portrayal of the princes of the nations in Daniel reveals that the unfolding of human history is not determined solely by the decisions made by human beings, for there is an unseen dimension of reality that must be taken into account. According to Page, obviously there are malevolent forces in the universe that exercise a baneful influence in the socio-political realm, especially where the people of God are concerned. This conviction grew more vividly in post-exilic Judaism, perhaps due to Zoroastrian influence (Green 1981:24; Hume 1959:211; cf. Khathide 2000:82). Wagner (1996) and others of the spiritual warfare paradigm, based on the conflict of the angelic forces and the intercession of Daniel, believe that the church ought to audaciously engage the evil forces that influence the direction and affairs of nations today. Nevertheless, Page (1995:65) cautions, and rightly so, that such otherwise noble and legitimate endeavours as intercession (see Eph 6:10-18), spiritual mapping and spiritual warfare, should not run the risk of indulging in the sort of speculation that scripture consistently avoids, and also that we need to be aware that in such exercises there is ever a danger of exaggerating the role of territorial spirits in such a way that the biblical teaching on divine sovereignty is compromised (for a critique of spiritual mapping and warfare see Lowe 1998a; Bresheare 1994:13f; Van der Meer 2001:47f). Nevertheless, in the Daniel conflict of celestial powers, if we so interpret them, we realise that the power of these evil agencies is limited, for the transcendent powers of good oppose them, and the faithful prayers of believers are also effective against them.

On the whole, we need to restate the observation of Langton (1949:8) who says that even the full extent of Old Testament demonology is very slight compared with the religious texts of the surrounding peoples. Ling (1961:4) says the comparative scarcity in the Old Testament of references to demonic beings can be attributed to the strong influence which prophetic Yahwism has had upon the Old Testament writings. Robinson (1913:47) concurs that the scantiness of Old Testament demonology can be explained in the character of Yahwism which would tolerate no rivals. Against this background, Hillers (1971:1523) says, therefore, one must not overestimate the importance of the numerous small traces of belief in the demons in the Old Testament, or underestimate the difficulties involved in interpreting them. At this junction, for the purposes of our study, we need to turn to what the Old Testament has to say about witches, mediums, magic and spirits (ancestral or otherwise).

2.5.4 WITCHES, MEDIUMS AND SPIRITS

According to Aune (1986:214f), the occultic practices were common among the neighbours of Israel, and they proved to be a great temptation. It is for this reason that we find numerous commands and admonitions throughout the Old Testament, warning Israel to stay away from every form of magical practice (see Arnold 1994:58).

Some of the spiritistic practices, sometimes called sciences, were developed and used by the ancient Chaldeans of Babylonia. Isaiah, in the eighth century B.C., tells us that the Babylon of his day was rife with sorceries of all sorts (Isa 47:12-15). More than a century later, in the days of Daniel, the magic-practising priests were still part of the Babylonian court (Dn 1:20; 2:2, 10, 27; 4:7; 5:11). Magic-practising priests, witchdoctors, medicine men and women, and sorcerers of all sorts were found among many places, the prime example being the Egyptians in the days of Joseph (Gen 41:8, 24). In the time of Moses, the magic-practising priests of Egypt showed their power by seemingly duplicating the first two miracles performed by Moses (Ex 7:11, 22; 8:7). But their powerlessness or limitation of their power was demonstrated when it came to the producing of gnats, having to admit that it was “the finger of God” (Ex 8:19; cf. Lk 11:19). The magicians of Egypt were following a known concept of magic-working sorcery that was, and still is, based on the belief that evil spirits can be induced either to help people or to harm them.

In the ancient Near East, according to the inquiry of Arnold (1994:59), many forms of divination were practised. One of the most popular forms was liver inspection (hepatoscopy). Perhaps, because the liver was thought to be the seat of the blood, and thus the centre of life, it was especially important in popular belief as an object that could help determine the future. Another well-known divination was necromancy, the conjuring of the dead (cf. 1 Sam 28:3-25). Since divination was closely associated with magic in all its forms, biblical teaching soundly condemned it (see Lv 19:26, 31; cf. Aune 1986:971f). Unger (1994:108f) believes that the wickedness and illegitimate nature of magic - the art of bringing about results beyond human power through the enlistment of supernatural agencies - appears when it is realised that the supernatural agencies are evil spirits.

Throughout the Old Testament different kinds of occultic practices are often catalogued, either in a list of prohibitions or in a historical narrative where the sins of a key figure are mentioned. For example, Manasseh, one of the kings of Judah, was guilty in the eyes of the Chronicler for breaking the occultic prohibitions of the Torah. He worshipped the Canaanite gods, practised astrology or a form of astral religion (“bowed down to all starry host and worshipped them” 2 Chr 33:3). Manasseh also “sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practised sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spirits” (2 Chr 33:1-6). The Chronicler concludes by saying that Manasseh did much evil. Likewise, Hosea, the last king of the northern kingdom, led Israel away from God to pursue the worship of foreign gods and engage in occultic practices, including astrology. The narrator says they set up sacred stones and Asherah poles, they worshipped idols, they imitated the nations around them, they bowed down to all the starry hosts, they worshipped Baal, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters in the fire, and they practised divination and sorcery (see Arnold 1994:58). The biblical author interprets their action as selling themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking him to anger and as a result, the Lord was “very angry with Israel”, removing them from his presence (2 Ki 17:7-23).

In the Old Testament, none of these occult practices are ever described in any detail. Instead they are mentioned in a list and condemned. There was a clear assumption on the part of the various Old Testament writers that the readers would know precisely what was being referred to. In the Torah, the most comprehensive list of occultic prohibitions is given:

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you (Dt 18:10-12).

Various methods of divination are condemned in scripture. There were different

divining methods that were prevalent in the ancient world among the Babylonians and other Semites and among the Greeks and the Romans (see Unger 1994:131). In Ezekiel's prophecy about the king of Babylon (see 21:21), he is said to have been involved in three kinds of divination common among the Semitic nations, namely, hepatoscopy ("looking in the liver") and consulting the teraphim - a form of divination which may have been effected by consulting the dead (see Unger 1994:132). There is no evidence which is available that these three kinds of divination which was prevalent among Semites, were practised among the Israelites. Rhabdomancy or divination by the use of the divining rod, is referred to by Hosea as practised by the Israelites in their defection and apostasy. The prophet condemns it (Hos 4:12). Although no explicit mention is made of it in the Deuteronomic list (Dt 18:9-15), astrology or astromancy is to be closely associated with Moloch-worship (see Amos 5:25-26 and Acts 7:41-43). Leahy (1975:71) writes that the orgiastic rites of the priests of Baal (1 Ki 18:28) are strongly suggestive of demon-possession; and it is significant that Jezebel, that patroness of Baalism, was known to dabble in magical incantations (A. V. witchcraft, 2 Ki 9:22). Against these God said through Micah, "I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers" (5:12). Unger (1994:112f) also goes on to mention charms and amulets which were demonstrative of the apostasy and occultism of Israel (e.g. Gn 30:14-24; Isa 3:18; Jdg 8:21,26). Unger (1994:113) believes that the condemnation of the custom of wearing amulets and of trusting in the defence of mere material objects is implied in Proverbs 6:21. A young man is exhorted to "bind" parental admonitions continually upon his "heart" and to "tie" them about his neck. Unger also shows that it is significant that the Talmudic word for "an amulet" (*gemia*) denotes something tied or bound to the person. Leahy (1975:73) remarks that throughout the centuries, charms have always been associated with idolatry, demon-worship and the resulting superstition. Thus, magic and divination, Unger (1994:109) concludes, are in the strictest and truest sense, a departure from the biblically revealed religion.

Insofar as the ancestors are concerned, Craffert (1999:79f) maintains that in most of the Old Testament books the dead were not only absent but remained excluded from God's presence. They were aligned with the powers of chaos (see Müller-Fahrenholz 1995) and a threat to holiness. This is clearly seen in the

laws forbidding contact with a dead body (cf. Nm 19:11 f). In the Old Testament, the living can praise God while the inability of the dead to do that put them outside God's sacred order (cf. Isa 39:18; Ps 6:5). The priestly tradition systematically tried to dissociate the tombs and the dead from the cult of Yahweh. It is also an interesting observation that the Bible states that, "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-pëor; but no man knows the place of his burial to this day" (Dt 34:5-6). The fact that no one knew the tomb of Moses, was it not, perhaps, a divine design to discourage the idolatry-prone Israelites from taking holy pilgrimages to the shrine of Moses, the greatest leader and liberator of the Israelites? As touching the dead in the Old Testament, Craffert (1999:80) says that the priestly tradition taught that the deceased persisted in sheol, which lies beyond the world of gods or human beings.

However, Craffert points out that side by side with this trend in the Hebrew Bible is another, which acknowledges the presence of function occupied by ancestors in community affairs. That is the veneration of the dead as a means of divine power. The ancestors were, so to speak, a gateway to the divine realm and were considered a continuous influence in human affairs. The development of the idea in ancient Judaism of the importance of the bones and tombs of the elite dead can be traced from Abraham and Jacob to the burial of Saul and his sons. At these tombs, as at the altar, heaven and earth met (see Lightstone 1984:85; Craffert 1999:81). The fact that Jews in later periods were allowed to offer prayers at these tombs confirms the insight that the ancestors (and their tombs) achieved the status of intermediaries with the divine world. In fact, prayers could even be addressed to the deceased rather than to a divine being. Put differently, the ancestors themselves had become divine beings of a kind (see Craffert 1999:81). The case of Rachel, the matriarch, bears this fact. According to tradition, she had remained barren for a long time. Her tomb at Bethlehem (recently excavated) became a place of pilgrimage for barren women to pray for progeny. Craffert says that it is not surprising that the early church also adopted this line of tradition from their faith ancestors. In the very early stages in the life of the Christian church, the cult of the dead originated, in which the shrines of the Christian martyrs played a major role. Almost thirty localities in Palestine from the fourth cen-

ture CE 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 1999:81).

The cult of the dead, to a greater or lesser degree, still remains a bone of theological contention in the process of Christian discipleship in Africa and other affected regions in the world.

In spite of the fact that the Old Testament invariably condemned the practice of consultation with the spirits of the departed dead as something completely at variance with the true spiritual worship of God, there is evidence, as Craffert notices, that the children of Israel dabbled in the ancestral cult. The children of Israel were obviously influenced by the nations of the ancient Near East. Unger (1994:143) corroborates this fact when he says that among various nations of antiquity, consulting with the spirits of the dead, was not only allowed, but abetted and widely practised. Necromancy was rife among the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. The diviner stood in the service of the states and was consulted before important decisions were made, or wars waged (see Jastrow 1911:150; Miller 1944:338).

Central to the question of ancestral worship and consultation of spirits and mediums is whether the dead are able to contact the living. According to Burnett (1988:65), the two common assumptions made by Christians are that the dead are unable to contact the living and that the materialisations are evil spirits in disguise. In the opinion of Burnett, the first assumption is based on verses such as Job 7:9, "So he who goes down to the grave does not return", which do not necessarily lead us to convincing conclusions. In his view, a more reliable basis is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. Even so, he argues, we cannot conclude that departed spirits are unable to communicate with the living. A careful reading shows that Abraham does not tell the rich man that it is impossible for the dead to return, but that it is spiritually useless (see Lk 16:31).

On the contrary, Burnett (1988:65) points out that a case can be made for the reality of the spirits of the dead or ghosts from the Bible. In the well-known story of the so-called witch of Endor in 1 Samuel 28 (see Angert-Quilter and Wall

2001) the medium was surprised that Samuel actually came back to life for a moment. This did not seem what she expected. Also in the New Testament, one finds Moses and Elijah conversing with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Although these are unique cases, they do not discount the possibility of spirits or ghosts (see Bauer 1966:69f). Burnett 1988:66) feels that we must therefore conclude that the Bible does leave open the possibility that the dead may communicate with the living. However, Burnett shows that the Bible is emphatic that any attempt to communicate with the departed is sin. In Israel there was to be a total ban on anyone who “consults the dead” (Dt 18:11). One of the sins of Israel condemned by Isaiah is that the people tried to consult the dead: “When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?” (Isa 8:19). As much as the Scripture encourages and stresses the obligation of children to “honour your father and your mother” (Ex 20:12), it forbids the communication with ancestral spirits and consulting the mediums.

In the case of Saul, Brueggemann (1990:193) concludes, “So Saul when approved religion will not reassure, goes elsewhere; against the religion of Samuel, against the prohibition of Deuteronomy, against his own royal edict. His decision to seek help from a medium is a measure of his moral exhaustion, his despairing faith, his failed life”. According to Leahy (1975:71), the factor that counted against Saul was that generally whether in Israel or in heathen lands, the medium was thought to be in league with sinister forces of darkness.

2.5.5. CONCLUSIONS

As far as the Old Testament is concerned, the references to hostile evil powers are remarkably few. The influence of prophetic Yahwism reduced the proliferation in the belief and practice of demonic activities, especially when compared with the religious texts of the surrounding peoples. The strong influence of prophetic Yahwism ensured the minor role played by the Satan-figure in the Old Testament. In the same vein, the consultation and communication with mediums and spirits, of whatever nature, were forbidden in the Old Testament.

2.6 DEMONOLOGY IN THE APOCRYPHA, PSEUDEPIGRAPH AND SOME OTHER JEWISH AND GRECO-ROMAN WRITINGS

2.6.1 THE ORIGIN OF SATAN AND DEMONS

The biblical idea that God and the righteous angels confronted the opposition of a great spiritual enemy, the devil backed by the army of the demons, had a long history and development in the ancient world. Many old stories of conflict among the gods are found in each of the cultures which influenced the biblical tradition (see Riley 1999:244).

In post-exilic and subsequent literature more than one account of the origin of the devil and fall of the angels is found. Insofar as the origin of the devil is concerned, one account seems to have been inspired by the oracles against the king of Babylon (Isa 14:4-20) and the king of Tyre (Ezek 28:11-19). The story goes that on the second day of creation, one of the archangels, in fact the highest of all, had through pride attempted to set himself up to be worshipped as an equal to God. The Latin translation of Isaiah 14:12 names this individual "Lucifer". In the book of Enoch 29:4-5 we read:

One from out of the order of angels, having turned away with the order that was under him, conceived an impossible thought, to place his throne higher than the clouds above the earth, that he might become equal in rank to my (God's) power. And I threw him out from the height with his angels and he was flying in the air continuously above the bottomless [pit]".

Though the Old Testament never explicitly addresses the origin of Satan or how or when he turned against God, Arnold (1992:61) states that it is possible that couched in the prophecies against the king of Tyre and the king of Babylon are insights into the original state and fall of Satan. Arnold bases his argument on the fact that this is how early Jewish interpreters understood these passages.

In the *Life of Adam and Eve* (12-17), dating from the first century B.C., one encounters a detailed narrative of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise and of Satan's downfall (cf. Nel 1987:12). After Adam and Eve are driven out of Paradise, they decide to do penance in the water, Adam in the Jordan river and Eve in the Tigris. Once again Satan approached Eve to stop her mourning and lamenting. Together they go to Adam. When Adam sees Satan accompanying Eve, he asks Satan why he does not leave them alone. Adam is surprised to hear Satan's account of the events: "O Adam! all my hostility, envy, and sorrow is for thee, since it is for thee that I have been expelled from my glory, which I possessed in the heavens in the midst of the angels and for thee was I cast out in the earth ... It is for thy sake that I have been hurled from that place. When thou wast formed, I was expelled out of the presence of God and banished from the company of angels ... And Michael went out and called all the angels saying; 'Worship the image of God as the Lord God hath commanded'. And Michael himself worshipped first; then he called me and said: 'Worship the image of God the Lord'. And I answered, 'I have no [need] to worship Adam'. And since Michael kept urging me to worship, I said to him, 'Why dost thou urge me? I will not worship an inferior and younger being [than I]. I am his senior in the Creation, before he was made was I already made. It is his duty to worship me' ... And God the Lord was wrath with me and banished me and my angels from our glory; and on thy account were we expelled from our abodes into this world and hurled on the earth. And straightway we were overcome with grief, since we had been spoiled of so great glory. And we were grieved when we saw thee in such joy and luxury. And with guile I cheated thy wife and caused thee to be expelled through her [doing] from thy joy and luxury, as I have been driven out of my glory."

According to this account, therefore, Satan was expelled from God's presence and the heavenly realm of angels, because he refused to adore Adam, created in the image of God. Consequently he envies Adam and will in future not hesitate to cause Adam's disobedience. Nel (1987:12) also draws our attention thereto that the document of the *Life of Adam and Eve* is reminiscent of the first attempt in history of the deception of Genesis 3 that relates the fall of humankind with the activity of Satan in a causal fashion (see also the *Apocalypse of Moses*, *Wisdom of Solomon* 2:24, *Josephus Anti.* 1:41f). When it comes to the origin of demons,

the speculation in the post-exilic writings is as rife. In the *Life of Adam and Eve* we read that when the devil refused to worship and reverence Adam who had been made in the image of God, the Lord God was wroth with him and he banished the devil and his angels from their glory (16:1; cf. Tertullian, *De Patientia* 5; *Qur'an* 15:26-35).

In the later period in the rabbinic writings another explanation is given for the origin of demons: "After the souls were created, the Sabbath came and prevented the completion of the work of creation and so they remained without bodies (*Midrash Rabbah* Gen 7:5). Another explanation of the origin of demons comes from the mythological attribution to the union of Adam with female spirits and Eve with male spirits (M/R Gen 20:11 "Throughout the entire one hundred and thirty years during which Adam held aloof from Eve the male demons were made ardent by her and she bore, while the female demons were inflamed by Adam and they bore"; cf. M/R Gen 14a; 24:6, 16:9). Another view that was commonly repeated was that the demons were a special creation on the sixth day (*Aboth* 5:6; cf. *bPesahim* 54a, *Mishnah*).

Another ancient theory of the origin of the demons was that they were the souls of the dead who, having been unjustly treated or killed, sought retribution (Tertullian, *De Anima* 57). Yet another conception was that they were ghosts of the wicked dead (Josephus, *Bel Jud* 7.185: "Demons [are] spirits of the wicked people who enter and kill the living"). Origen tells us that the church had no clearly defined teaching on the genesis of demons; his view was that the devil, after becoming apostate, induced many of the angels to fall away with him; these fallen angels were demons.

The most ancient of popular myth found in the Bible, intertestamental literature, the rabbis and the church fathers of the origin of demons is linked with the story of Genesis 6:2-4 that relates that the *bene ha 'elohim*, male deities (not generically 'children of the Gods' - see Parker 1999:796) find *benot ha 'adam*, female humans, attractive and take in marriage whomever they choose. Parker also notices the conspicuousness of the absence of Yahweh from these mythical events.

In the Jewish literature of the post-exilic or intertestamental period, the prominent theme was the belief that demons came into the world as a result of unnatural sexual relations between angels and human beings. Many Jewish writers interpreted the reference to sons of God as “angels” who rebelled against God. The disastrous consequence of this unnatural union resulted in the birth of the Nephilim, the source of demons and evil spirits (cf. Arnold 1992:66; Riley 1999:246; Nel 1987:11-12; Hendel 1993:168f). The Jewish apocalyptic book of 1 Enoch spends thirty-one chapters elaborating on the fall (*1 Enoch 6-36*). According to this account, after the physical beauty of women on earth erotically tantalised some 200 angels (see the *Apocalypse of Baruch*), led by a certain Semyaz, the angels made a joint decision to violate their divinely given boundaries by engaging in sexual activity with women. While they were occupying the earth, they taught people many evil arts, including alchemy, astrology, incantations and warfare. The women made pregnant by these supernatural beings, gave birth to freakish giants. These giants committed numerous atrocities and were drowned by the flood (*1 Enoch 6-16*; Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4). Their disembodied souls became the demons. In *1 Enoch 15:8-12* it is stated:

And now, the giants, who are produced from the spirits and flesh, shall be called evil spirits upon the earth, and on earth shall be their dwelling. Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men and from the holy watchers is their beginning and primal origin; they shall be evil spirits on earth; evil spirits shall they be called ... And the spirits of the giants afflict, oppress, destroy, attack, do battle, and work destruction on the earth, and cause trouble: they take no food [but nevertheless hunger] and thirst and cause offences. And these spirits shall rise up against the children of men and against the women, because they have proceeded from them.

The leader of this band of fallen angels, Azazel, although a messenger of Satan in 1 Enoch 54:6, was identified as the devil (*Jub 10:1-11*) and as the serpent who deceived Adam and Eve (*Apol. Abr. 23*). He is called Baalzebub, the Prince of the demons, who was formerly “the highest ranking angel in heaven” (*T. Sol. 6:1-*

2). In the *Jubilees* (a kind of midrash of Gen 1-Ex 12) it is explicitly stated that demons were responsible for the corruption of the sons of Noah. After listening to the prayer of Noah, God decided to expel these demons, who were actually created to tempt and to lead people astray. The “Prince of the spirits”, Mastemah, pleaded with God to show mercy and to exclude but a tenth from the verdict. This was granted and so it came about that a tenth of the evil spirits reunited on earth to serve Satan (*Jub* 10:3-11). They would remain on earth and would be responsible for the sin and impurity of humans (*Jub* 11:3-6) until the time of final judgement, when there would be no Satan or evil spirits (*Jub* 23:29).

In both *I Enoch* (ch. 64) and *Jubilees* (ch. 10-11), it is stated that the fallen angels revealed the heavenly hidden secrets to the people and caused them to commit sin. The fallen angels or demons were actively involved in the transgression of humans. A form of causality had thus begun to replace human responsibility in ethical conduct (Nel 1987:11).

In regard to the origin of evil, Ling (1961:11) concludes that the apocalyptic writings may be said to stand in a dialectical relationship to earlier Hebrew thought. The thesis was the primitive explanation of the evils of life in terms of exterior forces only, capricious evil spirits who operated at random and for whose operations human beings themselves were considered to bear no moral responsibility. The antithesis was the prophetic insistence upon the fact that it is an interior condition, namely, a human being's own sin, which is the cause of the evils which they suffer. The synthesis, according to Ling, is found in the apocalyptic view, which allows for the fact that evil may befall a human person for which he or she is not personally responsible; but which also points to the fact that such experiences may be due to an exterior collective force which is itself a consequence of sinful human existence. The conception of Satan, which represents the full development of Jewish demonology, Ling argues, in no way conflicts with the prophetic insistence that the root cause of a human being's condition is their own sin. Such a view, therefore, provides no moral outlet by which humankind may be excused from their own responsibility for the evils which they suffer.

Insofar as the origin of Satan and demons is concerned, the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings, like the Old Testament, do not give a clear and com-

plete picture. At most, these writings remain speculative. Nevertheless, these writings provide a necessary background of belief that we may approach the reference to the demonic power found in the New Testament. Even though most of the writings that lead up to the New Testament display theological indefiniteness concerning the origin of Satan and demons, one factor can be detectable throughout: the whole complex of spiritual evil is subject ultimately to the overruling power of God.

2.6.2 NAMES, CLASSES AND NUMBERS

In the Jewish extrabiblical literature the demons were believed to be under the dominion of a king or chief, either Ashmodai (*Targ. to Eccl.* 1:13; *Pes.* 110a; *Yer. Shek.* 49b) or, in the older Haggadah, Sammael (“the angel of death”) who kills his people by his deadly poison (“*sam ha-mawet*”), and is called ‘head of the devils’ “*rosh satanim*”; *Deut. R.* 11; *Pirke R. El.* 13; see Hirsh 1903:514).

It is characteristic also of the intertestamental literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls to use other names for the leader of the evil spirits. Mastemah, which as a common noun means approximately “enmity, opposition” in Hosea 9:7-8 and in some passages in the Five Scrolls, is a demon “Prince Mastemah” in *Jubilees* (11:5, 11; 17:16), and perhaps also in the *Damascus Document* (16:5; see Hillers 1971:1525; cf. *2 Enoch* 31:4). Belial (or Beliar, a corruption of the original form according to Hillers) is the most common name used for the leader of the demons in the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g. *1 QM* 13:4; cf. *2 Cor* 6:15). Hillers explains Belial (Heb *Beliyya 'al*) as a Hebrew compound word which etymologically means “no benefit” or “no thriving”, and in liberal usages is often equivalent to “scoundrel”. Hillers also points out that already in the Bible, “streams of *Beliyya 'al*” means “streams of destruction” (*2 Sam* 22:5; *Ps* 18:5) and in the intertestamental literature Belial is “the spirit of perversion, the angel of darkness, the angel of destruction” (Hillers 1971:1525). In the *Ascension of Isaiah*, the leader of the demons is referred to as Belial (4:2).

In the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, the leader of the hosts of evil is called Sammael (‘Blind god’ - 1:8,11), Melkira (‘King of evil’ - 1:8), Satan (2:2, 7), Beliar (1:8;

2:4; 3:11). In the book of *1 Enoch*, the leader of the fallen angels is referred to as Semyaza (6:3). In the *Life of Adam and Eve*, Satan is called “the devil” (17:1).

What was also typical of the post-exilic intertestamental literature was a concern to name the evil angels and classify them according to their function. Equally prominent is the arrangement and naming of the good angels surrounding the throne of God (see Arnold 1992:67; Ferguson 1984:98). In the domain of evil, while there is a certain amount of diversity regarding the specific functions of each of the powers, there is a fairly common belief in Satan as the chief. These powers of evil are represented as each having a significant measure within the structured hierarchy. For instance, Semyaza is identified as the chief of those who cohabited with women. Of the 200 angels who came with him, they were divided into groups of ten, with a prince such as Arakeb, Rame’el and Tam’el, set over them (see *1 Enoch* 6:7-8). Interestingly, according to *1 Enoch*, it was one of the Satanic messengers named Gader’el who misled Eve in the garden.

Watchers are a type of angels mentioned in Daniel 4:10, 14, 20. To this class the intertestamental literature assigns angels who, according to Genesis 6:2, 4, cohabited with women before the flood and fathered the race of giants (*Test. Reub.* 5:6,7; *Test. Napht.* 3:5; cf. *Genesis Apocryphon* 2:1, 16). The flood is the fault of the Watchers (*Jubilees* 7:21-25; cf. Cotter 1999:98).

According to rabbinical writings, the demons are numerous. They surround a human being on all sides as the earth does the roots of the vine (cf. Hirsh 1903:516). Rabbi Abaye says the demons are more than we are and they surround us like the ridge round a field. Rabbi Huna says: “Everyone among us has 1,000 on his left and 10,000 on his right hand” (see Ferguson 1987:89; cf. Ps 91:7). The demons are so numerous that if human beings were to see them they would lack the strength to face them.

In assessing the proliferation of the demonic belief in the intertestamental period, the comment of Russel (1964:240) is notable:

When we enter the intertestamental period we find that belief in angels has grown to proportions unknown in the

Old Testament writings. Details of their numbers, their names, their functions, their natures are given which, though in many cases having their beginning in the canonical scriptures, far outstrips anything to be found there.

2.6.3 THE NATURE

The nature of demons is a matter of much speculation among the rabbis. Demons were viewed as spiritual beings but with certain human-like characteristics (see Ferguson 1987:87). They are intermediary beings, inferior in some respects to angels, but in other respects superior to human beings (*bHagigah 16a; Aboth de Rabbi Nathan 37, 9a*).

As spirits, they are ordinarily invisible and “they change their appearance to any likeness they please; they see, but themselves are not seen” (*Aboth de Rabbi Nathan 37, 9a*). By virtue of their semi-celestial nature, demons were believed to be able to overhear the decrees of heaven. Demons may be consulted by human beings as to their future; this can be done by means of oil and eggshells; only on the Sabbath is this forbidden (*Shab. 101a*). In as far as the body-lessness of the demons is concerned, the rabbis believed that, “after the souls were created the Sabbath set in, and so they remained without bodies” (*Gen R 7*). In antiquity, demons were regarded as beings endowed with higher intelligence (see Hirsh 1903:517).

In summarising the nature of demons, Hirsh (1903:518) concludes that in the main, demonology among Jews preserved its simple character as a popular belief, the demons being regarded as mischievous, but not as diabolical or as agencies of a power antagonistic to God.

2.6.4 APPEARANCES AND FORMS

Demons assume the shape of human beings but have no shadow (*Yeb. 122a; Git. 66a; Yoma 75a*). At times they are black goat-like beings (*Kid. 72a*); at other times, they appear like seven-headed dragons (*Kid. 29a*). Demons, like angels, “they have wings and fly from one end of the world to the other, and

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know the future; and like men they eat, propagate and die” (*Hag. 16b; Ab. R.N. 37*).

Demons appear in many forms and change into many colours (*Yoma 75a*). Through magical practices, a person can make demons appear, as well as make them disappear. For example, “If one wants to discover them (demons), let him take sifted ashes and sprinkle around his bed, and in the morning he will see footprints of a cock. If one wishes to see them, let him take the afterbirth of a black she-cat, the offspring of a black she-cat, the firstborn of a firstborn, let him roast it in the fire and grind it to powder, and then let him put some into his eyes, and he will see them” (*Ber. 6a*).

Demons were often envisioned as composite beings, made up of the frightening aspects of animals, sometimes including faces and bodies. The *Testament of Solomon* speaks of demons “with heads like formless dogs ... [others] in the form of humans or of bulls or of dragons with faces like birds or beasts or the sphinx” (18:1-2). The book of Revelation describes three demons as “unclean spirits like frogs” (Rev 16:13).

In the Old Testament, Lilith is depicted as a carrion bird that finds its nest in the desert wastes and is joined by wild desert animals, owls and kites. Resheph is also conceived as a carrion bird (cf. LXX Dt 32:24). The devil, ‘ruler of demons’, Riley (1999:237) reminds us, is called the serpent and dragon (Rev 12:9), recalling the serpent in the garden (Gen 3:1) and the dragon in the sea (leviathan; Isa 27:1). Riley interprets Jesus’ giving of “authority to tread on snakes and scorpions” (Lk 10:19) to his disciples as referring to power over demons.

2.6.5 PLACES AND TIMES

The rabbinic literature specifies places and times where the demons are particularly active. The wilderness as the home of demons was regarded, even in the Old Testament, as a place where diseases like leprosy issued. In the case of leprosy, one of the birds set up to be offered as an expiatory sacrifice was released that it might carry the disease back to the desert (Lv 14:7, 52). The Septuagint (LXX) uses *daimonion* several times in the ancient Near Eastern sense of spirits

of the desert. It translates the Hebrew *se'irim* (wild goats, satyrs, goat demons; cf. Isa 13:21) and *siyyim* (desert spirits) as those that are to inhabit cities laid waste (cf. also *Ber. 4:35*). The book of Revelation describes the fallen city of 'Babylon' as a "dwelling place of demons and a haunt of every unclean spirit, a haunt of every unclean spirit and hateful bird" (18:2). It was common belief that demons frequented isolated wilderness areas and ruins (*Berakoth 3a-b; Ter-gum Jerusalem 1*; cf. Dt 32:10).

Rabbis also believed that places of ceremonial or other impurity were frequented by demons, particularly cited a number of times are toilets (*Ber. 65a; Shab. 67a; Pes. 111b; Yoma 77b; Kid. 72a; San. 65b*).

Water was also a place where the demons were thought to dwell; that meant that the top portion of water drawn from the well should be poured off before it was drunk (*Hullin 105b-106a; Pes. 112a; Midrash on Ps 20:7*).

The demons were especially active in dark places, so even familiar houses and fields could be dangerous at night time. If one slept alone in the house, one might be seized by Lilith, the most frequently named female demon (*Shab. 151b*; cf. Ferguson 1987:90; Hirsh 1903:517). It was forbidden to greet another person at night, for fear they might be another demon (*Sanhedrin 44a*).

Demons would try to attack scholars at night (*Ber. 54b*). There seemed to be the ordinary human fear of the dark and the unknown operative here (Ferguson 1987:90). An evil spirit is said to show himself or herself or to do harm to a person who is alone. To two persons the evil spirit might reveal himself/herself. It is stated that a torch is the equivalent of two persons, and a moonlight is equal to three persons (*Ber. 43b*). The crowing of the cock in early morning would drive a demon away (*Yoma 21a*). The evening of Wednesday and the Sabbath were times of special demon activity (*Pes. 112b*). Actually any time of the day could be an awesome time, such as morning and midday (*Pes. 111b; M/R Numbers 12:3* refers to "demons who hold sway at night" and to a midday demon).

Demons were believed to hover around the house and the field (Gen R 20), particularly in the lower regions of the air (Nm R 10). People were told of the

danger of walking between two palm trees (*Pes 111a*) or walking alone in the morning before cock-crow (*Ber. 43a; Yoma 21a*). The reason why people were warned of the eves of Wednesday and of the Sabbath is because it was believed that Agrat bat Mahlat “the dancing roof-demon” (*Yalkut Hadash, Keshafim 56*), haunts the air with her train of eighteen myriads of messengers of destruction, “everyone of whom has the power of doing harm” (*Pes 112b*). On those nights one should not drink water except out of white vessels and after having recited Psalm 29:3-9 (the verses mentioning seven times “the voice of the Lord” or other magic formulas (*Pes. 3a*).

Another perilous season was believed to be midsummer noon from the 17th of Tammuz to the 9th of Ab. Then the demon Keteb Meriri was said to reign from ten in the forenoon to three in the afternoon. The demon Keteb Meriri was envisioned to be having a head of a calf, with one revolving horn in the middle, and an eye on the breast and the body covered with scales and hairs and eyes and whosoever saw him, whether a human being or beast, would fall down and expire (*Pes. 3b; Lam R 3; Midrash Teh. to Ps 91:5; Nm R 12*).

It is clear from the rabbinical writings that people in antiquity were gripped by excessive phobia of certain times, periods and places which in turn resulted in more magic which was meant to be a coping mechanism in a world beset with forces of hostility.

2.6.6. FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

2.6.6.1 THE LEADER OF DEMONIC FORCES

In the book of *Jubilees*, the chief of the spirits of darkness is Mastemah (‘Hateful One’ - see Riley 1999:246) and Satan who accuses Israel before God and also ensnares and corrupts them that they be destroyed (*Jub 1:20*). In the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* the leader of the forces of evil is called the Angel of Iniquity who rules this world and causes apostasy, sin, magic and the persecution of the righteous, “dwelling in the hearts” of the rulers of Israel (2:4-10). In the last days the children of Israel will abandon the Lord and ally themselves with the devil (*T. Iss. 6*).

He rules the soul of the one perturbed by anger and falsehood, but flees from the one who avoids wrath and hates lying (*T. Dan 4:7-5:1*). Beliar or Belial causes the righteous to stumble by promiscuity (*T. Reub. 4:7-11*; cf. *4 Macc 18:8* - “the seducing and defiling serpent”; *Adv. Haer. 40.5.3*). The “Prince of Error” blinded Simeon’s mind so as to sell Joseph into slavery (*T. Sim. 2:7*) and caused Judah to go astray by the love of money (*T. Jud. 19:4*). The “Prince of the demons” is Beelzebul, who causes wars, tyranny, demon worship, violence and lust, and resides in the evening star (*T. Sol. 6:1-7*). The devil “inhabits as his own instrument” one who does evil (*T. Napht. 8:6*). Whatever the activity of the devil, however, it is performed by permission of God and according to divine plan to test the righteous and demonstrate who among humans are evil (*Jub 10:8-12*; *T. Job 8:2-3, 20:1-3*; *Rev 13:5*; cf. *1 Cor 11:19*).

2.6.6.2 DEMONS

(a) AT INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

The powers of evil spirits were considered to be inimical to the purposes of God. They were believed to exert their supernatural influence to lead people astray from the revealed will of God. Demons were thought to be responsible for leading people to all kinds of moral impurity (see Arnold 1992:67).

It is for this and other reasons that the Qumran community could refer to this evil dominion as “the company of darkness”. The Qumran *War Scroll* describes the activity of Satan and his demons in this way:

Satan, the Angel of Malevolence, thou hast created the pit; his [rule] is in Darkness and his purpose is to bring about wickedness and iniquity. All the spirits of his company, the Angels of Destruction, walk according to the precepts of darkness; towards them is their [inclination] (*1QM13:11-12*).

In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, we are told about the common Jewish thinking about the influence of the evil spirits on people in their daily lives.

According to the Testaments, every individual must personally struggle against evil spirits of deceit, who are ruled by the devil or Beliar. The evil spirits exploit human drives and frailties to promote their evil ends (cf. Arnold 1992:68-69). Sexual promiscuity, in particular, is pinpointed as one of the areas of sinful activity instigated by evil spirits. In the *Testament of Reuben*, the sexual sin is called “the plaque of Beliar” and is inspired by “a spirit of promiscuity that resides in the nature and the sense” (*T. Reub. 6:3; 3:3*). The *Testament of Reuben*, though, does not give the devil and his powers full responsibility for human lapses into sexual trysts; the involvement of the human mind and senses is given an equal role (see Arnold 1992:69).

In reflecting on Reuben’s incestuous sin with his father’s concubine, Bilhah (cf. Gen. 35:22), the Testament places more emphasis on Reuben’s own lust and mental titillation, “For if I had not seen Bilhah bathing in a sheltered place, I would not have fallen into this great lawless act. For so absorbed were my senses by her naked femininity that I was not able to sleep until I had performed this revolting act” (*T. Reub. 3:11-12*). Based on this regrettable experience, Reuben’s advice to his offspring focuses on discipline in their mind: “Do not devote your attention to the beauty of women, my children, nor occupy your minds with their activity. But live in integrity of heart in the fear of the Lord ... until the Lord give you the mate whom he wills, so that you do not suffer as I did” (*T. Reub. 4:1*). Nonetheless, in continuing to reflect on what he had learned from the event, he points to the devil’s involvement: “For promiscuity has destroyed many. Whether a man is old, well born, rich or poor, he brings on himself disgrace among mankind and provides Beliar with an opportunity to cause him to stumble” (*T. Reub. 4:7*).

In the Testaments, we also discover that the evil spirits of error also take advantage of the debase human nature towards jealousy. The *Testament of Simeon* reflects on Simeon’s role in the betrayal of Joseph by his brothers (Gen 37:12-36). Simeon relates how a powerful evil spirit exploited his jealousy towards Joseph: “In the time of my youth I was jealous of Joseph, because my father loved him more than all the rest of us. I determined inwardly to destroy him, because the prince (*archon*) of Error blinded my mind so that I did not consider him as a brother, nor did I spare Jacob, my father” (*T. Sim. 2:6-7*). Simeon thus

advises his children to “beware of the spirit of deceit and envy” (*T. Sim. 3:1*). If the influence of such a spirit is to be defeated, one must turn to the Lord. Simeon counsels, “If anyone flees to the Lord for refuge, the evil spirit will quickly depart from him and his mind will be eased” (*T. Sim. 3:5*). Simeon holds Joseph as a positive example. Joseph was able to love his brothers, in spite of their treachery towards him, because he possessed the Spirit of God (*T. Sim. 4:4*). In the words of Arnold (1992:69) these two examples help us gain insight into what Jews in the first century believed to be true regarding the role of evil spirits in the affairs of daily life especially with respect to personal morality.

But in the rabbinic writings, other functions and activities of demonic forces are mentioned. In these writings the focus is not only on personal morality. Demons were also believed to bring troubles and misfortune into the world (*Sirach 39:28-31; Berakoth 54b; Sifre Deuteronomy 32:17, 318; 32:24*). They seduced people to sin (*Erubin 41b; Sota 3a*). Resh Lakish said, “A person does not commit a transgression unless a spirit of folly enters into him”. The evil spirits could also cause madness (Midrash Rabah Numbers 19:8), the impoverishing of humankind (*Hullin 105b*) and killed people (*Pesahim 110a*). Demons could also imitate God, for example, God speaks through the dreams and so do the demons, though they do so falsely (*Berakoth 55b*). As ministers of God demons were believed to carry out punishment due to men and women for their sins (Midrash on Ps 17:8; 66a; M/R Deut. 4:4; cf. *Sanhedrin* on the “Prince of Gehenna”).

In the rabbinic writings demons are said to cause the faintness and fatigue of scholars. The wear and tear of the clothes of the scholars is due to their rubbing against them (*Berakoth 6a; Midrash on Ps 17:8 [65b]*).

Disease comes as a result of demonic influence (*Pesahim 112b; Hullin 105b; Gittin 67b*). Midrash on Psalm 91:3 refers to a man who saw a demon, fell flat and became epileptic. Various diseases are ascribed to demons such as affect the brain and the inner parts. Hence there was a constant fear of “Shabriri” (lit. “dazzling glare”), the demon of blindness who rests on uncovered water at night and strikes those who drink it with blindness (*Pes. 112a; 'Ab Zarah 12b*). Among the demons causing diseases we could mention the spirit of nightmare (*Bek 44b*),

the spirit of delirious fever and madness befalling humans and beasts (*Pesik, Parah 40a; Yoma 83b; Gen R 12*). The spirit of leprosy (*Ket. 61b*), the spirit of melancholy (*Yer. Git 48c*), a demon of disease which attacks women in child-birth (*'Ab. Zarah 29a*). These demons were supposed to enter the body and cause the disease while overwhelming (*Sifre Debarim 318*) or seizing the victim (*Shab. 151b; Yoma 83a, 84a*).

But Jews in the first-century world and their contemporaries did not just believe that demons were only malign spirits. There was also a positive understanding of the role of the demonic (cf. Graf 1997). This could be partly traced to some of the Babylonian amoraim who employed the shedim as friendly spirits and received useful instruction from them, calling them by familiar names such as “Joseph”, “Jonathan” etc. (*Pes. 110a; Hul. 105b; Yeb. 122a*).

Demons could be summoned to the aid of human beings. Solomon is quite prominent in rabbinic literature as one who knew the secrets by which to obtain mastery over the spirits. Solomon ruled over denizens of the upper world (of demons) as well as the lower (*Megillah 116; cf. The Testament of Solomon*). Before Solomon sinned he ruled over the demons. After he sinned, he brought sixty warriors to protect his couch from terror by night (*Pesikta Rabbati 69a; cf. Midrash Rabbah Exodus 30:16*). Solomon's servant, Benaiah, captured Ashmedai (Asmodeus), the prince of demons with a chain and a ring, each of which had graven on it the divine name. The demon's help was enlisted in the building of the temple (*Gittin 68a; cf. Sotah 48b; Midrash on Psalms 78:12; Midrash Rabah Exodus 52:4; Pesikta Rabbati 6:7*).

Several of the rabbis, too, were believed to have authority over the demons, for example, Johanan ben Zakkai (*Baba Bathra 134a; Kiddushin 29b*). Instructions were occasionally given about how to secure the services of demons. One rabbi fasted and spent the night in a cemetery so an unclean spirit might rest upon him and enable him to tell the future (*Sanhedrin 65b*). It was forbidden to consult demons on the Sabbath (*Sanhedrin 101a*). At least one day belongs to the Lord (cf. Ferguson 1987:92).

(b)

AT MACROSTRUCTURAL LEVEL

The influence of the demonic, according to Jewish writers, did not only affect individual people but other spheres as well. Jewish authors ascribed the rise and fall of non-Jewish religions to the inspiration of evil powers (cf. Arnold 1992:69). In discussing the influence of the powers on the rise of civilisation after the flood, the book of Jubilees, a second-century B.C. writing, refers to the beginnings of idolatry. The inhabitants of Ur of the Chaldees “made for themselves molten images, and everyone worshipped the icon which they made for themselves as a molten image. And they began making graven images and polluted likenesses. And cruel spirits assisted them and led them astray so that they might commit sin and pollution. And the prince, Mastema, acted forcefully to do all this (*Jubilees* 11:4-5).

Likewise, the apocalyptic book of *I Enoch* speaks of the demonic root of idolatry: “The spirits of the angels ... have defiled the people and will lead them into error so that they will offer sacrifices to the demons as unto gods, until the great day of judgement in which they shall be judged till they are finished (*I Enoch* 19:1).

Although the Old Testament is not so explicit about the involvement of the evil powers in the origins of idolatry, it does affirm that sacrificing to the idols is tantamount to sacrificing to demons:

They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominable practices they provoked him to anger. They sacrificed to demons which were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come in of late, whom your fathers had never dreaded (Dt 32:16-17).

Such a sentiment is also known in the New Testament (Rev 9:20). Many streams of Judaism also believed occultic practices were the work of the devil and his powers. According to *I Enoch*, the fallen angels taught people magic, incantations, alchemy and astrology (*I Enoch* 7-8; *Jubilees* 11:1-8).

Jewish writers also attributed civil unrest among the nations and their hostility towards Israel to the devious work of the evil powers (cf. Arnold 1992:70). The book of *Jubilees* ascribes a murderous tendency of people to the influence of the forces of Mastema, an evil angel corresponding to Satan: “And (Mastema) sent out other spirits to those who were under his hand to practise all error and sin and all transgression, to destroy, to cause to perish and to pour out blood upon the earth” (*Jubilees* 11:5). All the weaponry of warfare was also inspired by fallen angels: “And Azaz’el taught the people the art of making swords and knives, and shields, and breastplates” (*1 Enoch* 8:1).

Egypt’s hostility to Israel, and especially to Moses, is interpreted by the book of *Jubilees* as stemming from the supernatural opposition of the evil Mastema (see Arnold 1992:70). It was actually Mastema who used the Egyptian Pharaoh in an attempt to kill Moses; it was also Mastema who enabled the Egyptian magicians to perform the great wonders in opposition to Moses. Furthermore, it was Mastema who exerted his evil-inspiring influence on the Egyptians to pursue Israel into the sea (*Jubilees* 48).

The Qumran community, which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, gives prominence to the demonic in their understanding of society (see Arnold 1992:70-71). According to *IQM*, it is Satan and his powers who are behind the Roman usurpers: “All those (who are ready) for battle shall march out and shall pitch their camp before the king of the kittim (Romans) and before all the hosts of Satan gathered about him for the Day (of revenge) by the Sword of God (*IQM* 15:2-3).

The demonic, therefore, was believed to play a major role in the popular understanding of society and its diverse structures during the time leading up to the New Testament period. The spiritual and supernatural dimension in comprehending the dynamics and workings of society featured prominently in Jewish thinking. In the eyes of the writer of *Jubilees*, justice and freedom from oppression would have been impossible to obtain for Israel without addressing the powerful demonic hostility of Mastema. The people of Israel were freed from their terrible dehumanising conditions because Yahweh worked through his servant Moses as part of his larger plan for his people. The Qumran community was

anticipating the direct intervention of the mighty hand of God to deal an everlasting blow to Satan and all the host of his kingdom (see Arnold 1992:71).

2.6.7 EXORCISM AND APOTROPAIC MEASURES

2.6.7.1 MAGIC

(a) DEFINING MAGIC

Kitchen (1962:766) explains magic and sorcery as an attempt to influence people and events by supernatural or occult means. They may be associated with some form of divination, though divination by itself is the attempt to use supernatural means to discover events without influencing them.

As a universal phenomenon, magic may be termed 'black' or 'white'. Black magic attempts to produce evil results through such methods as curses, spells, destruction of models of one's enemy, and alliance with evil spirits and it often takes the form of witchcraft (see Kitchen 1962:766; Hall 1988). On the other hand, white magic tries to undo curses and spells, and to use occult forces for the good of oneself and others. The magician tries to compel a god, demon, or spirit to work for him or her (see Graf 1997; *Sanhedrin* 67b).

According to Craffert (1999a:84), a belief in magic assumes a specific worldview. It is operative where people believe in the existence of powers greater than themselves that can influence human affairs and can be persuaded or compelled to act on someone's behalf. Smith (1996a:208) writes that in the first-century period, people believed in natural magic (which deals with powers supposed to be inherent in natural events and objects like certain plants, stones, parts of animals or celestial bodies) and demonic magic. Demonic magic had to do with various sorts of beings or powers. It was believed that these powers and beings (which included gods and their intermediaries and spirits of the dead) could be invoked in a number of ways to intervene in human and natural affairs. Such invocation could be by means of specific rituals, by simply calling them or by compelling them by sacrifices (see Craffert 1999a:159-160).

(b) MAGIC TEXTS AND OBJECTS

The magical texts tell us something about the beliefs and practices of people at grassroots level in the ancient world. Most of the literary remains from the ancient world, for example, texts on papyrus and parchments, come from a minority elite group of society (see Craffert 1999a:84). Those were the people, the ruling elite, who could afford writing material and controlled the official traditions in society. Many of the magical texts, however, reflect the hopes, desires and fears of the majority of people at grassroots level. Meyer and Smith (1994:14) say these texts and practices answered the needs of the people who employed them in times of crisis, hurt, or loss, or in the continual difficulties of everyday life.

Of the Jewish magical texts, the most well known, the *Sefer ha-Razim* (*The Book of Secrets*) was written in Hebrew, and is a handbook for magical practices (see Smith 1996a:212). This book contains a whole number of spells, curses and incantations. As with magical texts in other languages, the themes include the healing of illness, the elimination of enemies, the sinking of ships, insight into other people's minds and dreams, love charms, protection against the evil eye, etc. (see Schafer 1990:81; Klauck 2000:226).

The collections of ancient magical texts include texts written on many kinds of writing material and in a wide variety of styles. While most of the magical handbooks were written on papyrus, many of the inscriptions of curses or spells were on objects of clay, metal or animal skin. These objects included magical bowls and gems. The largest collection of magical texts from the Greco-Roman world is the Greek magical papyri (see Betz 1992:xli-xliv; Craffert 1999a:86f).

(c) CURSE TABLETS AND BINDING SPELLS

Craffert (1999a:91) writes that more than 1500 curse tablets from the ancient world have been preserved. The majority were made of lead or lead alloys. Other materials could also be used, such as ostraca (broken postherds), limestone, gemstones, papyrus and wax, or sometimes the curse was written on the bottom of a ceramic bowl. A common description of curse tablets maintains that they are inscribed pieces of lead, usually in the form of small, tin sheets, intended

to influence, by supernatural means, the actions or the welfare of persons or animals against their will (cf. Versnel 1991:61). The common term for these curse tablets and binding spells is *defixiones*, from the Latin word meaning “to fasten” or “to nail down” (Gager 1992:30). The implicit or explicit purpose of curse tablets and binding spells is that the victim must be ‘bound’ or ‘nailed down’ and this includes a number of possibilities, for example, making the targeted victim powerless, unable to perform, making ill or affecting specific bodily parts.

Curse tablets were deposited in special locations where they took effect. They had to be buried in a river, land, sea, stream, coffin or in a well. Other places include the home of the desired target (often in the case of love spells) and for racing, they had to be buried in the stadium floor. Burying the tablet in areas governed by taboo, like graves or sanctuaries would prevent the victim from finding them and loosening the spell (see Craffert 1999a:92). Curse tablets and binding spells represent a cultural pattern which indicate to us something about the way in which divine power was mediated in the ancient world.

(d) CASTERS OF EVIL EYE

The power of the evil eye was feared in the first-century Mediterranean world and is feared up to this day (see Craffert 1999a:135). Its effects could be deadly, such as crop failure, disfigurement, enmity between family members and death itself (Eastman 2001:82). Craffert maintains that the belief in the evil eye includes faith in two separate phenomena (see also Isbell 1978:11). The first is the belief that certain people have basic powers of an evil disposition inherent in their eyes. By casting a glance on you, you could be affected. The second phenomenon is related to a belief that the gods and spirits are basically envious of humans and their accomplishments. Children and persons of fortune were considered among the most vulnerable.

The dangers ascribed to the power of the evil eye were indeed serious. For example, Philostratus claimed that Apollonius of Tyana killed every living thing with one look (*Vita Apoll.* 6.12). Pliny describes the destructive effect of the evil eye as a family trait:

There are families in the same part of Africa that wield the Evil Eye, whose praises cause meadows to dry up, trees to wither and infants to perish. Isogonus adds that there are people of the same kind among the Triballi and the Illyrians, who also injure by the evil eye and who kill those at whom they stare for a longer time, especially with furious eyes and that their evil eye is most felt by adults (H.N. 5.2.16-18).

In his 'Table Talk', Plutarch says that some people seriously hurt children by an envious look, and that adults also have been caused to "fall ill and waste away". He adds that even close relatives may cast the evil eye inadvertently on those they love, such as fathers on their children. The discussion in 'Table Talk' presents a debate between holders of a rationalistic explanation of the causes of the evil eye and those who understand it as demonic and wilfully malevolent. Thus Plutarch's work gives us a window into the range of viewpoints in the first century concerning the provenance and power of the eye, from the popular belief in demonic spirits at work to a more rational accounting of the phenomena (see Eastman 2001:83). Plutarch's discussion shows that he himself does not discount the material effects of malicious looks, although he does dismiss popular beliefs that they involve the casting of spells or the work of demons (*Moralia* 680C-683B).

Eastman (2001:76) writes that an association with greed and stinginess dominates the concept of the evil eye in first-century Judaism. In the Septuagint, we find occurrences of 'eye' (*ophthalmos*) modified by 'evil' (*poneros*) and for 'envy' (*phthonos*) in Deuteronomy 15:9, Sirach 14:8, 10, 31:13, and Tobit 4:7, 16. All these passages, in Eastman's opinion, involve descriptions or criticism of stingy behaviour or a 'greedy eye'. In the early rabbinic literature, the good eye is associated with the generosity while the 'evil eye' is associated with greed (see *Ab. 5:19*; cf. *4 Macc. 1:26, 2:15*; Dellings, 'baskaino' *TDNT*, I pp. 594-495).

The contrast between the generous 'good eye' and the stingy 'evil eye' also occurs in the New Testament. In Luke 11:34 (Mt 6:22-23), Jesus contrasts the 'evil eye' (*ophthalmos poneros*) with the 'single eye' (*ophthalmos aplous*). In

Mark 7:21 the 'evil eye' (*ophthalmos poneros*) is envy, part of a vice similar to that in *4 Maccabees* 1:26, 2:15. In Matthew 20:15, Jesus asks the jealous workers who want more money at the end of the day, "Is your eye evil because I am good?" (see Eastman 2001:77).

There can be no doubt that early Christians and first-century Jews shared their contemporary's firm conviction of the power of the evil eye and constant fear of its possessors and employed the conventional strategies of protection against it (see Craffert 1999a:136). The extent of the evil eye threat experienced by first-century Mediterraneans led them to develop many devices and strategies as protection against it. For example, the papyri frequently include *abaskantos* ('Unbewitched! May no harm befall you!') in the closing greetings as a kind of prayer for protection (see Moulton and Milligan 1930:106). Protective measures also included plaques on doorways, inscribed with incantations, and statu-ary images set up in gardens, fields, shops and public places (see Elliot 1994:57). Amulets were common, often contained in *bullas* worn by children or put on animals (Eastman 2001:83). Coral also was used as an amulet to protect children (Pliny H.N. 19:50). According to Pliny (H.N. 28:36, 39), 'spitting' was one method of protection against the evil eye. Paul's protest that, "you did not spit me out" (Gal 4:14), could be a reponse to an evil-eye accusation (see Elliott 1990:262-273; Neyrey 1988:72-100). In Paul's letter to the Galatians, it is clear that accusations of evil eye bewitchment play a significant role in the conflict between Paul and his opponents.

(e) AMULETS

Amulets differ from curse tablets in the sense that curse tablets once they were inscribed, they were deposited in special locations where they took effect (see Craffert 1999a:92). Amulets, on the other hand, were literally called *things tied around* since they were tied around parts of the body, usually the neck, arm or leg (see Craffert 1999a:107). Amulets were intended to bring supernatural power to bear against persons or animals. The wearing of amulets served to shield the bearer from all forms of harm or danger, such as protection against the danger of serpents, the evil eye and demons. By virtue of their alleged ability to ward off unseen disasters, some also guaranteed success and prosperity. They were often

used to introduce desirable qualities such as love, wealth, power or victory for the bearer. With the passage of time the boundary lines between amulets, curse tablets and bowls with inscribed spells disappeared and they were all used for a variety of purposes (see Gager 1992:219-220; Kotansky 1991:107; Yamauchi 1983:195).

Amulets came in many shapes and sizes. They could be simple pieces of string, colourful embroidered bands, engraved stones or rings, or strips of metal, papyrus or other materials inscribed with special formulas, then rolled up and folded and carried about on a string, in a pouch or in tubular containers. They were small magical objects that could be inscribed or uninscribed. They were prepared and sold by specialists, who produced them according to traditional recipes and consecrated them through ritual acts and thereby endowed them with power (see Craffert 1999a:107-108).

Amulets were apparently well known in Old Testament times. A number of passages confirm this view. The earrings which Jacob buried under the oak at Shechem were probably not just ornamental, but also amuletic (Gn 35:4 - see Craffert 1999a-108). The ornaments which Gideon took off the camels' necks were amulets (Jdg 8:21) and it is known that amulets were worn by both men (Jdg 8:26) and women (Isa 3:18). Despite the condemnation of amulets, Jews of all periods continued to wear them together with their prescribed phylacteries. Pharisaism insisted that the observance of the law was the best prophylactic against demons. The wearing of the *Tefillin*, the Greek name, indicates that they were regarded by the Hellenistic Jews as amulets (cf. *Targ. Cant.* 8:3; Gen R 35; *Men.* 33b).

Amulets and curse tablets were widely used in the ancient world. In search of honour and protection and for the sharing of the limited good in society, it was understandable that people used curse tablet and amuletic objects (see Gager 1992:218). The Jewish amulets that are available today are general adjurations against spirits and demons by which people were possessed. In most cases, the evil spirits were named as precisely as possible in order that no possible demon or spirit be overlooked and then be able to carry out the evil work (see Craffert 1999a:112; cf. Schäfer 1990:84; Betz 1992:313).

(f) MAGICAL FORMULAE, WORDS AND NAMES

According to Craffert (1999a:92), the term 'mystical words or formulas' refers to a number of features which appear on magical tablets. Often they are unintelligible lines of letters or forms of speech which are unrecognisable in any language of the time (see also Ferguson 1984:54). A fetching charm for an unmanageable woman which works on the same day, reads like this:

Take the skin of an ass and write the following in the blood from the womb of a silurus after mixing in the juice of the plant Sarapis.

The writing is this: SISISOTH, attract to me her (name of girl) on this very day, in this very hour, because I adjure you by the name CHYCHACHAMER MEROUTH CHMEMINOUTH THIONTHOUTH PHIOPHAO BELECHAS AAA EEE L'S'S'S'N'N'

And put the magical material inside with vetch and place it in the mouth of a dead dog, and it will attract her in the same hour (PGM XXXVI 361-371 - see Betz 1992:278)

What apparently mattered, according to Craffert (1999a:94), was that these strings of letters were understood by the spirits themselves. The same letters, which occurred with the same deities and demons, ruled out the possibility of free invention.

In many instances there are unintelligible characters or symbols. Because of their wide usage, especially in the first-century world, it can be concluded that such characters and symbols occupied a special place on curse and spell tablets (see PGM 1.265-269). Another feature is the common practice of writing words which can be read from either side, known as palindromes. They are mostly magical words with no recognisable sense in any language, but can be read and pronounced the same way forwards and backwards. The most common palindrome in magical literature from antiquity is ABLANA THANALBA. This magi-

cal name, usually invoked for beneficent results, has not yet been adequately explained but it is commonly thought to be of Jewish origin (Craffert 1999a:94). A special kind of palindrome is the SATOR-ROTAS square, which appears in many different versions (Yamauchi 1983:198) and another example is the ARABAOUARABA (*PGM XIII. 757*) which can be written forwards or backwards.

The power of names is another important feature in the use of magic. The fundamental significance thereof is that 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 (see Aune 1980:1546). 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 dwelled there. Elisha, for example, cursed the young men who mocked (2 Ki 2; cf. Mk 9:38; Lk 9:49; Acts 19).

The name of the Jewish God, Yahweh, was particularly famous for its usefulness in magic. Although most of these texts were pagan texts, the name of the Jewish God appears more than three to one when compared with any other deity mentioned in the magical papyri. The very common IAO in many of the texts is the Greek version of the Hebrew, Yahweh - the Jewish God, while El and Saboath (both referring to the Jewish God or his angels) are equally popular (see Craffert 1999a:90; *PGM VII 211-212*).

(g) MAGIC ROOT (HERB?)

In *The Jewish War* (7.181-182, 185), Josephus tells of a magic root of the plant Baaras. Josephus says that with all the attendant risks associated with the plant like touching it which may be fatal, it possesses one virtue for which it is prized: The spirits of wicked people which enter the living and kill them unless aid is forthcoming - are promptly expelled by this root, if merely applied to the patients. In Josephus' own day, exorcism was performed in Solomon's name with a ring containing a magic root (*Anti.* 8.47). They could be exorcised by providing a host body, usually an animal, but also a figurine, or even a reed of the same size as the human sufferer.

(h) THE BOOK OF TOBIT

The most striking book in the Old Testament apocrypha concerning magic and exorcism is *Tobit*. Tobias, the son of the righteous Tobit, was sent on a journey to collect some money which his father had left in trust with a friend. Tobias was accompanied on the trip by a man who was actually the angel, Raphael, in human disguise. On their way they stopped at Ecbatana, where lived Raquel, a kinsman of Tobit. Raquel had a beautiful daughter named Sarah, who had had a series of unfortunate experiences. Sarah had been engaged seven times, but each prospective husband had died in the bridal chamber before marriage was consummated, killed by the demon Asmodeus, who loved Sarah and would not let anyone have her. Before Tobias and Raphael arrived in Ecbatana, they had stopped at the Tigris River and caught a fish. The angel instructed Tobias to cut open the fish and take the heart, liver and gall out and save them with a promise, "As for the fish's heart and liver, you must burn them to make a smoke in the presence of a man or a woman afflicted by a demon or evil spirit, and every affliction will flee away and never remain with that person any longer" (*Tobit* 6:8; cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 28.63; PGM CXIV.1-14).

Tobias found Sarah very attractive and desired to marry her, but was fearful, because seven others had died attempting to marry her, but the angel Raphael reassured him that if he were to follow his instructions of expelling a demon, success would be guaranteed. It worked on Asmodeus. When the demon smelled the odour he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt. But Raphael followed him (Asmodeus), and at once bound him there hand and foot (*Tobit* 8:3).

According to Ferguson (1984:78), there are many motifs of folklore about demons that are combined in the tale of the book of *Tobit*: a demon's love for a beautiful woman, the mysterious and dangerous qualities of a new bride, the use of magic as a protection against demons, and the terminology of "binding" a demon. Something that is overlooked by commentators on the story, is the role played by prayer together with magic in the exorcising of demons: "Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, 'Sister, get up and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety'" (*Tobit* 8:4-5; cf. 6:18; see also Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus* 453-463).

(i) CONCLUSIONS

The Jewish involvement in magic reflects the Jewish popular belief in demons, spirits and powers of evil in the period leading to the New Testament. Even in the New Testament times, there are instances confirming the widespread practice of magic, for example, the two Jewish magicians - Simon (Acts 8:9), and Bar-Jesus or Elymas (Acts 13:6-12). Luke also writes about certain itinerant Jewish exorcists, who had added the name of Jesus to their repertoire of magical names (Acts 19:13-20).

Contrary to Old Testament and official Jewish restrictions against the use of magic, many Jews throughout the Mediterranean world adopted and further developed these occult practices of their pagan neighbours.

2.6.7.2 SPIRITUAL MEANS

(a) THE COVENANT

As much as there were magical practices to ward off the demonic, there were “spiritual” means as well (see Ferguson 1984:92-93). Just to be part of the covenant people was itself important. According to one passage, the prince of Gehenna voraciously demanded multitudes of victims, but God would not give him the seed of Isaac. Rather God said, “I have whole companies of heathens whom I will give you” (*Shabbath* 104a).

(b) GOD HIMSELF

God, himself, was seen as a shield for his people (Midrash on Psalms 104:24 [224a]). In this reference it is written, “were it not for the shadow of the Holy One, blessed be He, which protects a man, the demons would destroy him Were it not for the ordinance of the Holy One ...”

(c) THE NAME OF THE LORD

The name of God was effective in driving demons away. In Midrash Rabbah Numbers 12:3, it is said, “By the power of His name I put to flight the harmful demons and the destroying angels” (cf. Craffert 1999a:90; see also Mk 16:16).

(d) THE FEAR OF THE LORD

In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the fear of the Lord is mentioned as one of the apotropaic measures. Surprisingly, in the *Testament of Benjamin*, the fear of the Lord is mentioned together with the love of one’s neighbour: “Fear ye the Lord, and love your neighbour; and even though the spirits of Beliar claim you to afflict you with every evil, yet they shall not have dominion over you... For he that feareth God and loveth his neighbour cannot be smitten by the spirit of Beliar, being shielded by the fear of God (*T. Benjamin* 3:3).

(e) ANGELS

God’s angels are said to afford protection to his people against demons (Midrash on Psalms 17:8 [65b]; 9:4 [199b]; Midrash Numbers 12:3). In fact, “the wicked are accompanied by the angels of Satan; the righteous by the angels of God (*Tosef., Shab.* 17.2-3; cf. *Jubilees* 10.6; see also Ps 34:7).

(f) THE WORD OF GOD

The word of God was itself protection (Midrash on Psalm 104:24 [224a]; Shebuoth 15b). Particularly the part of scripture known as *Shema*, the Jewish confession of faith (Dt 6:4-9; 11:3-21; Nm 15:36-41) was for every Jew to know. It is stated, “If one recites the Shema upon his bed, the demons keep away from him” (*Berakoth* 5a; cf. Midrash Rabbah Numbers 20:20).

(g) OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW

Fulfilling the commandments was another sure protection against demons. For each commandment observed by a human person becomes an angel “to guard

him against demons” (Ex. R. 32). “Every observance of the Law is a protection” (*Sotah 21a*) and those doing sacred work need fear no evil powers (*Pes. 8b*). In the *Damascus Document*, the following protection against demons is given: “On the day on which a man undertakes to be converted to the Law of Moses, the angel of hostility will depart from him if he fulfills his promises” (CD 16:14f). It is also stated that, “Every limb engaged in the fulfillment of a divine is protected against the ‘Strong One’” (*Pesik. R. 9*; Midr. Teh. to Ps 35; cf. Lk 11:21). Thus, Pharisaism, while increasing the whole of ceremonial laws for the sake of the love of God, showed a way to overcome the fear of demons. Belief in the power of the law became an antidote against what may be termed “Satanaphobia”, and against the spirit of pessimism and asceticism which was fostered by the Essenes and the Christian heirs (Hirsch 1903:519).

(h) PRAYER

Prayer was considered as a powerful weapon available to the righteous person (cf. James 5:16). The story was told of a demon who was haunting a school-house. He appeared in the guise of a seven-headed dragon. Every time the rabbi fell on his knees in prayer, one head fell off (*Kiddushin 29b*). This may remind us of Jesus’ statement that, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer” (Mk 9:29).

(i) THE BLOOD

The name ‘shedim’ which denotes a storm-demon (Isa 13:6) or evil demons, came to the Israelites through their interaction with the Chaldeans. In Chaldean mythology, the seven evil deities were known as ‘shedim’, storm-demons represented in ox-like form. The sacred writers intentionally applied the word in referring to the Canaanite deities. But they also spoke of “the destroyer” (Ex 12:23; cf. Meier 1999:240f) as a demon whose malignant effect upon the houses of the Israelites was to be warded off by the blood of the paschal sacrifice sprinkled upon the lintel and the door-posts (Hirsch 1903:515; cf. Rev 12:11). According to the book of the *Jubilees*, in the Passover night, Satan was bound and prevented from doing harm to Israel (*Jub xlvi.15; Pes. 109b*).

(j) THE BLESSING OF THE PRIEST

The priest's blessing was also taken as a protection against malign influences (Nm R 11). When the tabernacle was built by Moses and the priestly blessing pronounced, the spell of the evil eye was broken (*Pesikta Rabbati* 5:10).

(k) HYMNS AGAINST DEMONS

From the "*Songs of the Sage*", it is clear that God's people in ancient times made use of song to protect themselves against the influence of the demonic forces. One of the songs reads:

Blessings to the King of glory
Words of thanksgiving in psalms of [...]
to the God of knowledge
to the resplendence of the powerful,
God of gods,
Lord of all the holy ones.
His realm is above the powerful mighty
before the might of his power are all terrified
they scatter and flee before the radiance of his dwelling
of his glory and majesty
And I, the Sage,
declare the grandeur of his radiance
in order to frighten and terrify
all the spirits of the ravaging angels
and the bastard spirits
demons, Liliths, owls and [jackals...]
and those who strike unexpectedly
to lead astray the spirit of knowledge,
to make their heads forlorn and ...
in the era of the rule of wickedness
and in the periods of the humiliation of the sons of light,
in the guilty periods of those defiled by sins
not for the everlasting destruction

but rather of the humiliation of sin [...]
Rejoice, righteous ones, in the God of wonders.
My psalms are for the upright
May all those of perfect path praise him.

- *4Q Songs of the Sage (4Q510[4QShira])*

(l) CONCLUSIONS

Although the use of magic was widespread among the Jews of the Mediterranean world as in other nations of the first-century era, there is evidence that there were other ways that were considered spiritually acceptable in the exorcising or protection against demonic forces. For the righteous person, the magical or talismanic means, were prohibited according to the Old Testament and other Jewish religious restrictions.

2.6.7.3 EXORCISTS, MIRACLE-WORKERS AND HOLY PEOPLE

(a) APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

The most significant and best known Greco-Roman holy man, a close contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth, was Apollonius of Tyana in Cappadocia, whose life spanned the first century A.D. and who died in the principate of Nerva.

Apollonius was born of a well-to-do Greek family and was educated in Tarsus. His biographer, Philostratos, a professional writer who was commanded by the emperor's mother to publish a fitting account of Apollonius' life, reports in *The life of Apollonius of Tyana*, that he was an ascetic wandering teacher and reformer who visited many of the prominent cities of the Roman world, and travelled as far as India. As with other philosophers, he was persecuted under Nero and Domitian, but charges of magical practices were involved. His reported miraculous powers and extraordinary features in his life like prevision of events, teleportation, exorcisms, healings etc., have made him the principal first-century representative of the "divine man" (*theios anér*) concept - both of the sage and

wonder-worker types - which has come to prominence in the New Testament gospel studies as the background for the portrayal of Jesus (Ferguson 1993:361; see also Craffert 1999a:129f). Among the features of Apollonius' life that may be parallel with Jesus are: his miraculous birth (1.4,5); the gathering of a circle of disciples, of whom one (Damis) was in a position to transmit authentic information; itinerant teaching; collection of miracle stories e.g. demonised boy, lame man, blind man, paralytic (3.38f), and disappearance at his trial (8.5 - see Ferguson 1993:362-363; Klauck 2000:169; *Life of Pythagoras*).

A notable incident in Apollonius' life of exorcism occurred when a licentious youth broke out into loud and coarse laughter during a discourse by Apollonius. Then Apollonius looked up at him and said: "It is not yourself that perpetrates this insult, but the demon (*ho daimon*) who drives you on without your knowing it." And, in fact, the youth was, without knowing it, possessed by a devil (*daimonion*); for he would laugh at things that no one else laughed at, and then he would fall to weeping for no reason at all, and he would talk and sing to himself. Now most people thought that it was the boisterous humour of youth which led him into such excesses; but he was really the mouthpiece of a devil (*to daimonion*), though it only seemed a drunken frolic in which on that occasion he was indulging. Now when Apollonius gazed on him, the ghost (*to eidolon*) in him began to utter cries of fear and rage, such as one hears from people who are being branded or racked; and the ghost swore that he would leave the young man alone and never take possession of any man again. But Apollonius addressed him with anger ... and ordered him to quit the young man and show, by a visible sign, that he had done so. "I will throw down yonder statue", said the devil, and pointed to one of the images which were in the king's portico, for there it was that the scene took place. But when the statue began moving gently, and then fell down, it would defy anyone to describe the hubbub which arose thereat and the way they clapped their hands with wonder. But the young man rubbed his eyes as if he had just woken up, and he looked towards the rays of the sun, and assumed a modest aspect, as all had their attention concentrated on him; for he no longer showed himself licentious, nor did he stare madly about, but he had returned to his own self, as thoroughly as if he had been treated with drugs; and he gave up his dainty dress and summery garments and the rest of his sybaritic way of life, and he fell in love with the austerity of philosophers, and donned their

cloak, and stripping off his old self, modelled his future life upon that of Apollonius (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.20; cf. Mk 5:1-20).

(b) HONI, THE CIRCLE-DRAWER

The religion of the Israelites was renowned for the tradition when prophets like Elijah and Elisha would demonstrate an ability to exert their will on natural phenomena. In the cases of severe drought, in addition to liturgical prayers and sacrifices for rain, they would urge persons of repute in the field of miracles to intervene on their behalf (see Craffert 1999a:132).

One of the holy men or *Hasidim* in the Jewish world of Jesus' time, accredited with miracles, was Honi, the Circle-drawer. Circles were solar symbols in Hellenistic magic. Drawing the circle around himself was probably a magical act in which Honi excluded the dangerous spirits from his immediate environment and protected himself against their attacks (see Mishnah Taanit 3:8). Knowing the name of a deity was one way of gaining control over it and using such names was common practice in magical incantations (see *PGM XII.160-178*). By calling on the name of the Lord (not the name itself), Honi could persuade the master of the world to act on his behalf.

(c) HANINA BEN DOSA

Another person who was accredited with miracles of causing the rain to fall, healing the sick and exorcising the demons was Hanina ben Dosa who, like Jesus of Nazareth, lived in the first century prior to the destruction of the temple in a small Galilean village in the district of Sepphoris (see Craffert 1999a:133; 1999b:83).

Among other things, Hanina ben Dosa is reputed for immunity from snake bite:

Our rabbis say, once upon a time a poisonous snake was injuring people. They went and made known to Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa. He said to them, "Show me its burrow". They showed him its burrow and he placed his heel

upon the mouth of the hole. It came forth and bit him - and it died. He put the snake on his shoulders, went to the House of Study, and said to them, "See my sons, it is not the snake that kills but sins that kill". Then they said, "Woe to the man a snake attacks and woe to the snake which Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa attacks!" (See Cartlidge and Dungan 1980:159; Vermes 1973:73; cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 28.6.30-33; Mk 16:17-18).

Hanina was also renowned for his ability to heal from a distance (cf. Ps 107:20; Mt 8:8, 13). One of the stories is about the son of Gamaliel who was suffering from a mortal fever. Two servants were sent to Hanina, who retired to his upper room and prayed. He returned with the word that the fever had departed. Back at home it was confirmed that the fever had left at exactly that time.

(d) OTHER 'EXORCISTS'

Jewish writings which emerged after the Old Testament ascribed an exorcist status to some of the Old Testament personalities - a status which the Old Testament itself does not give.

In the Qumran documents, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, relates the story of Abraham as an exorcist in the healing of Pharaoh. The Essene writer seems to have been entirely responsible for this detail. In the story, Abraham behaves like a genuine exorcist since he cures the king of Egypt, who has been attacked by some purulent malady, by laying his hands on him and expelling the evil spirit (*Genesis Apocryphon* 20:29).

In the *Prayer of Nabonidus* (4QPrNab), the healer, who was very likely Daniel, is also an exorcist. In his comment on the prayer, Dupont-Sommer (1961:325; see also Knibb 1987:206) says that Daniel (the exorcist) is given this title in the text (4b-5a). Nothing is said of the way in which the exorcist proceeded; what is remarkable is the formula employed in the narrative: "and an exorcist forgave my sins". In the context, says Dupont-Sommer, a formula such as this is obviously equivalent to "and this exorcist healed me of my sickness". Dupont-Sommer

also points out that in the synoptic gospels, Jesus says in the same way to the quadraplegic, “My child, thy sins are forgiven - meaning he is cured. As the scribes are scandalised by such a statement, Jesus explains to them: “Which is easier to say to the paralytic, ‘Thy sins are forgiven’, or ‘Arise, take thy pallet and walk?’” And thereupon he ordered the sick man to rise, take up his bed and return to his house (Mk 2:1-12).

For Dupont-Sommer, the comments which the gospel story attributes to the Scribes on this occasion, are particularly instructive: “How can this man (Jesus) speak so? He blasphemes! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mk 2:7; Lk 5:21). According to Dupont-Sommer, these comments reflect Pharisaic sentiment; they would be out of place among the Essenes. The *Prayer of Nabonidus* shows clearly that the Essenes believed that a properly qualified exorcist possessed the power to remit sin, and at the same time expel sickness. Dupont-Sommer concludes that Jesus in the gospel story speaks like Daniel in the Qumran writing. Moreover, the *Damascus Document* appears to attribute to the ‘overseer’ (*mebaqqer*), power to forgive sins within the Essene community: “He will loose all the chains that bind them ...” (xiii.10).

In the *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus portrays David as a kind of constant exorcist to a spirit-troubled king Saul (6.166-169). The method is just to sing songs and play the harp - no incantations or spells. The singing and playing is sufficient to cause the demons to leave (see Cotter 1999:104; cf. 4QSongs of the Sage).

Again, Josephus quotes Eleazer, the Pharisee (70-90 CE), who draws on Solomon’s method for exorcism (*Ant.* 8.46-49). Josephus relates that, “I have seen a certain Eleazer, a countryman of mine [Josephus], in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, tribunes and a number of other soldiers, free men possessed by demons, and this was the manner of the cure: he put to the nose of the possessed man a ring which had under its seal one of the roots prescribed by Solomon, and then the man smelled it, drew out the demon through his nostrils, and when the man at once fell down, adjured the demon never to come back into him, speaking Solomon’s name and reciting the incantations which he had composed ...”

The name of Solomon finds prominence in Jewish exorcist stories. In rabbinic literature, Solomon is mentioned as one who knew the secrets by which to obtain mastery over demons. Solomon ruled over the denizens of the upper world (demons) as well as the lower (*Megillah* 116; cf. *Testament of Solomon*). Before Solomon sinned, he ruled over the demons. After he sinned, he brought sixty warriors to protect his couch from terror by night (*Pesikta Rabbati* 69a, cf. *Midrash Rabbah* Exodus 30:16). Even Josephus believed that God granted Solomon knowledge of the art used against demons for the benefit and healing of people (*Ant.* 8.44-45).

Something that could be learnt of exorcists in the early centuries comes from Lucian of Samosata (120-190 [?]), who was chiefly known for his satirical dialogues lampooning all aspects of life, especially religious “superstitions”. It is worth noting that Lucian’s home was in the East, and he can be expected to know something of the culture particular to Syria and Palestine of the first and second centuries - a world where the Jesus of Nazareth was active. There is no reason to think that Lucian had Jesus himself in mind, for such exorcisms he describes were common (see Ferguson 1984:56). Lucian criticises oracles as ignorant and deceitful, feeding on weakness and credulity (see Walker 2000:655).

In Lucian’s *The Lover of Lies*, Ion scolds the story-teller for his incredulity over the miraculous and gives testimony about a “Syrian” who exorcises demons. In *The Lover of Lies* 16, the story is told thus:

“You act ridiculously,” said Ion, “to doubt everything. For my part, I should like to ask you what you say to those who free possessed men from their terrors by exorcising the spirits so manifestly. I need not discuss this: everyone knows about the Syrian from Palestine, the adept in it, how many he takes in hand who fall down in the light of the moon and roll their eyes and fill their mouths with foam; nevertheless, he restores them to health and sends them away normal in mind, delivering them from their straits for a large fee. When he stands beside them as they ask there and asks: ‘Whence came you into this body?’ the patient

himself is silent, but the spirit answers in Greek or in the language of whatever foreign country he comes from, telling how and whence he entered into the man; whereupon, by adjuring the spirit and if he does not obey, threatening him, he drives him out. Indeed, I actually saw one coming out, black and smoky in colour.”

Lucian’s satirical portrayal attests to the popularity of exorcists in his society. In the accounts of Apollonius of Tyana and the Syrian from Palestine, we find much that agrees with the New Testament accounts of expelling demons: these parallels include the effects of demon possession on a person, in bodily actions and in voice; anger and assertion of authority by healer/exorcist; the effects on the person after the demon has departed. Among the differences are the fee charged, the material description of the demon and the physical signs given of expulsion (see Ferguson 1984:57).

Having cited a few examples we can, therefore, cautiously conclude that evil spirits indeed inhabited the bodies of human beings. This seems to have been common knowledge in the first-century world. Though widespread in the Mediterranean world in the first-century, Kotansky (2000:273) arrives at the conclusion that the idea that spirits may be exorcised from the body of a person, is Semitic. Greek spells that preserve the notion have a thoroughly Jewish ring about them. Exorcism, says Kotansky, is a Semitic concept. In another investigation, Ferguson (1984:46) finds that Jews had a considerable reputation as magicians and exorcists (cf. Acts 13:6-11; 19:13-16). Other magicians of non-Jewish background borrowed from their Jewish contemporaries. Jesus and the early church practised exorcism. It remained for a long time a practice among the early Christians (see Iraneaus, “*Haereses*” ii [2]:4, 32; Origen, “*Contra Celsum*” iii [3]:24).

2.6.8 DESTINY AND OVERTHROW OF DEMONS

In the Jewish literature that forms part of the New Testament background, there seems to be no doubt of the destiny of the evil spirits. In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the fact of the overthrow of the devil and the demons be-

comes clear: “And after these things there shall arise unto you the Lord himself, the light of righteousness ... he shall redeem all the captivity of the sons of men from Beliar; and every spirit of deceit shall be trodden down” (*T. Zebulun* 9:8) and “Beliar shall be bound by him [the Lord] and he shall give power to his children to tread upon evil spirits” (*T. Levi* 18:10-12). In the *Testament of Simeon*, we are told that “all the spirits of deceit shall be given to be trodden under foot, and men shall rule over wicked spirits” (6:6).

According to the *Assumption of Moses*, by most indications a first-century document, it is stated that God’s kingdom will “appear throughout all his creation, and then Satan shall be no more, and sorrow shall depart with him” (10:1). In the Qumran writings, Belial is depicted as subordinate to God “who made Belial to corrupt, an angel of hatred” (*1 QM* 13:11). God ordained a day “to annihilate the sons of darkness, (when there will be) rejoicing for all[the sons of light]” (*1 QM* 13:16).

Of particular interest in the overthrow of evil, is the linguistic symbolism of the ancient Babylonian myth of a combat between the divine creator and a great sea monster (see Russel 1960:98). This myth finds echoes in a number of passages in the Old Testament where the monster is variously described as the dragon, Leviathan, Rahab or the serpent (e.g. dragon Job 7:12; Rahab Job 9:13; serpent Job 26:13; Amos 9:3).

In the Babylonian and Hebrew forms alike, the monster symbolises the chaotic deep or cosmic ocean (Hebrew *Tehom*, Babylonian *Taimat*) which is regarded as the place of mystery and evil. The power of God over the deep is explicitly shown in scripture (see Ps 33; 93; 107:23-32; Jonah 2:9). In Genesis 1:2, God the Creator saves the world from the power of chaos in the form of the primeval ocean.

The same sea-monster reappears in the apocalypse in the several writings of various dates. In the *Testament of Asher*, for example, the writer tells of the coming of the Most High to earth and of his “breaking of the head of the dragon in the water” (7:3; cf. Ps 74:13). There is a tradition that this dragon, described as Behemoth and Leviathan, is to be devoured at the Messianic banquet by

those who remain in the messianic age (see Russel 1960:99; cf. *II Esdras* 6:52; *II Baruch* 29:4). In the Old Testament, the same sea-monster is slain by Yahweh “with his sure and great and strong sword” (Isa 27:1, 9; Job 26:12). Inasmuch as this Babylonian cosmogony conflicted with the Jewish monotheistic system, the battle of God or his angel Gabriel with Leviathan and Behemoth was transformed into a great eschatological drama which ended in the perfect triumph of divine justice (see Hirsh 1903:518).

The Jews of intertestamental times expected demonic activity until God overthrows evil. It was a common feature of the expectation concerning the messianic age that the power of demons would be broken at that time. God’s Elect One who is called in *I Enoch* 37-71 “The Anointed One”, “The Righteous One”, “The Son of Man” (This title, so familiar to the reader of the New Testament gospels, is derived apparently from Daniel 7:13 - see Pfeiffer 1959:123), will sit on the throne of glory and judge “Azazel, and his associates, and all his hosts in the name of the Lord of spirits” (*I Enoch* 55:4; 90:20-27), and the end of Satan will be the healing and resurrection of the servants of the Lord (*Jubilees* 23:30).

2.6.9 CONCLUSIONS

The first-century Jews shared in the common Mediterranean belief in the existence of spirits. There is a clear distinction between good and evil angels or spirits in Jewish demonology. Demons are given place in holy writings by expanding scripture text. In this case, Genesis 6:1-4 and other scriptures are refashioned to include the demons. While there is no similar cosmic myth in the rest of the Greco-Roman collections, in *I Enoch*, the evil spirits are separated from the good through a “historical sin”. The demons have a nature separate from that of humans. That demons incite people to sin is an important difference between later Jewish demonology and primitive religion. In later Judaism, the structure of the kingdom of darkness with the chief demon (Satan) as leader, seems to take concrete shape. The impression that demons have an element of immortality or indestructible life suggests that an eternal suffering and punishment will be borne by the wicked spirits. Though the devil and his forces are hostile to God and humanity, their power and influence are limited; God is sovereign over all creation, including the forces of evil.

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, occasional 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 *zeitgeschichtlich* 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; Buitenhart 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 astonishing 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, *Agésilas* 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; Mk 4:13-20), 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 between 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 climactic position in Matthew, for it appears at the end of the last of

Matthew's five great discourses (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 (*IQS* 1:18; 2:5, 19; 3:20-23). Belial is the angel of malevolence (*IQM* 13:12), who lives in the hearts of his followers, the “sons of darkness” (*IQS* 1:10), and rules in the preacher of apostasy (*CD* 12:2). The enemies of the righteous are filled with “guiles of Belial” (*IQH* 2:16f; 6:21; 7:4). Belial’s followers are called “his congregation” (*IQH* 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 (1QM 1:1, 13). But it will be destroyed (1QM 11:8f), because God himself is fighting against him (1QM 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 (1QS 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 (1QS 4:20-25; 1QH 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 ondervinden 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 (*pneumatou 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 uncontrollable. 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 solitation 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 (1998:310), 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 subterranean 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 theophany (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 4:1 f). 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 catastrophes 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, *I 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, *I 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 synoptics 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 ethnocentrically. 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 psychiatric nature by western people, would be accepted as normal culturally valid experiences. Unfortunately, demon possession, 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 cemeteries 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 cemeteries/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") experience 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, according to Joubert, do not merely illustrate the present and future fate of the disobedient 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?” Twelfree (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 (Twelfree 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*). Philostratos 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 4:17-18; 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 perseverance 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 *IQM* 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 Syrophenician 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 unsuccessful 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 *IQapGen* 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 did 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 preferably 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 *arché*) 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 [*kyriotetes*] 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 (*arché*) 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 categorical 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 (*arché*) of all that exists (Col 1:18) and the head (*kephalé*) 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 kosmokratōras tou skotous toutou*) and against the spiritual forces of evil (*ta pneumatika tēs ponērias*) 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 (*tēs 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 illustrate 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.

CHAPTER 3

POWER ENCOUNTER IN LUKE-ACTS

3.1 OPENING STATEMENT

People in the first-century Mediterranean world were quite familiar with the influence and activities of the spirits of evil. It is for this reason that the practice of magic was widespread in the ancient world. The advent of the kingdom of God in Christ and the inception of the New Testament church occurred in an atmosphere that was infested by spirit beings. It is not surprising, therefore, that the kingdom of light, ushered by Jesus Christ, stood to collide with the forces of darkness. The New Testament writers report the instances of conflict between the forces of good and evil.

In this chapter, after dealing with the introductory matters on Luke-Acts, the encounter between the power of God and that of darkness, is illustrated by the Beelzebub controversy in the gospels with special reference to Luke and the power encounter in the book of Acts as related in the anecdotes of Simon Magus, Elymas the sorcerer, an anonymous slave-girl of Philippi and the botched exorcism in Ephesus.

3.2 THE RELEVANCE OF LUKE

In researching the history and mission of the early church, focus on the two-part work of Luke cannot be overemphasised. The mission of the early church is central in Luke's writings (see Bosch 1991:84). Hahn (1965:136) refers to it as the dominating theme for Luke. The other reason for selecting Luke is to be found in a basic difference between him and the other three evangelists in that Luke not only wrote a gospel, but also the book of Acts. By continuing his literary project into the Acts of the Apostles, Luke not only introduces us to Jesus and his ministry, but also to how that ministry relates to significant events in the early church. According to Bock (1992:495), this enables Luke to discuss

how God brought his salvation in Jesus, how the church preached Jesus and how it carried out its mission to both Jews and Gentiles.

The study of Luke's writings is also relevant because Luke was perhaps the only Gentile author of the New Testament writing for Christians who were predominantly of Gentile origin. Moreover, Luke appears to have had in view many communities rather than one single community (see Bosch 1991:85, cf. Bauckham 1998:44).

When turning to the issue of magic or power encounter in the first-century Mediterranean world, the writings of Luke cannot be ignored. Although the subject is still regarded as taboo or irrelevant by many New Testament scholars (Garret 1989a:2), there is rather sufficient evidence that the New Testament authors were, especially in the gospels and Acts, aware of the activities of evil spirits and the prevalence of magic. In their reporting of the ministry of the historical Jesus and the mission of the early church, the New Testament writers do not shun discussion on the subject of power encounter (Garret 1989b:142-165).

Luke uses several anecdotes in illustrating the prevalence of magic in the ancient world. He makes a theological point that Christians wielded authority over the devil and his works in the post-resurrection era. Before the passion, Jesus had described a vision in which he "saw Satan fall like lightning from the sky" (Lk 10:18). Jesus said this after his disciples came back with a report saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" (Lk 10:17). In the same passage of scripture, Jesus promises "authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you" (Lk 10:19). These statements serve to demonstrate the victory of Christ and his followers over the forces of evil.

The two-volume work of Luke does not only relate the one history of God in his business with the world but also helps modern inquirers in showing how Jesus dealt with the forces of evil and how the early church coped with the diabolical agents in its mission of proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. What Jesus begins in the gospels, specifically in Luke, is continued by the early church in the book of Acts. But before we delve into the issue of power encounter in Luke-

Acts, it is only appropriate to comment, albeit elementarily, on other introductory matters pertaining to Luke-Acts.

3.3 INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON LUKE-ACTS

3.3.1 AUTHORSHIP

3.3.1.1 EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

At the beginning of the gospel, the author addresses a certain Theophilus, and when referring at the very beginning of Acts to his ‘former word’, the author of Acts addresses a person of the same name. There is no convincing evidence against the natural conclusion that the same person is author of both the gospel of Luke and Acts (see Cadbury 1958:8f; cf. Beck 1976-7:346-352).

Allusions to the gospel of Luke appear early and exist in *1 Clement* 13.2; 48.4 (late 90’s) and in *2 Clement* 13.4 (c. 150). In addition, a use of Jesus’ teaching, similar to that found in Luke 10:7, appears in 1 Timothy 5:18. Numerous texts comment on the authorship of Luke-Acts. Justin (c. 160) in *Dialogues* 103.19 speaks of Luke as having written a “memoir” of Jesus and notes that the author was a follower of Paul.

One of the earliest traditions for the writing of Luke-Acts is known as the Muratorian Canon, which was probably written in Rome (c. 180-200). According to its author, Luke, the physician, wrote after Paul had taken him along on his travels. Irenaeus (c. 175-195; *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1; 3.14.1) states that Luke, the physician, a companion of Paul, wrote down the gospel Paul proclaimed. The so-called Anti-Marcionite Canon (c. 175) describes Luke as a native of Antioch in Syria (Acts 11:19-30; 13:1-3; 15:30-35), commenting that he lived to be eighty-four, was a doctor, was unmarried, wrote in Achaia and died in Boetia. Tertullian (early third century; *Marc.* 4.2.2; 4.5.3) calls the gospel a digest of Paul’s gospel. The tradition of Luke’s association with Paul became embellished so that Eusebius (early fourth century; *Hist. Eccl.* 3.4.2), for example, writes that Luke was a native of Antioch, a physician, and a long-time companion of Paul’s, and that he spoke carefully with other apostles and left us two volumes of

medicine for souls. The unified voice of these traditions regarding authorship enhances the identification of the gospel and Acts with Luke and makes Luke's connection very likely (see Knight 1998:8-9). But there is no clue in either the gospel or in Acts that a person named Luke is the author, so Luke (-Acts), like the other gospels, was originally anonymous.

3.3.1.2 INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Luke is mentioned three times in the New Testament, in each case in one of the Pauline letters (Col. 4:14; Phlm 24; 2 Tim 4:11), but it is in Acts that we gather our best information about him. The relationship between the gospel of Luke and Acts means that, despite the objections of certain scholars, we may justly accept that they were most probably written by the same person. Among the similarities between the two books, we may point to the following:

- (a) Both are dedicated to the same person, Theophilus.
- (b) Acts (1:1) refers to a 'first book', and this is usually taken as an allusion to the gospel.
- (c) Similarities in concepts, vocabulary, and style.
- (d) Similarities in certain preferences, characteristics, etc.

What are termed the "we"-sections in Acts, where the person plural replaces the third person plural (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16), indicate that their author was a companion of Paul's. These sections could be extracts from a travel narrative. If this is accepted, then their author must be one of Paul's travelling companions.

In search of the authorship and identity of Luke-Acts, it can also be stated that there is also no universal agreement whether Luke was a Gentile or Jewish Christian. The main argument in support of Luke as a Christian convert from Judaism is his use of LXX and Hebrew expressions such as "it came to pass that" (see Freed 1994:140). Arguments in favour of Luke as a Gentile who was converted to

Christianity from a pagan background, are the excellence of his Greek, his avoidance of Semitic expressions, his omission of Jesus' controversies with Jewish authorities over legal observances and the fact that his knowledge of the geography of the country of Palestine is not always accurate. Fitzmeyer (1981:42) has argued, among other factors, that on the basis of Luke's name and the tradition connecting him with Antioch, Luke was "a non-Jewish Semite, a native of Antioch, where he was well educated in a Hellenistic atmosphere and culture".

3.3.1.3 WORKING HYPOTHESIS

We have a few general facts concerning the author of Luke-Acts. We know, for instance, that he was not an eye-witness of Jesus' life and work; this is evident from his prologue to the gospel (1:1-4), where he mentions eye-witnesses as sources he calls on, which implies that he himself was not one of these. But if we take Acts as a sequel to the gospel of Luke, as both tradition and internal evidence suggest, the "we"-sections in Acts allude to the fact that the author of Acts was a first-hand witness of some of the events taking place in that volume and that he was a companion of Paul's. We may further tentatively conclude that Luke was of Hellenistic, non-Jewish antecedents, but who he was, is not clear from either the gospel or Acts.

3.3.2 PLACE AND DATE

The place of composition of Luke-Acts is uncertain, but most agree that it was written in Palestine. The traditional sites of Achaia, Rome Caesarea, the Decapolis (a region in Palestine east of the Jordan River), and some place in Asia Minor have been suggested. If we accept the four-source theory of the composition of the gospels and date Mark at c. A.D. 70, then Luke is later than Mark and was written after A.D. 70 (see Luke 19:39-44; 21:20, 24). Consequently, most scholars agree that Luke-Acts was written c. A.D. 70-90 (see Fitzmeyer 1981:55).

3.3.3 PURPOSES

Luke is the only gospel writer to state expressly why he wrote his gospel, and he does so right at the outset, in a prologue (1:1-4) which is unique in the New

Testament. Probably these prefatory verses are intended to serve also as an introduction to Acts (see Schuyler 1978:100). The way in which v. 5 begins, leads us to surmise that the first four verses may not have been written until after the rest of the gospel story - a practice still common among present-day authors.

The word “narrative” (Lk 1:1), often used in historical writings, indicates that Luke intended to write a historical work in the ancient sense of the term; he wanted to write accurately (*akribos* trans. “closely”), orderly and truthfully. To see that Luke’s preface is like those of ancient historical writers, it needs to be compared with the one by Josephus in *Against Apion* (1.1-3; 2.1.1).

I assume that in the history of the *Antiquities*, most excellent Epaphroditus, I have made clear to those who come upon it the nature of the Jewish race ... But since I see that many influenced by the malicious slanders of certain persons, do not believe what I wrote concerning our antiquity ... I thought to write briefly about all these things, to convict those who insult us ... to correct the ignorance of some, and teach all who want to know the truth about our antiquity.

In the first book, my most esteemed Epaphroditus ...

In the prefaces of Luke and Josephus, the Greek is carefully written, the work is addressed to a respected person, the writing of others is implied not to be satisfactory, and the writer states his purpose. Luke seems to have a historical purpose for writing, at least to the extent of settling a story of Jesus and of salvation for all people in a historical context. Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that Luke is not primarily a historian in the narrow sense of the word but instead the greatest synoptic theologian (see Freed 1994:142). According to Marshall (1970:10), Luke was not attempting to transform the content of the message but “to set it out through the medium of a historical account for the benefit of Theophilus and all like him who want a reliable foundation for their faith”.

3.3.4 THE READERS

Both the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are dedicated to a person by the name of Theophilus. This name means ‘beloved [=friend] of God’, and this has led some scholars to suppose that it has only a symbolic significance, with no historical person intended. But according to Du Plessis (1983:154), this is unlikely since this name was common among both Jews and Gentiles (see e.g. Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII.5.3).

Scholars differ as to the reason why Luke-Acts is dedicated to Theophilus. For example, Du Plessis (1983:154) is of the opinion that Luke probably hoped to enlist him as a sort of publisher who could assist with the costs and distribution of his two-volume work. On the contrary, Marx (1980:17) believes that the dedication to Theophilus in Luke’s two prefaces must not be confused with the dedication of a present-day book which may indicate a gesture of gratitude, the recognition of some family or ideological kinship. Marx further says that it is not like the prefaces written by Horace, Vergil, Cicero and Josephus who dedicated their works to a famous patron expecting him to underwrite the cost of publication. A shadow hung over the author always reminding him to avoid anything that might seem offensive to his patron. But in the case of Luke’s preface, such a mercenary intention is not even remotely indicated. The central theme of Luke is that Jesus offers salvation to humankind (see Marshall 1970:116f).

Experts in the study of Luke-Acts seem not to emerge with a consensual view of the actual identity of who Theophilus was. The fact that Luke addresses him as ‘most excellent’ (*krátiste*) Theophilus, may indicate that he was a high-ranking official or someone high up the social ladder. Against the notion that ‘most excellent’ is no more than a form of courteous address, Du Plessis (1983:155) points out that the title is used in addressing Felix and Festus (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25) which may demonstrate its formal usage than otherwise. Another intriguing fact in the prologue of Luke is whether Theophilus was already a convinced Christian or someone desiring to know more about the Christian faith. What is clear, though, is that Theophilus appears well informed about the Christian gospel.

Since earliest times until the present, names have been suggested in trying to identify Theophilus. Without using a definite name others have thought that this person must have been a Roman official, a resident of Rome, someone from Alexandria, or someone from Syrian Antioch. The seven names are:

- (a) Theophilus, brother-in-law to Caiaphas, was high priest A.D. 37-41 (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII.123; XIX.247).
- (b) Theophilus, an official in Athens, convicted of perjury by the Areopagus. He has no known Christian connections (Tacitus, *Annals* ii.55). However, because of a tradition which says Luke wrote his history in Achaia and Boeotia, it is thought that this man may be Theophilus.
- (c) Theophilus of Antioch was a wealthy and distinguished Christian who converted a large hall in his home into a church. He is mentioned in *Clementine Recognitions* (10.71), and is favoured by many because the Anti-Marcionite Prologue to the Third Gospel (c. A.D. 170) states that Luke came from Antioch (Geldenhuys 1950:17f).
- (d) Again, Luke could have given Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Cyprus, the name Theophilus as a pseudonym (Acts 13:7-12).
- (e) Lucius Junius Annaeus Gallio. This brother of Seneca was perhaps the most eminent Roman that Paul met (Acts 18:12-17).
- (f) Streeter (1930:534-539) nominates Titus Flavius Clemens, heir-presumptive of the Emperor Domitian, even though he does not appear in the pages of our New Testament. He is roughly a contemporary of Luke's and may have been executed because of his interest in Christianity.
- (g) Bengel (*Ordo Temporum*) believes that Theophilus was Philo. Judaeus was an Alexandrian because his Hebrew name was *Yedidyah* which is the equivalent of Theophilus.

(h)

To this list of seven names, Marx (1980:18) adds King Agrippa II as also a possibility.

Whoever Theophilus might be, it is generally accepted that the work of Luke was intended for him alone. The readers to whom he was expected to pass it on, were probably Gentile Christians (see Du Plessis 1983:155; Fitzmeyer 1981:58; Bock 1992:498). This view is based on Luke's obvious concern to relate his accounts of the Christ-event and its sequel to a Greco-Roman literary tradition (e.g. in the prologue of the gospel), his dedication of his two volumes to a person bearing a Greek name (though it could have been borne by a Jew), and his manifest desire to relate the salvation promised to Israel in the Old Testament, to Gentiles or non-Jews.

Again, Luke's elimination of materials from his sources, "Mk" or "Q", that are predominantly Jewish preoccupations (e.g. in the Sermon on the Plain - where most of the matter in the antithesis of Matthew 5:21-48 disappears; or the details about Jewish ritual purity and peity; or the controversy about what is clean or unclean Mark 7:1-23), are best explained by this Gentile Christian destination of his writings (see Fitzmeyer 1981:58). The substitution of Greek names for Hebrew or Aramaic names or titles also suggests a Gentile Christian audience, for example, *kyrios*, "Lord", or *epistatés*, "teacher", for *rabbi/rabbouni* (Lk 18:41; cf. Mk 10:51; Lk 9:33; cf. Mk 9:5); *kranion*, "skull", for 'Golgotha' (Lk 23:33; cf. Mk 15:22). His interest in Gentile Christians is likewise responsible for his tracing of Jesus' genealogy back to Adam and God (and not just to David or Abraham, as in Matthew). Most of Luke's quotations from the Old Testament are derived from the Greek version or LXX.

Luke's intended Gentile audience is clear in his use of the term, "Judea", which he, at times, utilises in the generic sense of Palestine as a whole (Lk 1:5; 4:44; 6:17; 7:17; 23:5; Acts 2:9; 10:37). In his relation of the expansion of the Christian church in the book of Acts, Luke also shows how Gentiles have gained a share in what had been given to Israel, that is, the salvation of God sent first to the reconstituted Israel (Acts 15:16-18; cf. 3:23 - see Jervell 1972:41-74). There may have been some Jews and Jewish Christians among the audience Luke addressed, as the quotation of Isaiah (6:9, 10) at the end of Acts (28:26-27)

suggests, but the general observation we may deduce is that the audience envisaged by Luke in his writings of Luke-Acts is one that is predominantly Gentile Christian, and Theophilus is one of them.

3.3.5 LUKE AS HISTORIAN

Stott (1990:22), in support of the view that Luke writes as a historian, says that in his introduction to the gospel, Luke delineates five successive stages. First, there are historical events. Luke calls them certain things that have been “fulfilled among us”. And if fulfilled is the right translation, it seems to indicate that these events were neither random nor unexpected, but took place in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Second, Stott says that Luke mentions the fact that there were contemporary witnesses - apostles who were eye-witnesses of the historical Jesus. The third phase is Luke’s own personal researches. Stott reminds us that, although Luke belonged to the second generation who had received ‘tradition’ about Jesus from apostolic witnesses, he had not accepted it uncritically. On the contrary, he had carefully investigated everything from the beginning. The fourth stage that Stott mentions is that, after the events, the eye-witness tradition and the investigation, came the writing. The fifth stage is that the writing would have readers, among them Theophilus whom Luke addresses “so you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught”. Thus, the events which had been accomplished, witnessed, transmitted, investigated and written down, could be the ground of the Christian faith and assurance (Stott 1990:23).

Ramsay (1915:222) also sees Luke as a historian. He writes, “His (Luke’s) statements of fact (are) trustworthy; he is possessed of the true sense; he fixes his mind on the idea and plan that rules in the evolution of history, and proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. He seizes the important and critical events and shows their true nature at great length, while he touches lightly or omits entirely much that was valueless for his purpose”. For Ramsay, this makes a great historian.

Another reason for crediting Luke’s claim to be writing history is that he was a travelling companion of Paul’s. Several times in the Acts narrative, Luke changes from the third person plural (‘they’) to the first person (‘we’), and by these ‘we’-

sections, he unobtrusively draws attention to his presence, in each case in the company of Paul. The first journey took them from Troas to Philippi, where the gospel was planted in European soil (16:10-17); the second, from Philippi to Jerusalem after the conclusion of the last missionary journey (20:5-15; 21:1-18), and the third from Jerusalem to Rome by sea (27:1-28:16). Apparently, during these periods, Luke would have ample opportunity to hear and absorb Paul's teaching, and to write a personal travelogue of his experiences from which he could later draw (see Stott 1990:24).

Insofar as historical reliability is concerned, it appears that Luke was careful with his material (Bock 1992:497), though some scholars like Dibelius (1956) and Goulder (1977-8), do acknowledge the fact that Luke should be understood to have used his sources with great freedom. Some of this historical selectivity perturbs Marshall (1970:53), who says it leaves the later scholar at the mercy of what an ancient writer (like Luke) considered vital instead of furnishing him or her with all the relevant evidence on a particular problem.

Another criticism Leaney (1958:9) levels against Luke's historical reliability, is his claim that he writes with scientific objectivity. Leaney believes that Luke's claim to historicity cannot exempt him from a judgement based on comparison of his work with the data afforded by Pauline epistles and Josephus. For Leaney, Luke is not a 'scientific' historian in the true sense of the word; rather, he writes as one for whom Christ alone makes history intelligible.

On the other hand, Marshall (1970:53-54) feels it can be protested that it is wrong to assess an ancient historian by the standards of contemporary history. Then, there were different standards of accuracy and there was a different outlook on the work. It would be wrong to expect an ancient historian to measure up to the standards of a later period. Marshall argues that the better comparison would be with his contemporaries. In that case, we shall be able to see what kind of historian he was, so that we can arrive at a fair judgement.

For the moment, Marshall (1970:75) feels that a blanket condemnation of Luke as a historian of the early church, is uncalled for. Though Luke may have limitations as a historian if judged by modern standards, Marshall believes that it would

be unfair to suggest that Luke is a thoroughly tendentious and unreliable writer when it comes to the writing of the early church. Therefore, Marshall concludes that “while we do not wish to underestimate the strength of the case that has been brought against him, there is, in our judgment, sufficient evidence in his favour to demand a more positive evaluation of his historical reliability”. Bock (1992:498) reminds us that Luke shows interest in both history and theology, that he writes as a theologian and a pastor who is, at the same time, directed by the history which preceded him. Therefore, to underemphasise any element in the Lucan enterprise, whether pastoral, theological or historical, would be to underestimate the depth of his writing. To reiterate Leaney’s (1958:9) statement: Luke “writes as one for whom Christ makes history intelligible”.

3.3.6 LUKE AS THEOLOGIAN-EVANGELIST

Luke has been described by various scholars of the New Testament as a writer who puts his focus on salvation. Lohse (1954:256) comments that Luke is truly the theologian of salvation history. Salvation is explained by Walters (1962:1126) in the following manner:

(Salvation) means the action or result of deliverance or preservation from danger or disease, implying safety, health and prosperity. The movement in scripture is from the more physical aspects towards moral and spiritual deliverance. Thus, the earlier parts of the Old Testament lay stress on ways of escape for God’s individual servants from the hands of their enemies, the emancipation of his people from bondage and their establishment in a land of plenty; the later parts lay greater emphasis upon the moral and religious conditions and qualities of blessedness and extend its amenities beyond the nation’s confines. The New Testament indicates clearly man’s thralldom to sin, its danger and potency, and deliverance from it to be found exclusively in Christ.

Based on this summary, (Marshall 1970:95) says that it emerges that the word 'salvation' had a wide range of meaning. In the gospels, a considerable number of occurrences of the verb *sozo* refer to healing from disease or to deliverance from other threats to life and safety. Thus, in Luke it is used in 6:9 (Mk 3:4) of the preservation of life, in 8:3b (Luke only; cf. Mark 5:23, 28) of the cure of a demoniac, in 8:48 (Mk 5:34); 17:19; 18:42 (Mk 10:52) of the healing of various afflictions, and in 8:50 (cf. Mk 5:23, 28) of the raising of Jairus' daughter; it is also used when the bystanders and the dying thief call on Jesus to display his power by saving himself from the death of the cross (Lk 23:35, 37, 39; cf. Mk 15:30f). In the book of Acts, the verb is used of healing in 4:9 and 14:9, and of rescue from mortal danger in Acts 27:20, 31. This leads Marshall to conclude that there is some link between healings wrought by Jesus and the spiritual salvation which he brought to humankind - a link which is not merely linguistically easy but has its deeper roots in the fact that, common to both sets of activity, is the power of God revealed in Jesus to faith. The power to heal and the authority to save, both reside in God.

Though Luke neatly traces the theme of salvation in his writings, some theologians criticise him for this. In the 1950's, when German theologians, namely Dibelius, Haenschen and Conzelmann began applying redaction-criticism to the writing of Luke, felt that Luke pursued his theological concerns at the expense of his historical reliability. Marshall (1970:18-19), who built on their work, while at the same time subjecting Luke's work to a rigorous critique, urges that we must not set Luke, the historian, and Luke, the theologian, in opposition to each other, for he was both and in fact, each emphasis requires the other.

Salvation is the central motif in Lucan theology (see Marshall 1970:85), both in the gospel, in which we see it accomplished, and in Acts, where it is proclaimed (see Stott 1990:30). Green (1965:125) also draws attention to this when he states, "It is hard to overestimate the importance of salvation in the writings of Luke." The theology of salvation in Luke's writings is already adumbrated in the 'Song of Simeon' or *Nunc Dimittis*, which he records in his gospel in which Simeon is quoted saying,

For my eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared in the
sight of all people,
a light for revelation to
the Gentiles
and for glory to your people
Israel (Lk 2:30-31)

Stott (1990:31) also directs our attention to the fact that Luke, the theologian, is essentially the evangelist, for he proclaims the gospel of salvation from God in Christ for all people, hence, the inclusion in Acts of so many sermons and addresses, especially by Peter and Paul. In so doing, Luke not only shows them preaching to their original hearers, but also enables them to preach to us who, centuries later, listen to them. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter said that the promise of salvation is for us too, and for every generation, indeed “for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39).

3.4 SPECIAL INTERESTS OF LUKE

3.4.1 THE POOR

In the reading of Luke, there appears to be a focus on the poor and those who are marginalised. The beneficiaries of salvation are the outcasts: the poor, sinners and tax collectors. The poor in Luke are materially and spiritually poor (see Bock 1992:506). 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”. Bosch (1991:98) shows that this sentiment is sustained by the gospel. The beatitude of the poor and the parallel woe-saying on the rich (6:20, 24), the parable of the rich fool (12:16-21), the story of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31), the exemplary conduct of Zaccheus, the chief tax-collector of Jericho (19:1-10), serve to illustrate the message contained in the *Magnificat*.

The term *ptochos* (“poor”) occurs ten times in Luke, compared to five times each in Mark and Matthew. In recent years much has been written in an endeavour to identify the poor to whom Luke refers. Particularly the difference between

Matthew's and Luke's first beatitude (Mt 5:3 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit"; Lk 6:20 - "Blessed are the poor") has attracted scholars and ordinary readers of the Bible alike. The Matthean version may be understood only in a spiritual sense but in Luke such a spiritualisation is "still more unwarranted" (Bosch 1991:99). But there is also no doubt that in Luke's idea of the poor, those that are devout, the humble and those who live in utter dependence on God (cf. Pobee 1987:18-20), are not excluded from the categorisation of the poor. Bock (1992:506) is of the opinion that sinners should be included in this category of the poor (cf. Lk 5:27-32; 7:28, 30, 34, 36-50; 15:1-2; 19:7). Bosch (1991:99) maintains that poverty is a social category in Luke, although it certainly has other undertones as well.

3.4.2 WOMEN

Seim (1994:3) maintains that it is a statistical fact that, compared with the other New Testament writings, the gospel of Luke contains more material about women. As many as forty-two passages in Luke are concerned with women or with female motifs (cf. Neyrey 1985:108f). But it is not only the responsiveness of women (7:36-50; 8:1-3; 8:48; 10:38-42; 13:10-17; 24:1-12) that Luke is interested in; often it is a widow who is cited since she represented the most vulnerable status within society (Bock 1992:506; see Lk 2:37; 4:25-26; 7:12; 18:3, 5; 20:47; 21:2-3). Whether in parable or by example, these women show that they are sensitive to the message of Jesus. Though on the periphery of first-century society, they are in the middle of Luke's story. Bock (1992:506) also points out that the fact that women are often paired with men (2:25-28; 4:25-27; 8:40-56; 11:31-32; 13:18-21; 15:4-10; 17:34-35; Acts 21:9-10), suggests that the gospel is for both genders, as well as all races and social strata (see also Bosch 1991:98-103).

In comparison with the other gospels, Luke's special interest in women cannot be overemphasised (see Freed 1991:146). In contrast to Matthew's account, where Joseph is the focus of attention in the birth narrative, Mary is much more prominent in Luke. The angelic salutation to Mary: "Greetings, you who are highly favoured" (Lk 1:28), is remarkable, especially if viewed against the backdrop of the oppression of women in the socio-cultural setting of the first-century

world. Only Luke has the story of Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, and Anna, the prophetess (2:36-38).

In Acts, women play a prominent part in the church. The disciples “devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus” (1:14). Luke also mentions “devout women of high standing” (13:50), Sapphira along with her husband, who was a member of an early Christian commune sharing rights and responsibilities (see Freed 1991:146). Other women specifically mentioned include Tabitha (Dorcas), “full of good works and acts of charity” (9:36-41); Mary, mother of John Mark, in whose house people worshipped (12:12); Lydia, “a worshipper of God”, who became a Christian (16:14-15, 40); and Priscilla who, with her husband, became a leader in the church at Ephesus (18:1-3; 18-21, 26). Luke also includes women in his summaries of the growth of the church (5:14; 8:3, 12; 9:2; 17:2, 34; 22:4). In her work, based on the socio-historical setting and written from a feminist liberation theological perspective, Reimer (1995) gives a vibrant historical presentation of the women in Acts. Her investigation shows how dominant New Testament exegesis has neglected the question of women’s “material” work. Reimer (1995:xx) is of the impression that women were constantly shoved into the “sacred” niche in the patriarchal family. She concludes that this not only ignores the fact that women worked hard then, just as they do today, but that it also sharply limits the history of women. Though Luke mentions women in Acts, there can be no denial that the proportion of material in Acts relating to women is much smaller than in the gospel (see Seim 1994:3). Relatively fewer examples of women occur, and those who are mentioned are given little space and attention. But as compared with the rest of the New Testament authors, Luke does give a better profile of women in the ancient world (cf. Koperski 1999:517f).

3.4.3 THE UNIVERSALITY OF LUKE’S MESSAGE

Luke views Jesus’ work in a perspective that includes all humankind (see Knight 1998:173). So he deliberately sets his narrative in the framework of world history (Du Plessis 1983:148) by stating who the emperors and governors were at the time of Jesus’ birth and when he began with his ministry (Lk 2:1f; 3:1). This universalism emerges clearly, *inter alia*, in the words of the veteran Simeon:

For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the
sight of all people,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel
(Lk 2:31-32)

In order to draw attention away from the Palestinian setting in his gospel and to stress the universal significance of Jesus' teaching, Luke sometimes omits references to specific locations (see Freed 1991:146). For example, by not mentioning Caesarea Philippi (Lk 9:18; see also Mk 8:27; 16:13) as a place of Peter's confession - "The Christ of God" - Luke implies that the confession of Jesus as the Christ can take place anywhere.

On the other hand, Samaria, not mentioned in Mark or Matthew, is mentioned in Acts, where it is referred to in connection with the growth of the church (8:1-17; 15:3), as well as in Luke 17:11-19. Although Mark does not mention Samaritans and Matthew does so only to say that their cities are to be avoided in the disciples' mission (Mt 10:5), Luke has a special interest in Samaritans. Jesus and his disciples go through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem. When some Samaritans will not receive Jesus, James and John want to "bid fire come down from heaven and consume them" (Lk 9:51-55). It is only Luke that has the parable of the good Samaritan (10:29-37) and the healing of the Samaritan leper (17:11-19). All this affirms Luke's view of the new inbreaking of divine salvific activity into human history which includes the extension of salvation to persons outside God's chosen people of old (see Fitzmeyer 1981:187).

3.4.4 THE HOLY SPIRIT

As if it were a forgotten factor, LaVerdiere and Thompson (1976:567f) remind us that the Holy Spirit is prominent in both Luke and Acts. To a very real extent, then, Luke unites the time of Jesus and the time of the church in one era of the Spirit (Bosch 1991:87). Fitzmeyer (1999:165) states that in any discussion about the unity of the Lucan gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, the role of the Holy Spirit is an important element. In another publication, Fitzmeyer (1981:227) re-

iterates that no adequate description of Lucan Christology or soteriology is possible without a discussion of the role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts (see also Du Plessis 1983:148; Bovon 1987:202).

Other New Testament writers have described the work of the Spirit in the early Christian community, but the unique character of the Lucan writings, which comprise almost a quarter of the New Testament, is seen partly in the way the Spirit is depicted both in the third gospel and in the sequel to the Jesus story that only Luke, among the evangelists, has bequeathed to us in the Acts of the Apostles. Although Mark uses the word “spirit” nineteen times; Matthew, fourteen as often as Luke, Luke uses “Holy Spirit” fourteen times more than Mark (four) and Matthew (five) together (see Freed 1991:165).

From the beginning of Luke to the end of Acts, the Spirit is the motivating force behind the main characters. In Luke, Zechariah (1:67), John the Baptist (1:15), Elizabeth (1:41), Mary (1:35), and Simeon (2:25-27) are portrayed as motivated by the Spirit. After his baptism, Jesus is “full of the Holy Spirit” (4:1), and returns “in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” (4:14). Luke prefaces Jesus’ gratitude to the Father in Q (Mt 11:25-27) with the words “he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit” (10:21-22). Also in Q, the statement of Matthew 7:11 that God will “give good things to those who ask him”, in Luke is “give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (11:13). In Acts, the church begins with the outpouring of the Spirit as prophesied by Joel so that Christians who are assembled are “all filled with the Holy Spirit” (2:4-21). The Spirit is a motivating power behind the apostolic mission and is responsible for the growth of the church (9:31). Acts closes with a reminder from Paul that “the Holy Spirit was right in saying ... through Isaiah” that the Jews would reject the “salvation of God”, which “has been sent to the Gentiles” (28:25-29).

When we return to the life of Jesus, it is doubtless that Jesus is “a bearer of the Spirit” (Conzelmann 1960:180). In Luke’s writings, the Spirit is considered as to be the essential presupposition for the special messianic ministry (cf. Acts 10:38). According to Guthrie (1981:514f), many major events in the life of Jesus are specifically connected with the activity of the Spirit, for example, the prophecy of

his coming (Lk 3:15f), the virgin birth (Lk 1:35), baptism (Lk 3:22) and the temptation (Lk 4:1).

Conzelmann (1960:180) argues that, in the description of Jesus as bearer of the Spirit, there is implied his relation to the powers of the world. As far as Conzelmann is concerned, it is not accidental that it is in the story of the temptation that Luke emphasises the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit. It is in the encounter with Satan that the endowment with the Spirit is made manifest, and Satan has to yield. Guthrie (1981:519-520) says that the Spirit played a critical role in the exorcism of demons in the mission of Jesus. Since the whole operation is centred in the world of spirits, it is natural to find the Holy Spirit as the agent for casting out evil spirits. In Guthrie's opinion, the many exorcisms in the gospels act as a reminder of the spiritual conflict into which Jesus was plunged. The role of the Spirit in exorcism is clearly illustrated in Jesus' statement: "If it is by the Spirit (par. Lk 11:20 - "finger") of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:28).

On the whole, the Spirit is the inaugurator and the motivating force behind the public ministry of Jesus. In the programmatic scene in the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me ... to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour ... [to] preach the good news of the kingdom" (Lk 4:18, 19, 43), and this becomes the very purpose for which he has been sent (see Russel 1986:47-63; Fitzmeyer 1999:172).

3.4.5 PRAYER

Closely related to the preceding is Luke's stress on the significance of prayer; this applies both to Jesus himself and to his disciples (see Phil-Hyun 1999; Plymale 1991; Freed 1991:147; Du Plessis 1983:149). Luke has nine references to Jesus at prayer, seven of them peculiar to his gospel. Luke connects these occasions with particular turning points or events in the life of Jesus: at his baptism (3:21), at the time he chose the Twelve (6:12), before Peter's confession (9:18), at the transfiguration (9:28f), when the Seventy returned (10:21), prior to teaching the disciples the Lord's prayer (11:1), in Gethsemane (22:39-46), and crucifixion (23:34, 46) - but also in the normal course of his ministry (5:16). Luke is the only

evangelist to record two parables in connection with prayer, namely, the friend at midnight (11:5ff) and the unrighteous judge (18:1-8), and to include the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the temple (18:9-14). Again, it is Luke alone who has Jesus tell Peter of his prayer for him (22:32) and urge the disciples in Gethsemane to pray (22:40). He also mentions the congregation at prayer (1:10).

In his second volume, Luke uses the sanctioning power of prayer to affirm that the early church continued the ministry of Jesus, working as instruments of God to accomplish divine purposes (Plymale 1991:75). The prayer texts reveal that the leaders of the church possessed a God-given authority necessary to lead it in its monumental task in which members of the community of the faithful were empowered by God to face overwhelming opposition and carry out the mission of proclaiming the divine plan of salvation. Haenchen (1971:103-104) uses prayer at the election of Matthias (Acts 1:24-25) as an example of Luke's vivid and dramatising style, designed to present his understanding of the history and importance of the church so as to edify the church in his own day. The prayer offered by the Christian community upon the release of Peter and John (Acts 4:24-30) comes at the conclusion of the post-Pentecostal story, which begins in 3:1 with Peter and John going up to the Temple, presumably for prayer, since it was the "hour of prayer".

In the line of prayer texts in his writings, Luke concludes by citing Stephen's death prayers: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59) and "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (7:60). After saying the words of the first prayer, Stephen, while being stoned by an angry mob, knelt down and cried the second prayer in a loud voice. Following these prayers, Stephen died. Concerning the second prayer, Bruce (1951:180) remarks, "An unexpectedly beautiful word for so brutal a death". Stephen, a man filled with the Holy Spirit, died a horrible death of dignity and hope, uttering a prayer of forgiveness for his persecutors.

Luke also shows that Christians in Acts, pray at critical moments. After Jesus' ascension, the disciples, including women, "all joined constantly in prayer" (1:14). Christians also pray for receiving the Holy Spirit (8:15), before sending out apostolic missionaries (13:1-4; see also 14:23), and before receiving visions from

heaven (10:1-16; 11:5). Even the sailors taking Paul to Rome pray “for day to come” when they think they “might run on the rocks” (27:29). So, through these scriptures in Luke’s writings, we can observe the thematic concern of prayer in Luke’s theology.

3.4.6 JOY

Luke frequently uses words to express joy, as well as a large number of semantically related terms (see Du Plessis 1983:149). Luke begins and ends his gospel on a note of joy (1:47; 24:52f). In between, there are phrases expressing joy: people who leap for joy (6:23), laughter (6:21), merriment (15:23), and rejoicing over the recovery of what had been lost (15:6, 9, 23, 32). Again, it is only Luke who records the beautiful canticles that are best known by their initial Latin words: *Magnificat* (1:46-55), *Benedictus* (1:68-79), *Gloria in excelsis* (2:14) and *Nunc Dimittis* (2:29-32). In Acts, after receiving healing, the crippled beggar “went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God” (3:8) - generally a sign of joy and thankfulness.

3.4.7 CONCLUSIONS

Luke, to a large extent, seems to pick some important themes which otherwise do not feature prominently in the other gospels. By letting the spotlight fall on the socially disadvantaged, the poor and women, Luke gives modern believers, especially those in Africa, a glimpse of the social ills in the first-century Mediterranean world and how those on the periphery of society came to joyfully share in God’s gifts of salvation and the Holy Spirit.

3.5 THE THEOLOGY OF LUKE-ACTS

3.5.1 THE PLAN OF GOD

According to Caird (1994:28), Luke has provided us with “the fullest, most explicit and most consistent answer to the question of God’s plan”. In support of this view, Squires (1993:1) agrees that the plan of God is distinctively a Lucan

theme which undergirds the whole of Luke-Acts, becoming especially prominent in the speeches of Acts.

In his gospel, Luke first presents this distinctive theme where he links the plan of God with accepting the baptism of John, which the people and the tax collectors did (Lk 7:29), thereby 'justifying God', and in contrast to the Pharisees and the lawyers, who rejected such a baptism (Lk 7:30). In the first major speech reported in Acts, Peter claims that Jesus' crucifixion occurred as part of God's "definite plan and knowledge" (Acts 2:23), and the early Christians acknowledged to God that the plot against Jesus which led to his death was "whatever thy hand and thy plan had destined to take place" (Acts 4:28). When the apostles came before the Sanhedrin, the Pharisee, Gamaliel, asks a rhetorical question as to whether this plan is really of men (Acts 5:38) or of God (5:39), implying the latter (see Squires 1993:2). Paul also knew of the overarching plan of God. In his first reported sermon, he says that David carried out the plan of God in his life (Acts 13:36). In his farewell speech to the Ephesian elders, Paul declares, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole plan of God" (Acts 20:27). The major elements of the plan are the career of Jesus, the hope of the spiritually humble and needy, the offer of God's blessings, the coming of the new era, along with the suffering which comes to Jesus, and the division which comes to Israel (see Bock 1992:502).

Supporting the theme of God's plan is the note of promise and fulfilment running throughout the gospel and Acts, especially as it relates to scripture (cf. Bock 1994:91). The Lucan prologue clearly speaks of fulfilment in the first verse of his gospel. Luke describes Jesus' activities as events "fulfilled among us". The prologue to Acts speaks of the completion of God's plan in terms of times and seasons, a phrase that indicates a set schedule (Acts 1:6-7). Verses 4-5 repeat the reference to the coming of "the gift my Father promised", that is, the Holy Spirit, a promise introduced in Luke 24:49. So both prologues discuss the same theme. The phrase: "the gift my Father promised", links the closing chapter of Luke's gospel with the opening chapter of Acts (Lk 24:49 with Acts 1:4-5).

The appeal to the Old Testament concentrates on three areas: Christology, Israelite rejection and Gentile inclusion, and justice at the end. The warnings to heed

the prophets are a recognition that irreversible authority resides in the message about Jesus. The prophets are to be believed (Lk 16:31; Acts 3:22-26; 13:27, 32, 40-41; 26:27). At the centre of this message from the Old Testament was Christology, as Luke 24:44-47 reveals. This Christological emphasis also permeates the infancy material. John the Baptist is the forerunner, as Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6 promised (Lk 1:14-17). Jesus is the promised son of David, the Son of God who will rule over Israel forever (Lk 1:31-35). God's accomplishment of this plan reflects his mercy promised to Abraham and to the fathers (Lk 1:46-55). The promise also pervades the end of Acts. Christ's death and resurrection and the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles were predicted of Moses and the prophets (Acts 26:22-23). Moses and the prophets also testified to Jesus and the kingdom (Acts 28:23). "The Way", as Christianity is called in Acts, is in accordance with the Law and the Prophets (Acts 24:14).

There are numerous Lucan texts which also speak of Israelite rejection and Gentile inclusion. Luke's quotation of Isaiah 40 stresses the theme of the appearance of salvation before all flesh (Lk 3:4-6). Other Lucan texts recall that Israel had earlier responded with unfaithfulness (Lk 11:49-51; 13:31-35; Acts 3:23; 7:51-53; 28:25-28).

The reality of judgement at the end is emphasised in the Old Testament allusions to the eschatological discourses of Luke 17:20-37 and 21:5-38. In addition, the apostles stressed the reality of the coming judgement (Acts 2:38-40; 17:26-31). The God of design and concern has carried out his plan in Christ Jesus and through him in the church.

Themes that reveal the outworking of the plan of God are also discernible in other scripture verses in Luke-Acts. The "today" passages show the availability of promise (Lk 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 13:32-33; 19:5, 9; 19:42; 23:42-43). John the Baptist is the bridge stretching between the old era of promise and the new era of inauguration (Lk 1-2; esp. 1:76-79; 3:4-6; 7:24-35; 16:16). The era of promise-expectation followed by the era of inauguration is illustrated in clear terms in Luke 7 where John the Baptist represents the greatest prophet of the old era (7:27). Nonetheless, the new era is so great that the lowest member of the kingdom is higher than the greatest prophet of the old (7:28).

Other elements of the plan are seen in Jesus' mission statements where he outlines his task. These statements represent Jesus' timeless mission. They describe what he was called to do in his life and what those who followed his message are called to proclaim in his name. The statements represent why he came and why he was raised. Referring to Isaiah 61:1, Jesus said of his mission:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom
for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's
favour (Lk 4:18-19).

Bosch (1991:100) comments that these words contain a programmatic statement concerning the mission of Jesus in which he reverses the destiny of the poor. Bosch says that they are "a sort of manifesto" of Jesus. Against the strong inclination to interpret this text in spiritualistic terms, Yoder (1972:34) argues that this passage, quoted from Isaiah, is not only a most explicitly messianic one: it is one which states the messianic expectation in the most expressly social terms. In this text, Jesus appealed to the Old Testament year of Jubilee (see Bock 1994:93). Lebacqz (1987:123) interprets the Jubilee as depicting a time of emancipation and of returning to ancestral lands. Families long divided because of misfortune and debt will be reunited on their tribal lands. The good news is that they will be able to begin again. Sider (1990:80) believes that the Jubilee prescribes justice and not a haphazard handout by wealthy Israelite philanthropists. Bock (1994:93) says that like the Jubilee, the period of Jesus' messianic ministry signalled a time in which people could be graciously released from debts and the burden of sin (cf. Lv 25:1-12; Dt 15:2-23; Ps 82:1-2; Isa 52:7). And as part of those in need, Jesus was commissioned to heal those that were sick (Lk 5:30-32) and demonised. The mandate is conveyed to the representatives of Christ (Lk 10:1-23; esp. 17-20; cf. Acts 10:36-43).

The geographic progression also reveals the movement's growth under the plan. The basic outline of the gospel from Galilee to Jerusalem (Lk 4:14-15; 9:51) shows this growth, as does the necessity of Paul's going to Rome in Acts (1:8; 19:21; 23:11). Perhaps no theme underscores divine design more than the Lucan "it is necessary" (*dei*) theme. This Greek word is used 99 times in the New Testament, of which 40 are in Luke-Acts. The references cover a wide variety of topics. Christ *must* be in the Father's house (Lk 2:49). He *must* preach the kingdom (4:43). He *must* heal women tormented by Satan (13:16). In looking at events associated with his death or his return, certain things must precede the end (21:9). The Passover lamb must be sacrificed, as Jesus and his disciples gathered for a final meal (22:7; see Neyrey 1985:8f). The Son of Man or the Christ *must* suffer, perish in Jerusalem, and be raised (9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 24:7, 26; Acts 17:3). The scriptures *must* be fulfilled in that Jesus *must* be numbered with transgressors (Lk 22:37, quoting Isa 53:12), and certain events predicted of Christ *must* occur (Lk 24:44). Judas' fall was a *necessity* according to Acts 1:16. The gospel *must* go to the Gentiles after the Jews rejected it (Acts 13:46). Entrance into the kingdom to come *must* come through trials (Acts 14:22). Christ *must* remain in heaven till the appropriate time (Acts 3:21). Paul *must* suffer for Jesus' name sake (Acts 9:6, 16). He *must* stand trial before Caesar (Acts 25:10; 27:24), and he *must* go to Rome (Acts 19:21) where he *must* witness (23:11). Much in God's plan was carried out by commissioned agents, some of whom knew what they should do (see Bock 1994:94).

3.5.2 CHRISTOLOGY

Anyone familiar with the history of Christian theology, is supposed to be more or less conversant with the fact that sincere and faithful believers have held different and conflicting views about the person and significance of Jesus Christ. From the great Christological debates of the patristic era to the contemporary discussion about the historical Jesus (cf. Focant 1999:563 f), Christians have understood Jesus Christ in diverse ways (see Matera 1999:1). Berkouwer (1954:13) points out that during Christ's sojourn on earth, widely divergent ideas of him were already current (see also Cullmann 1963:1 f). This is seen partly in Christ's question to his disciples: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (Mt 16:13).

In trying to answer this question from a Latin American perspective, Sobrino (1978:xv-xvi) says that, frequently, Christ has been reduced to a sublime abstraction. He argues that “the bad feature of this abstractness is seen in practice, where a separation is introduced between the total or whole Christ on the one hand and the concrete history of Jesus on the other”. Sobrino concludes, therefore, that this opens the way for the theoretical possibility of an alienating comprehension of Christ. Sobrino’s comment is, among other things, possibly a reaction to a one-sided understanding of the person and mission of Christ (see also Bosch 1980:202f; Khathide 1999a:39; Costas 1974:313). In the African context, the holistic understanding of Christ is more urgent because, “to an African there is no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular” (Adeyemo 1979:97). In support of this reality, Oduyoye (1979:11) explains that in Africa, spiritual needs are as important for the body as bodily needs are for the soul. In seeking a relevant Christology in Africa, we need to be aware of the African worldview in which the world is believed to be inhabited by beings both invisible and visible, and by inanimate objects all of which exist in a balance of relationships within the context of the natural rhythm and cycle of life (see Mugambi 1989:56). Any inquiry into the Christology of Luke-Acts within the African context needs to take cognisance of these different realities of the African, otherwise it would become a sublime abstraction, as stated by Sobrino.

In search of the Christology of Luke-Acts, we encounter one major difficulty in that Luke is not directly accessible to us (Tuckett 1999:134). Luke also never writes an essay or a doctrinal treatise on his own understanding of the person of Jesus. Different scholars, though, have attempted to discover the meaning of Christology in Luke-Acts. The last few years have seen four major full-length monographs on Lucan Christology, namely, Doble (1996), Strauss (1995), Buckwalter (1996) and Fletcher-Louis (1997). Another notable work is that of Bock (1987) who, by using redaction-critical means, assesses afresh Luke’s use of the Old Testament in the service of his Christology.

Though the Christology of Luke-Acts may be a disputed terrain, with some saying that the titles (e.g. Saviour, Christ, Son of David, Son of God, Son of Man, Prophet, etc.), which were applied to Jesus may not have been univocal in meaning within either Judaism or Greco-Roman thinking at the time, Tuckett (1999:139)

maintains that, in looking for a Christology of Luke-Acts, one cannot ignore the more traditional approach entirely. According to him, the fact remains that certain key “titles” or terms were used by early Christians to refer to Jesus in a potentially significant way which means that these terms so provide an important part of the evidence for seeking to uncover Christological ideas of early Christians. Although Jesus was reluctant to call himself certain titles (see Schweizer 1982:82), except possibly “Son of Man”, there is little doubt that the early church, in the usage of titles, preferred to formulate its understanding of the person and mission of Christ, albeit in a less theologically structured manner.

According to Fitzmeyer (1981:196), there are four phases of Christ’s existence in Lucan Christology. The first begins with his virginal conception and continues until his appearance in the desert to be baptised. The second begins with his baptism and continues through the Period of Jesus until his ascension. The third begins with his ascension and continues until the *parousia*. The fourth is the *parousia* itself. Bock (1994:102; 1992:503) sees a study of Lucan Christology as indicating that Luke consciously revealed who Jesus is with a step-by-step approach starting from Messiah-Servant-Prophet to Lord. In this position, Bock is opposed by other scholars like Evans (1990) who say Luke’s Christology is more of a patchwork than a unified whole; it is a collection of a variety of traditions.

In Lucan Christology, we discover that Jesus is the key figure in salvation-history, for he is the one in whom God’s activity in human history is manifested (see Conzelmann 1960:170f; Fitzmeyer 1981:192). Luke depicts Jesus as a Palestinian Jew, born in Bethlehem (2:6-7; cf. Du Plessis 1983:190), of Davidic lineage (1:27; 2:4; 3:31; a “regal figure” - Bock 1992:503), raised in Nazareth (4:16). Luke speaks of Christ as “a man attested to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst” (Acts 2:22). In Luke’s portrait of Jesus, we see a man of genial ways, a man with a great concern and love for other people. Despite his tendency to suppress the marks of human emotion that are found in the Marcan narrative, Luke has depicted him with notably human qualities. But Luke also affirms certain things about Jesus that transcend his human condition, which among others include (i) Jesus’ virginal conception through the power of the Holy Spirit (1:34-35); (ii)

Jesus' unique Spirit-guided ministry (3:22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; Acts 10:38); (iii) Jesus' special relation to his heavenly Father (2:49; 3:22; 9:35; 10:21-22; 23:46); (iv) Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Lk 24:6a; Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 37; 26:23) and (v) Jesus' ascension (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9) or exaltation to the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33; 5:31).

Despite reservation by some scholars, we need to return to several titles used for Jesus in Luke-Acts. Fitzmeyer (1981:197), in reference to the Christological titles, says that we need to be aware that in the Lucan writings, the titles are more expressive of soteriology than of Christology. He also points out that in a study of Christological titles used in the New Testament, one has to discuss three aspects of them: the background or origin of the title (Palestinian, Judaism or Hellenistic world?), its meaning and its application. Though such a detailed approach is an interesting and worthwhile exercise, it falls beyond the scope of the current study.

The title of *Messiah* or *Christ* (*christos*), though not the most frequently used title for Jesus in the Lucan writings, has to be regarded as the most important (cf. Mainville 1999:313f). This emerges from the question that the Lucan Jesus poses to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Was not the Messiah bound to suffer all this before entering into his glory?" (24:26). Moreover, only Luke in the New Testament implies the importance by telling us the name "Christians", by which the disciples came to be known (Acts 11:26; 26:28). The title "Christ", refers to Jesus as the promised Anointed One ("Messiah" in Hebrew means "Anointed One"; see *Ps Sol.* 17:32; *1 Enoch* 48:10; 52:4; *2 Esdras* 12:32; *1QS* 9:11).

A key usage of the word "Christ", unique to Luke, occurs in Luke 4:41. Demons confessed that Jesus is the Son of God, then Luke explains that they "knew that he was the Christ". In this way, Luke shows Jesus' sonship is linked to the promise of the Messiah (Bock 1994:106). "Christ" was also the title used by Peter in his confession (9:20). The issue of Jesus' identity as Christ was a key contention at Jesus' trial (22:67). The issue of Jesus as Christ, the king, continued to be central in his movement toward crucifixion (23:2, 35, 39). In reflecting on the resurrection, Luke makes the point that Christ's suffering was necessary and was foretold. In the book of Acts, a number of things are said to happen "in the

name of Christ”: baptism (2:38), salvation (4:10), healing (9:34), peace (10:36), baptism of the Spirit (10:48), risking of life (15:26) and exorcism (16:18).

In discussing salvation-history, it is notable that a distinctive Lucan title for Jesus is *Saviour* (*soter*). John also uses it (4:42), but among the synoptics it is found exclusively in the third gospel. It appears in the infancy summary in Luke 2:11 when the angel announced Jesus’ birth: He is Saviour, Messiah and Lord. The title occurs again in Acts 5:31, when Peter and the apostles rebut the accusations of the Sanhedrin by declaring that God raised Jesus to his right hand “as Leader and Saviour”. Jesus is presented as the Saviour of Israel who is exalted to the right hand of God to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel (Acts 13:23-25). The title “Saviour”, has an Old Testament background, since it is used there for both individuals whom God raises up for the deliverance of his people (Judg 3:9, 15) and of God himself in that capacity (1 Sam 10:19; Isa 45:15, 21); and *soter* appears in the corresponding passages in the LXX (see LXX *Wisd.* 16:7; *1 Macc.* 4:30; *Sir.* 51; *Ps. Sol.* 3:6; 8:33; 16:4 - all used of God).

The title most often applied to Jesus in Luke-Acts is *Lord* (*kyrios*) - almost twice as many times as Christ. It is used for both Yahweh and Jesus. In the angels’ announcement to the shepherds of Bethlehem, he is identified, among other things, as “Lord” (Lk 2:11). Elizabeth is made to refer to Mary as “the mother of my Lord” (1:43) whereas Mary is calling herself the “handmaid of my Lord” (1:38), referring to Yahweh with this title. Fitzmeyer (1981:203) believes that the sense of Lordship that *kyrios* would have carried among Palestinian Jews for Yahweh is now extended to Jesus, especially in his risen status. It is expressive of the dominion that both figures are thought to have over human beings. Conzelmann (1960:171) cautions, though, that we should not read any cosmological reference into the title *kyrios*, such as there is, for example, in the hymn in Philippians 2:6f. Nevertheless, he agrees that it is true that Jesus is Lord over the evil spirits, over every power of the enemy, even in his lifetime (cf. Lk 10:18f). Cullmann (1963:234-235) is not persuaded that *kyrios*, as a title referring to Jesus, does not have a cosmological dimension, basing his argument on scriptures like Isaiah 45:23 (“To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” - a repeat of Phil 2:10f; cf. Ps 102:25; Heb 1:10f; Acts 10:36).

The title, “*Son of God*”, which became so important for later theology, is likewise used for Jesus in the Lucan writings. The title is used in Luke 1:35 in association with the virgin birth. It is also used by Satan at the temptations as the claimed title for Jesus (“If you are the Son of God” - 4:3, 9). A significant use of this title appears in 4:41, where it is linked to and explained by the title “Christ.” Demons called Jesus the “Son of the Most High God” (8:28). The title seems predominant when spiritual beings are addressed (Bock 1994:108). The use acknowledges that Jesus possesses a high level of authority. The title, “Son of God”, was a position in dispute at Jesus’ trial, as seen in Luke 22:70. Acts 9:20 is the only place where the full title appears in Acts. It clearly describes the exalted Messiah who sits next to God the Father with total authority. As such, it is a title of high Christology (Bock 1994:108; cf. Tuckett 1999:149). The designation: “Son of God”, does make the Father-Son relationship between God and Christ a special and quite a unique one (Cullmann 1963:270).

The key title that Jesus preferred to speak of himself is *Son of Man* (*ho huios tou anthropou*). Late in the gospel (21:27), Jesus, by referring to “the Son of Man”, alludes to the authoritative figure of Daniel 7:13-14, who received authority from the Ancient of Days over the kingdom. In Daniel, the term is not a title but a description, “one like a son of man”, that is, a human. The title, “Son of Man”, is prevalent in all three gospels. Though Mark emphasises the suffering Servant, Luke’s treatment is divided between the uses that describe Jesus’ current ministry, suffering and return.

A step in the process of development between Daniel and the New Testament, commentators have often referred to the individual use of the phrase in *I Enoch* (46:2-4; 48:2; 62:5-7; 13-14; 69:27-29). Here the phrase is applied to a mysterious hidden figure who is to be revealed; he is also called “the Elect One” (*I Enoch* 49:2-4; 61:8-9; 62:1), “the Righteous and Elect One” (53:6), “the Lord’s Anointed” (48:10; 52:4), and “the Light of the Gentiles” (49:4; cf. Lk 2:32). Thus, it would seem that this is a transitional use, referring to an apocalyptic figure (see Fitzmeyer 1981:209).

In employing the title, “Son of Man”, Luke uses it of Jesus’ earthly ministry, in which it expresses his mortal condition (5:24; 6:5; 11:30; 12:10; 22:48, with a

connotation of dignity; in 6:22; 7:34; 9:58, with a connotation of service or lowliness). Luke also employs it in sayings that refer to Jesus' passion (9:22, 44; 18:31; 22:22; 24:7- in the announcements of the suffering that is awaited). The apocalyptic Son of Man is a figure with great authority who judges (9:26; 12:8, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30). Jesus asked whether the Son of Man will find faith on earth when he returns (18:8). Luke 21:27 notes Jesus will ride the clouds as he returns (cf. Dan 7:13-14), a figure of speech that was an Old Testament picture of deity (Ex 34:5; Nm 10:34; Ps 104:3). People are to watch so that they have the strength to stand before the Son in that day (Lk 21:36). When Stephen was martyred, he saw Jesus standing as the Son of Man to receive him. The Son of Man for Luke is a title that allowed Jesus to describe himself, since only he used the title. Included in the title is authority, rejection and reign (see Bock 1994:111).

Another primitive title that Luke has picked up from the gospel tradition, is *prophet* (*prophetes*). Jesus is depicted using the title of himself (by implication at least) in the Nazareth synagogue: "No prophet is accepted in his own country", a saying based on Mark 6:4. The outstanding example of this rather submerged category is Luke 4:16-30. Here Jesus said he fulfilled Isaiah 61:1-2a, in which Isaiah described a prophet who would be anointed by God and would bring the message of hope to God's people (see Bosch 1991:108-112). However, Jesus is more than a prophet, for he brings the salvation he proclaims. Jesus' prophetic function receives confirmation in Luke 4:24 (par. Mk 6:4). In the same episode, he compares himself to Elijah and Elisha (Lk 4:25-27). Still later, he is explicitly recognised by the people as "a great prophet" (Lk 4:25-27). Still later, he is explicitly recognised by the people as "a great prophet" (Lk 7:16, in an episode exclusive to Luke), as "one of the prophets of old" (9:8, 19), and as "a prophet mighty in deed and word in the eyes of God and all the people", a confession attributed to Cleopas on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:19; cf. 7:39). Also, in a passage exclusive to Luke, Jesus refers to himself as a prophet and links his destiny in Jerusalem to this role: "It is impossible that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem" (13:13). Indeed, as that destiny begins to unfold itself, he is taunted by those who hold him in custody and have blindfolded him, "Now prophesy! Who was it that hit you?" (22:64). The prophetic description of Jesus received more emphasis in the Transfiguration. Luke 9:35 ("Listen to him") points to Jesus as the "prophet like Moses", by alluding to Deuteronomy 18:15. The

role is even more explicitly given to him in Peter's speech in the temple, where a form of Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19 is quoted (Acts 3:22-23), and again in Stephen's speech, where Deuteronomy 18:15 is cited (Acts 7:37). As a prophet, Jesus shared the fate of earlier prophets, namely, national rejection (Lk 13:13; 11:47-51; see Karris 1985:93).

There are also less frequently used titles in Lucan Christology. Luke presents Jesus as a *Servant*, a glorified one and not the suffering Servant. Jesus is God's Servant glorified (Acts 3:13) and exalted (v. 26). This is the emphasis in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Peter spoke of Jesus as the *Prince* or *Leader* (*archegos*, Acts 5:31), an image that depicts a royal figure with authority who leads the way for his people in redeeming them. The redemptive emphasis is seen in its use alongside the title "Saviour" in the same verse. Jesus was called the *King* (*ho basileus*) at the time of his triumphal entry (Lk 19:38, which alludes to Ps 118:26). "King" is the title discussed in the legal proceedings surrounding Jesus' trial before Pilate (Lk 23:3 - "Are you the King of the Jews?") and in connection with his death (vv. 37-38). One of the thieves recognised he was dying with a king, for he asked to come into Jesus' kingdom (v. 42) and was promised paradise that day. Some Jews in Thessalonica accused Christians by saying the believers called Jesus a king (Acts 17:7). The demons confessed that Jesus is "the Holy One of God" (*ha hagious tou theou*, Lk 4:34). These spiritual beings were silenced by Jesus, who had authority over them (cf. Acts 3:14-15). The title of the *Son of David* occurs in Luke only in the episode of the healing of a blind man outside Jericho: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" (Lk 18:38-39), and in the debate of Jesus with the scribes about how the Messiah could be called David's Son (20:41, 44). The title obviously related to Jesus' Messianism. This relationship can be seen in *Ps. Sol.* 17:21 in a pre-Christian writing.

Jesus is called a *Judge* in Acts 10:42 and 17:31. Another title of respect is *Master*, used in Luke 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49; 17:13. A centurion referred to Jesus' innocence by affirming that he was "a righteous [*dikaios*] man" (Lk 23:47). In Acts 4:11, Peter spoke of Jesus as the "rejected stone", an allusion to Psalm 118:22. Another title refers to Jesus' role as instructor. Twelve times he was called *Teacher* (*didaskalos*, Lk 7:40; 9:38; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21, 28, 39; 21:7; 22:11) This title is the most popular title used by the Scribes and Pharisees

for Jesus. It described Jesus as a “rabbi”. Although nowhere was Jesus directly called healer/exorcist, there is little doubt that Luke does put a strong emphasis on the miracles, healings (see Lindemann 1999:225f) and exorcisms carried out by Jesus (and his disciples) as signs of God’s power and the ushering in of God’s kingdom (see Tannehill 1986:89). Bock (1992:168) writes that, 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, nor even an illustration of the kingdom, but actually the kingdom of God itself in operation.

In summary, Luke used numerous titles to describe Jesus. Most suggested his authority or his role as the promised Messiah. In Lucan Christology, Jesus is at the centre of God’s plan. He is able to save and to bring wholeness to humankind and is worthy of people’s trust. Therefore, because of who Jesus is, people are offered a divine opportunity to respond to him. For not only is Jesus prophet, Messiah, Saviour and Lord, but also he will return to judge all as they stand before him. In fact, even now he sits at the right hand of God exercising authority and distributing the benefits of salvation, even the Spirit of God, to those who call on him for salvation. It is significant that Luke, in his use of Christological titles, makes no distinction between the historical and the exalted Christ.

3.5.3 SOTERIOLOGY

Having sketched Luke’s basic Christology, we turn to his view of the significance of Jesus’ role in the Father’s plan of salvation. From the foregoing it is clear that Luke has not written the story of Jesus just with an intention to explain his human condition or the history of the Christian church. Rather he has retold the story of Jesus with a definite Christological and soteriological intent: what Jesus did, said and suffered for had, and has, a significance and bearing on human history. Acts 4:12 makes that clear: “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among human beings by which we are saved”.

Before we can go on to explain the Lucan concept of salvation, it is of importance that we discuss, albeit briefly, whether there is any saving significance in the death of Jesus in the Lucan writings. Conzelmann (1960:201), among others, says that in Luke's writings there is no trace of any passion mysticism, nor is any direct soteriological significance drawn from Jesus' suffering or death. Conzelmann further states that in Lucan Christology, "the idea of the cross plays no part in the proclamation" (ibid). Fitzmeyer (1981:219), in his response to Conzelmann's view, argues that this is only true if one is looking for the Pauline way of expressing the significance of Jesus' death in the Lucan writings. Neyrey (1985:190) reminds us that many models of soteriology are operative in Luke-Acts as well as in the early church's preaching and therefore it would be a mistake to expect only one model, and a sacrificial or atonement model at that.

George (1973:186f) has gathered all the references to the death of Jesus in the Lucan writings, and the sum total of them makes a striking impression. It may be that they do not all underline the saving significance of it in a Pauline or Marcan way, but in the whole picture of the suffering Messiah, it is difficult not to see Luke's way of presenting that significance. Bock (1992:505) adds that though the cross is less important for Luke than for Paul, its significance moves beyond an ethical or historical function and occupies an important theological position in Luke's teaching. Jesus, as seen in Luke 22-23, is the righteous sufferer. But two texts cast light on the meaning of his death. Luke 22:20 makes it clear that Jesus' death inaugurates the new covenant with God, while Acts 20:28 argues that the church was, in Paul's words, "purchased" with Jesus' blood. Covenant inauguration and a soteriological transaction take place in Jesus' death. Though Luke, for some inscrutable reason, omits the Marcan saying about the Son of Man who had to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45), he is the only synoptist who has preserved the words pronounced over the bread at the Last Supper as, "This is my body which is given for you" (Lk 22:19; cf. 1 Cor. 11:24). Luke also depicts Jesus as a suffering Messiah: "Was not the Messiah bound to suffer all this before entering his glory?", "... the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead" (Lk 24:46; see Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23). Luke further depicts Jesus as the prophet who has to perish in Jerusalem (Lk 13:33), and Acts 13:28-30 clearly explains that what happened to him was divinely related to God's salvific plan. Fitzmeyer (1981:220) writes that "In other words, the Lucan 'necessity' involved

in the plan of salvation-history has a bearing on the death of Jesus". Both Bock (1992:505) and Karris (1985:80) agree that to view the death or the cross of Christ in Luke-Acts as an isolated event, is a mistake. Rather, it should be seen integrated as part of God's whole plan in Jesus Christ. George (1973:216-217), in reaction to the perception of the lack of the cross message in Luke, concludes, "In fact, Luke does not suppress the cross, nor its tragedy, nor its mystery, nor even at times its salvific role, nor the necessity for the disciple of Jesus to deny himself, to take up the cross, and follow the Master".

Having touched on Luke's soteriological understanding of the death of Christ, we now can move on to explain the meaning and effects of salvation in the Lucan Christology. Bosch (1991:104) states that "salvation", as well as its attendant ideas of repentance and forgiveness of sins, is central to Luke's two-volume work (see also Marshall 1970:159). The words *soteria* and *soterion* ("salvation") appear six times each in Luke and Acts, against no occurrences in Mark and Matthew, and only one in John. Four times, salvation is mentioned in Luke's infancy narrative. In two of these instances Luke uses the less common form *soterion* which, apart from Acts 28:28 (that is, at the very end of his two-volume work), occurs only in Ephesians 6:17. Bosch (1991:105) therefore concludes that, in a sense, then, Luke frames his entire corpus of writing with the idea of the salvation that has dawned in Christ. Among the synoptics, only Luke calls Jesus *Soter* ("Saviour"), once in the gospel (2:11), and twice in Acts (5:31; 13:23). Luke also gives prominence to *metanoia* (repentance) and the forgiveness of sins. This message of repentance and the forgiveness of sins reverberates in the missionary sermons in Acts (cf. 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 10:43; 13:38; 17:30; 20:21; 26:18, 20). However, the message does not begin only in Acts. At the end of the gospel, the risen Jesus tells his disciples that, "in his name the message about repentance and forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (Lk 24:47).

In the writings of Luke, those who repent and whose sins are forgiven, experience *soteria* (salvation). In the infancy narrative of Luke, *soteria* obviously has political undertones: God has raised up a "horn of salvation" for Israel (1:69); he has saved Israel from its enemies (1:71); and will give his people "the knowledge of salvation" (1:77). But it is also evident that the salvation that has come to

Zaccheus' house is not really political. In his case, as with the prodigal son, salvation means acceptance, fellowship and new life.

Whatever salvation is, according to Luke-Acts, it includes in every specific context "the total transformation of human life, forgiveness of sin, healing of infirmities, and release from any kind of bondage" (Bosch 1991:107; cf. Bock 1994:126; Fitzmeyer 1981:223; Marshall 1970:94f; Walters 1962:1126f). This comprehensive understanding of salvation is evident in both the gospel and Acts. It is centred in Jesus Christ. It is offered to all races (Acts 10-11). It is at the centre of the apostolic message. But it does not have only a vertical, individualistic dimension. It involves the reversal of all the evil consequences of sin, against both God and neighbour (Bosch 1991:107). And if Fitzmeyer's (1981:223) statement is valid, which in my view it sufficiently is, that the image being used in *aphesis hamartion* (the forgiveness of sins) is derived from an economic and social background in antiquity, either from the remission of debts or punishment or from the release from captivity or imprisonment (cf. *4QMess ar*), then salvation, according to Bock (1994:127), must impact the human structures (cf. Lk 1:68-79). Salvation, in Luke-Acts, denotes deliverance of human beings in all spheres, whether they be evil, spiritual, moral, political or cataclysmic. It connotes a victory of them from a state of negation, and a restoration to wholeness or integrity in Jesus Christ (see Fitzmeyer 1981:222) that comes from the act of faith.

Luke does not only just explain the meaning of salvation but he also gives the benefits thereof. The first is forgiveness (*aphesis*). In Luke, the knowledge of forgiveness is available through the preaching of the "prophet of the Most High", namely, John the Baptist (Lk 1:76-77), who in turn pointed the way to the Davidic "horn" (v. 69) who will bring salvation to the nation of Israel (v. 68) and light to all those who sit in darkness (v. 79). To the synagogue crowd, Jesus proclaimed a release (*aphesin*) for the captives and liberty for those who are oppressed (Lk 4:18). Here the words of Jesus harked back to the imagery in Isaiah 61:1 and 58:6 (see Bosch 1991:101, 109; Bock 1994:135). This "serious exodus" imagery, as Jesus announced in the synagogue, pictured God's people released from enemies, which included Satan and sin, as Jesus' later mission made clear (Lk 10:9, 18; 11:20-23; 22:20). Luke 24:47 summarises the disciples' message, a message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins. The Acts passages are all

familiar summary passages. In Acts 2:38, forgiveness is related to repentance and pictured in baptism; in 5:31, forgiveness is available to Israel; in 10:43, forgiveness is based on faith; in 13:38-39, forgiveness is available through Jesus based on the faith that frees one from bondage, a freedom that the law could not provide; and in 26:18, those who turn from Satan to God receive his forgiveness.

Besides the presence of the indwelling Spirit (see Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17), Luke enumerated numerous benefits that come from salvation. The forgiveness of sins has already been mentioned. Another key benefit of salvation is life (*zoé*). A scribe asked Jesus about inheriting eternal life (Lk 10:25), actually concerned about being assured of participating in the final resurrection (cf. Dan 12:3). Jesus replied that he should love God and his neighbour, a reply that well summarises the message of the law. To do this would bring life (Lk 10:28). A negative statement about life is given in Luke 12:15 where it is stated that life does not consist in one's possessions. The parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:16, 21) illustrates this truth and calls on the rich towards God (see Bosch 1991:99-103; Bock 1994:135). Another benefit of salvation in Lucan writings, is peace. Like a rising star, Jesus, as the promised one from the house of David (Lk 1:69), shines as light and reveals the way of peace (v. 79). A reconciled relationship between God and humanity as effected by Jesus the Saviour, Christ and Lord, brings peace to humankind of God's pleasure (2:14). The offer of peace is part of the kingdom message (10:5-6). In a counter note, Jesus denies that he has come to bring peace in a passage preserved from "Q". Fitzmeyer (1981:225) explains this note of discord or division as belonging to another theme in the Lucan gospel, foreshadowed already in the infancy narrative, when Simeon says of the child that he is set for the fall and the rise of many in Israel (2:34). Jesus denies that his coming brings peace because of the recognition that human beings will have to make a decision about him, either for or against him. Indeed, this division is precisely what did happen within many Jewish families, as verses 51-52 indicate. But, in the long run, those who accept him as an influence in their lives will experience that comprehensive peace which is the effect of the Christ-event itself (cf. Phil 4:7). Peter said his message was "the good news of peace through Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:36).

Luke also mentions other less frequently used modes of expressing the effects of the Christ-event in his writings. One of them is “justification”, which Luke, surprisingly enough, uses in a speech of Paul in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch: “Be it known to you, therefore, brothers, that through him the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and [that] in all those things in which you could not be justified in Mosaic Law everyone who has faith is [now] justified through him” (Acts 13:38-39). This is the only time that Luke speaks of justification as an effect of the Christ-event, and he links it explicitly to his own more common notion of “the forgiveness of sins”. He seems to be making known to his readers that he knows of Pauline justification (see Fitzmeyer 1981:226).

Another benefit of salvation mentioned by Luke, though used with some variation of force, is grace (*charis*). Grace refers to unmerited favour, a gift one receives from God at the moment a person genuinely believes (Bock 1994:136). Mary was the object of God’s favour as God prepared to use her as a vessel through whom Jesus would enter the world (Lk 1:30). In two verses that describe Jesus’ growth (2:40, 52), grace, that is, God’s favour, is said to rest on him. In Acts, grace rests on people and communities. Acts 4:33 speaks of grace resting on all believers. Stephen was full of grace (6:8), and Stephen spoke of God’s favour on David (7:46). Paul and Barnabas had been committed to God’s grace by the church at Antioch for their first missionary journey (14:26). Still, another mode of expressing an effect of the Christ-event may be found in the words of the crucified Jesus who replies to the penitent thief, “Today you shall be with me in Paradise” (Lk 23:43; see Fitzmeyer 1981:226). Here the effect is seen as an intimate association “with Jesus”, that is, a share in the destiny of the Christian, “to be with the Lord”, of which Paul speaks in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Philippians 1:23.

In contrast to those who respond positively to the gospel and consequently become receivers of the benefits of salvation, Luke also identifies spiritual and human opponents of salvation and of the new community. At the transcendent level the spiritual forces, that is, Satan and the demons, stand resistant though powerless before the plan of God (Lk 4:1-13, 33-37; 8:26-39; 9:1; 10:1-12, 18; 11:14-26; 22:3; Acts 8:14-25; 13:4-12; 16:16-19; 19:10-20; see also Fitzwater 1948:507). For Luke, God’s struggle not only involves reclaiming humanity’s

devotion, but reversing the effects of the presence of the evil forces (Bock 1992:507).

On a human level, the opponents of the Saviour and his saving activities are primarily the Jewish religious leaders, especially the Scribes and Pharisees. When Jesus claims authority to forgive sin and challenges the Sabbath tradition (Lk 5:24; 6:1-11), their opposition becomes a regular feature of the narrative. In three instances where Jesus is seated at the table with the Pharisees, they are warned (Lk 7:36-50; 11:37-52; 14:1-24). In the journey section as well as in Jerusalem, it is the leaders who are at the centre of Jesus' condemnation (11:37-52; 20:45-57). For the most part, Luke sees the leadership standing opposed to Jesus and plotting his demise (Lk 6:31; 23:3-5). Again, the response of Israel is a tragic one. As a nation, Israel was in line for a blessing, but has missed its day of visitation and now awaits judgement (Lk 19:44). Now it is the "time of the Gentiles" (21:24). In Acts, the nation is warned to change its mind about Jesus and repent (Acts 2:22-24; 5:27-32). In Acts as well, the new community of God's salvation suffers great risk when it returns to the synagogue to offer hope for the nation. In reading Luke-Acts, it becomes obvious that God's plan of salvation is vehemently opposed by both transcendental and human forces.

Luke's understanding of salvation is evident in both the gospel and Acts. The mission of the Christian community in Acts is a mission of salvation, as was the work of Jesus. In Luke-Acts the incomparable grace of God is lavished upon sinners. The initiative to save and to forgive remains God's throughout. Perhaps the parable of the prodigal son best captures Luke's ideal of what salvation means. The prodigal son in Luke becomes the recipient of unfathomable and undeserved kindness; sinners are not only sought and accepted but receive honour, responsibility and authority. God answers the prayer of the tax-collector instead of the Pharisee, not as Jesus' listeners have anticipated. Salvation comes to a chief tax-collector, of all people, but only after Jesus has taken the initiative and invited himself to the house of Zaccheus. A Samaritan, the most unlikely candidate imaginable especially considering the religious and racial divide between the Jews and Samaritans at the time, performs an extraordinary deed of compassion. A contemptible criminal receives pardon and the promise of paradise in the hour of death, without any possibility of restitution for his wicked deeds. In Acts,

the Samaritans and the idol-worshipping Gentiles receive pardon and the gift of the Holy Spirit and are incorporated into Israel, with whom they form the one people of God. According to Bosch (1991:108), “The Jesus Luke introduces to his readers is somebody who brings the outsider, the stranger, and the enemy home and gives him or her, to the chagrin of the ‘righteous’, a place of honour at the banquet in the reign of God”.

3.5.4 THE KINGDOM

Among scholars, it is generally agreed nowadays that the notion of *basileia* (kingdom) belongs to the core of the theology of Luke (see Del Agua 1999:639). The concept of *basileia* seems to give unity to the whole narrative of the Lucan two-volume work. Luke seems to have placed a framework of the *basileia* by putting the logion of Luke 4:43 which gives an overall interpretation of the mission of Jesus and the last sentence of the colophon, in Acts 28:31.

In Luke’s gospel, Jesus is the proclaimer *par excellence* of the kingdom (see Du Toit 1982:220; Fitzmeyer 1981:154). Conzelmann (1960:20, 114) has noted that John the Baptist in Luke does not proclaim the kingdom of God, in contrast to Matthew 3:2, where the proclamation that Jesus is to make is first heard from the lips of John. The first proclamation of it in the Lucan gospel is made by Jesus (4:43), even though Luke has omitted any reference to it in his parallel to the first dramatic announcement of it in Mark 1:15. In Fitzmeyer’s (1981:154) view, this omission was to make room for the identification as the one in whom Isaiah’s words were fulfilled. When the first proclamation of the kingdom of God is made in Luke (4:43), Jesus is made to add significantly, “Because that is why I was sent”.

At the beginning of the section on the messianic self-proclamation of Jesus in Nazareth and the fulfilment of the kingdom of God (Lk 4:16-30), the narrator sets the scene for his reading of Isaiah 61:1-2a, combined with the phrase “to set free the oppressed” of Isaiah 58:6; it is the prophetic reading of a synagogal service (cf. Del Agua 1999:649). The speech which follows the reading of Isaiah in Luke 4:18f, is presented as a synagogal homily. By identifying himself with the Isaianic tradition of *mebasser*, Jesus proclaims himself the eschatological “Her-

ald-Prophet”. Thus, the Lucan Jesus applies to himself, in an explicit way, a messianic tradition of prophetic typology by which he is characterised as Messiah, Herald of the kingdom and “Anointed by the Spirit” (cf. *11 Q Melchizedek*; TgIsa 52.7; Bosch 1991:110; Ford 1984:55-61).

Fitzmeyer (1981:54) sees Luke as deriving part of the kingdom preaching from Mark (see Lk 8:10; 9:27; 18:16, 17, 24, 25; 22:18) and part of it from “Q” (see Lk 6:20; 7:28; 10:9; 11:2, 20; 12:31; 13:18, 20, 28, 29; 16:16). Therefore, we may safely conclude that the Lucan Jesus proclaims in this respect what the Marcan and the Matthean Jesus does. However, there are some Lucan nuances in the manner of Jesus’ kingdom preaching that is noticeable in Luke. Whereas Mark 10:29 records Jesus’ words about the need of disciples to leave home and family “for my sake and that of the gospel”, the reason becomes in Luke 18:29 merely “for the sake of the kingdom of God”. Moreover, there is a sense in which the Lucan Jesus speaks of the imminence of the kingdom: “The kingdom of God is near” (Lk 10:11, 21:31). Yet he does not hesitate to speak of its presence in his own person and acts, “The kingdom of God is among you” (Lk 17:21). The kingdom of God becomes personified in Jesus Christ who came to do the will of the Father (see Shenk 1983:207). The Lucan narrative is to retell the story of Jesus Christ as *autobasileia* (cf. Green 1970:60-61; Del Agua 1999:651; Padilla 1985:186).

The good news of the kingdom was both preached by Jesus and embodied by him. Commenting on Luke 17:21 (“Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you”), Costas (1979:7) writes, “Jesus spoke of the kingdom not only as a transcendent and future reality, but also as immanent and present”. In Jesus, God’s rule has broken into our world. In the words of Costas, “whoever believes in Jesus Christ knows him personally, is in fellowship with the Father and has entered the kingdom” (ibid). The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God is a summons to a decision: the acceptance of the grace of God, an adoption of new values and a new lifestyle and an acceptance of a new perspective on reality. As much as God in the *missio Dei* says “yes” to humanity and the rest of creation, the requirements of God’s kingdom say “no” to the world’s way of doing things (see Bosch 1991:10-11). The call of the kingdom is to participate in the new humanity which God is creating through Jesus Christ in the power of his

Holy Spirit. Costas calls this a demand for total commitment to God and neighbour. Indeed, this conversion also embraces a person's change of attitude to nature and the environment. The *basileia* of God stands for the new order of life. It demonstrates God's resolve to make all things new (cf. Rev 21:5).

Ridderbos (1962:61) and Bock (1992:504) state that the evidence that the kingdom has come, is the overthrow of the wicked one. In Matthew 12:28 and Luke 11:20, Jesus speaks emphatically of the presence of the kingdom: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God (Lk - "finger of God"), then the kingdom of God has come to you". The kingdom, as a present reality, is associated with Jesus' authority, well illustrated as he exercises his command over the spiritual forces of evil. The arrival of the kingdom is accompanied by the powerful demonstrations of victory over evil through miracles in general, and the casting out of demons in particular (see Burgess *et al* 1988:523; Wimber 1985:30). In the miracles of Christ, especially in exorcisms, the message is clear: eschatology has invaded the present age (see Khathide 1999a:53; Burgess *et al* 1988:523; Ridderbos 1962:65-76). Perrin (1963:185) sums up realised eschatology as God's kingly activity manifested in a breaking into history and human experience to visit and redeem his people in a manner decisive for their salvation. However, the way to the realisation of the kingdom is through the cross (Shenk 1983:210).

According to Ridderbos (1962:62), the whole struggle of Jesus against the devils is determined by the antithesis between the kingdom of heaven and the rule of Satan, and time and again the superior power of Jesus over Satan and Satan's kingdom demonstrates the breakthrough on the part of the *basileia* of God. This is proven at the start by the temptation in the wilderness (Lk 4:1-11). In Luke 10:17-19, the evangelist narrates a fascinating episode of Jesus having sent out seventy-two disciples who came back and jubilantly told him of their mission success upon which Jesus responded, "I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven." Jesus accepts the joy of those sent out and shows them the background of their power over the devils (Ridderbos 1962:63).

But the advent of the *basileia* is not only shown in the miraculous demonstrations (e.g. exorcisms), but also in Jesus' preaching-teaching of the kingdom (see Fitzmeyer 1981:154-155; Ridderbos 1962:65f, Wimber 1985:30). The days of

the ministry of Jesus are characterised as the time in which the good news of the kingdom is being preached. In answer to John the Baptist's question: "Are you he that cometh?" Jesus not only refers to his miracles but also to the preaching of the gospel to the poor: "The poor have the gospel preached to them" (Lk 7:22). The Lucan Jesus stresses the radical character of the reaction of the kingdom preaching, most notably in Luke 16:16, of which Conzelmann (1960:23) has made so much in a different respect: "Up until John it was the law and the prophets; from that time on the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is pressed to enter it", that is, everyone who enters it does so only with a radical, demanding invitation to do so (cf. Fitzmeyer 1981:155).

Concerning kingdom preaching, it is remarkable that it is only Luke who depicts the risen Christ speaking to his disciples about the kingdom (Acts 1:3) and reacting against a still-misunderstood sense of it among them (Acts 1:6). Fitzmeyer (1981:155) comments that this is obviously a transitional nuance, which links the disciples' eventual preaching to that of Jesus himself. The same transition is suggested in the specifically Lucan saying recorded in 22:29-30, addressed to the disciples who have followed him in his trials: "I assign you a kingdom such as my Father has assigned me, that you may eat and drink in my kingdom ..."

What is also observable in the Lucan writings is that some passages dealing with the kingdom, have a two-pronged reference, to a present and a future aspect - a reference that is not without its significance for the eschatology of the Lucan writings. Luke 17:22-37 describes the judgement preceding the full arrival of the kingdom. Here is the "not yet" aspect - the kingdom in consummation (see Bock 1992:504). Luke 21:5-38 also describes the "time of redemption". Here, the imagery of the Day of the Lord abounds as evil is decisively judged. Within the space of a few verses (21:25-27), allusion is made to a range of Old Testament verses suggesting cosmic disturbance associated with the Day of the Lord (Isa 13:10; Ezek 32:7; Joel 2:30-31; Ps 46:2-3; 65:7; Isa 24:19 (LXX); Hag 2:6, 21; Dan 7:13; cf. Bock 1987). The Old Testament hope and expectation is not dead, as Acts 3:20-21 also makes clear. Jesus will return to fulfil the promise - a promise that will show itself visibly on earth to all humanity, as well as in the eternal benefits given to believers.

Though the kingdom was inaugurated by Jesus, it has yet to reach its complete fulfilment. Burgess *et al* (1988:524) explain it this way: “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.” The full revelation of the age of the Messiah will be the time when the new order of God’s salvation will be fully experienced, including the elimination of social, physical and personal disabilities (see Shenk 1983:210). The apocalyptists shared in the hope when the Messiah makes war against the enemies of Israel and against Beliar whose captives he sets free (*Test. of Dan 5:10-11*); he then binds Beliar (*Test. of Levi 18:12*) and casts him into the fire (*Test. of Jud. 25:3*; cf. Rev. 20:7-10). In the *Psalms of Solomon*, the coming of the kingdom is identified with the mighty ruler, a descendant of David’s line (17:23) and God’s anointed, that is, the Messiah (18:6). In the *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1 Enoch 37-71*), it is stated that at the end of age the supernatural and pre-existent Son of Man will come to take his place ‘on the throne of glory’ where he sits as judge (45:3; 48:2f; 49:4; 61:8f) and through whom God transforms the heaven and the earth and makes them a place of blessing (45:4-5; Rev 21). In the *Assumption of Moses*, the writer mentions that God’s kingdom “will appear throughout all his creation” (10:1). God’s people will live lives of joy and peace, for there will be no Satan or any other evil destroyer to hurt them (see *Book of Jubilees 23:29*). In the *Sibylline Oracles III* it is said God will send his King, or Messiah, who will lift the curse of war from all humankind (652-656) and it will be a time of peace throughout all the earth (741;759).

The familiar picture discernible in the apocalyptic writings is that of an earthly kingdom, eternal in duration, universal in its scope and ruled over by God’s Messiah (see Russel 1964:289). In almost the similar manner, the Lucan view of the future aspect of the kingdom is that it is earthly, that is, Jesus will rule as a Davidide on the earth and will bring about total deliverance as he executes his sovereignty over all (cf. Bock 1992:504). Such hope is most strongly expressed in the narrative and songs of Luke (1:32-33, 46-55, 67-79). The eschatological discourses and the remarks of Acts 1:11 and 3:18-21 show that the future hope has not been absorbed in the theme of present inauguration, but remains alive, connected to its Old Testament roots (see Khathide 1999a:49; Russel 1964:288; Burgess *et al* 1988:522; Bock 1992:504).

5.5 ECCLESIOLOGY

Paul and Luke in Acts are the two main New Testament writers who use *ekklesia* as the name for the “called assembly”, the organised Christian community, either local or universal (see Fitzmeyer 1981:252). Besides the Matthean usage of the term *ekklesia* (see Mt 16:18; 18:17) and its frequent occurrence in Revelation 1-3 (in the letters to the seven local churches), it is used but rarely elsewhere (Jas 5:14; 3 Jn 6, 9, 10; Rev 22:16). Except for his usage of *ekklesia*, Luke also refers to the members of the church in various ways. He mentions, for instance, that the followers of Jesus, the Christ, have come to be known generically as “Christians” (*Christianoi*, Acts 11:26). Sometimes he refers to them simply *mathetai/mathetria* (disciples, Acts 6:1, 2, 7; 9:1, 36, etc.). Again, sometimes he refers to them as *adelphoi* (brothers, brethren), using a term that implies community rather than a function or ministry within it (Acts 1:15; 9:30; 10:23; 11:1, 29, etc.). Luke is also aware that some members of the church served in special functions or ministries: “elders”, “the Twelve”, “apostles”.

Luke depicts Paul (and Barnabas) setting up “elders” (*presbyteroi*) “in every church” (Acts 14:23). When Paul is returning to Jerusalem from what is generally called Mission III (A.D. 58), he summons the elders of Ephesus to Miletus and addresses them, telling them to be responsible “overseers” (*episkopoi*) of the church of God (Acts 20:17, 28; cf. 1:20). The elders appear elsewhere as functionaries or leaders in local churches (Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4, 5, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18). It seems, then, that Luke has attributed to Paul the structure of the community with which he was familiar in his own day. The elders appear to have been understood by Luke to be persons of authority and this is evidenced by the way that they are coupled with the apostles in Acts 15-16.

Luke is also aware of a group in the early church called “the Twelve”. Like the other synoptists, he traces the origin of this group to the ministry of Jesus himself (Lk 6:13; cf. Mk 3:14; Mt 10:1-5). The betrayal of Jesus by Judas, “one of the Twelve”, is remembered with horror by the early church (Mk 14:10, 43; Lk 22:3, 47; Mt 26:14; cf. Jn 6:71). That they serve as an important link between Jesus and the early church is seen in the beginning of Acts, where the initial nucleus of disciples feels that it is necessary to reconstitute the Twelve and Matthias

is chosen by lot to be with “the Eleven” in the place vacated by Judas’ death (Acts 1:26). Luke sought to explain this necessity by the relation of the new community to be fashioned on Pentecost to that of Israel (see O’Toole 1984:18; Fitzmeyer 1981:253; Bovon 1987:323f).

In Luke’s thinking of the organised or structured Christian community, he also refers to the seven table-servers, appointed by the whole assembly under the supervision of the Twelve or the apostles (Acts 6:1-6). They represent a structure that the community itself introduces. They are to “serve tables” (*diakonein trapezais*) in order that the Twelve might devote themselves to preaching, prayer, and the ministry of the word (6:2, 4). Amazingly, Stephen (6:8-7:53) and Philip (8:4-13), two of the appointed seven on whom the apostles prayed and laid hands, are subsequently depicted by Luke as preaching and disputing with the Jews. However, it is significant to note that Luke is much more concerned about tracing the growth of the church in various parts of the eastern Mediterranean world and with the spread of the word of God through it to “the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8) than the details of church structure.

For Luke as well as other New Testament writers, the main concern is that the crucified Christ lives on as the risen Christ and is glorified by God and this certainty gives meaning and reason for existence to the community of believers, the church. The New Testament authors endeavour to argue that the church sprang not from imaginations of the disciples, not out of a baseless credulity, but from real experiences of encounters with one who was truly alive (Lk 24:36-49; Acts 2:24; 3:15; 10:39-41). In the witness and interpretation of events by the new community, “Jesus the preacher becomes Jesus the preached, the bearer of the message becomes the central substance of the message” (Küng 1968:80). In the church, Jesus is recognised and acknowledged to be what he has now revealed himself to be: the (the anointed one, the *Christos*), the Son of Man descended from heaven, the Son of David, the Servant and the Son of God, the King, the Lord. With this affirmation a new community is born. The scattered disciples congregated once more in Jerusalem. The experience of this new community is a cause of joy and gratitude for the disciples.

The new community applies to itself the Old Testament prophecies concerning

the last days (see O'Toole 1984:18-19). From the reading of Luke-Acts and other New Testament writings, it becomes clear that the new community had not chosen to separate itself from Judaism. Instead, it has presented itself as the hope of the nation of Israel but had to be forced to become distinct (see Bock 1992:506).

What sets the new community apart from the Jewish community is the experience of the Spirit (see Heyns 1980:60, 77). The Spirit not only evidences the presence of the ascended Lord in their midst (Acts 2:14-40; 11:15; cf. Mt 28:20b; Mk 16:20), but also enables the new community to live by the principles of Jesus - a life distinct from contemporary norms of piety and current cultural standards (Acts 12:1; 14:1-14; 22:24-27). In the fulfillment of ancient prophecies the special gift of the last days, the Spirit of God, is bestowed upon the new community (see Fitzmeyer 1981:256; Küng 1968:80). In many ways the new group of disciples may be seen as the eschatological community of salvation (Küng 1968:81) or "the transmitter of the message" of salvation (Conzelmann 1960:207).

But it is not only God's will revealed in people being saved in and through Jesus Christ that Luke is interested in, he also equally lays stress on the necessity of discipleship to which the free offer of God's mercy and grace constrains one (see Du Toit 1983:181). According to Martin (1976:366f), Luke does not recount his story as a disinterested or neutral narrator; he tells the Jesus story in order to evoke reaction from his readers. The Spirit comes to a person, sets before them the offer brought by Jesus and expects him or her to react by yielding himself or herself to Christ and wholeheartedly following him. The Christian is exposed to many perils, the greatest of them being apostasy and the loss of faith (Brown 1969). These dangers beset the church from within and without. Those external to it are described in Luke 12:1-12 (cf. Acts 4; 5:17-42; 7; 8:1-3; 12:1-19; 16:16-40, etc.). In his gospel, Luke's reference to disciples being brought before the synagogues and authorities is preceded by a statement regarding the necessity to confess Christ publicly (v. 8) and a warning not to slander the Holy Spirit (v. 10). Intense persecution, even death (v. 4f; cf. Acts 7), can threaten the Christian and cause them to lose courage. This is why Luke exhorts believers to persevere in prayer (19:1-8; cf. Acts 4:23-31), bidding them not to condemn too easily those who stumble. As in the case of the widow in that parable, God

will rectify the cause of the true believer, who may be assured that he will do so, and quickly (see Du Toit 1982:182).

Luke also states that discipleship makes high demands on a believer. This is clear from Luke 9:57-62, where would-be followers of Jesus, and the one he called to follow, but had an excuse or another, evoking this response from him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God” (v. 62). In Luke 14:25-33, Jesus points out that anyone who wishes to follow him must first count the full cost. In Acts 14:22, Paul and Barnabas teach the believers in Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch that they “must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God”.

Still in the context of Christian discipleship, it can be noted that no other New Testament writer, except perhaps the author of the epistle of James, even then only in an analogous way, speaks out as emphatically as does Luke about the Christian disciple’s use of material possessions, wealth and money (e.g. Lk 6:20; Lk 1:53). In Acts, Luke presents an idyllic picture of the first Jewish Christians of Jerusalem in the matter of common ownership and sharing of wealth as a model for the community of his own day (see Bosch 1991:98-100; Fitzmeyer 1981:247; Bock 1992:509; Tannehill 1986:127).

Though the following of Jesus is not exclusive to Luke (see Mk 2:14; 10:21), the stress that this idea receives in the Lucan gospel is noteworthy. In particular, its relation to the travel account is to be noted, since immediately after the introduction to it (9:51-56) comes sayings of Jesus to three prospective followers, “as they were walking along the road” (9:57-62). Thus, for Luke, Christian discipleship is portrayed not only as the acceptance of a master’s teaching, but as the identification of oneself with the master’s way of life and destiny in an intimate, personal following of him (see Fitzmeyer 1981:241) or as the Belgic Confession says of Christians that they “bow their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ” (Article 28). The Lucan view of discipleship is further illustrated by a special corporate sense of following that is found in the Acts of the Apostles, where the primitive Palestinian Christian community is designated “the Way” (*hé hodos*), a term that is exclusively Lucan in the New Testament, being found in Acts 9:2;

19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22. Therefore for Luke, the church comprises persons of disciplined community who are willing to walk the path that Christ walked.

ESCHATOLOGY

In the view of Fitzmeyer (1981:231), eschatology is the most difficult and most controverted aspect of Lucan theology today. What compounds the problem is that Luke, unlike the other evangelists, wrote Acts as a sequel to his Jesus story. Some scholars assert that the first Christians expected Christ's imminent return, the *Naherwartung*, as it is called. When he did not speedily return to earth, the primitive community was grievously disappointed and discouraged (see Du Toit 1983:252).

To help this situation, Luke intervenes and broadens the time schedule within which God continues to bring his salvation to his people (see O'Toole 1984:149). In his eschatological conceptions, Luke no longer speaks of an instant or imminent *parousia*, the second coming of the Lord. In doing so, he breaks with the earliest Christianity which, according to Du Toit (1983:253), "took no account of the progress of world history but expected the end, the *parousia*, to take place shortly". On the contrary, Mattill (1972:276f) maintains, basing his argument on scriptures like Acts 10:42; 17:31; 24:15, 25, that Luke held for an imminent expectation like the rest of the earliest believing community. But the majority opinion on the Lucan view of eschatology is that Luke moves away from an instant or imminent *parousia*. However, it is to be noted that Luke does not do away completely with the primitive gospel tradition about the imminent judgement or an imminent coming of the kingdom or the Son of Man (see Fitzmeyer 1981:233). For example, John the Baptist is portrayed challenging the crowds about "the wrath that is coming" (Lk 3:7) and preaching how "the axe already lies at the root of the trees" (3:9; cf. Mt 3:7-10) and how the winnowing fan of judgement has already been taken up" (3:17; cf. Mt 3:12).

Among the scholars who maintain that Luke, in his writings no longer speaks of an imminent *parousia*, is O'Toole (1984:149) who states that for Luke the *parousia* is the end of the end times; it is the final establishment of the kingdom. But the end times, according to Luke, begin with the birth of Jesus (see Lk 1:76;

cf. 1:15-17; Lk 1:17; Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6; Lk 1:78; Mal 4:2; Isa 60:1-2) whose arrival is preceded by the messenger who goes first to prepare the day of the Lord. Later, Jesus contends in the synagogue at Nazareth that the proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord (cf. Lk 4:19) has been fulfilled for his hearers. Luke himself in his story of Pentecost inserts into the quotation from Joel 2:28 "... in the last days, God declares". Luke thus makes Pentecost an event of the last days. O'Toole (1984:150) concludes therefore that the last days according to Luke should not be completely identified with the *parousia*, which is really the last event of these days. Conzelmann (1960:95) perceives Luke as expanding the original sense of the "last days" according to which the outpouring of the Spirit is no longer itself the start of the eschaton but the beginning of a longer epoch, the period of the church.

For Conzelmann (1960:95), "The Spirit himself is no longer the eschatological gift, but the substitute in the meantime for the possession of ultimate salvation." The Spirit makes believers to exist in the continuing life of the world and in persecution and he gives the power for missionary endeavour and for endurance. This change in the understanding of eschatology can be seen in the way in which Luke, by his description of history, depicts the nature of the church, its relation to the world and the course of the mission in its progress step by step, and in the way in which he repeatedly describes the Spirit as the power behind this whole process (see Fitzmeyer 1981:230). In Acts, the Spirit becomes the guiding force of Christian disciples and witnesses (see Acts 2:4; 4:31; 8:29, 39; 10:19, 44; 11:28; 13:2, 4; 15:28; 20:22, 28).

When one reflects on the Lucan writings especially on eschatology, one realises that it will be entirely not true to say that Luke has abandoned belief in an early expectation of the end time. Instead, he has obviously coped with the delay of the *parousia* which puzzled early Christians. In his eschatological conception, Luke does retain, albeit in a somewhat blunted way, some of the traditional references to the imminent coming of the kingdom, Son of Man or judgement. These cannot be ignored in looking for the mere widespread pattern of the Lucan shift, because Luke could have omitted all the traditional material about an imminent coming. Apparently Luke was aware of the importance of it in the tradition and that is why he retained some of it. But he also has sought to shift Christian

attention from an exclusive focus on imminence to a realisation that the present period of the church has a place in God's salvation history (see Conzelmann 1960:95-97; Fitzmeyer 1981:235; O'Toole 1984:159). As part of the mission of salvation that the church is privileged to participate in (see Bosch 1991:10), believers are expected to engage the powers of evil that hinder God's total salvation meant for humankind (see O'Brien 1984:110f). This area of power encounter in Luke's theology becomes the next focus of our attention.

3.5.7 DEMONOLOGY/POWER ENCOUNTER IN LUKE-ACTS

3.5.7.1 AN OVERVIEW

In Acts 10:38, we are told that Jesus "went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil". Perhaps this sums up the ministry of healing and exorcism of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts. This role of Jesus is broadly developed in a number of exorcism stories recorded in Luke-Acts. Jesus' relation to demons is highlighted in the exorcism in the Capernaum synagogue (Lk 4:33-37) and in the story of the Gerasene demoniac (8:26-39). Tannehill's (1986:89) comment on these passages of scripture is insightful. He says that in these stories there is emphasis on the qualitative distinction between Jesus and the demon expressed by "What have you to do with us" (4:34; cf. 8:28) and by the contrast between "the holy one of God" and the "unclean spirit" (4:33-34). The demons submit to Jesus' authoritative command, which prevents them from working further harm to their victims. While Mark 1:26 and 9:26 tell of the frightening and possibly dangerous effects of the demon after Jesus' exorcising command, the parallels in Luke 4:35 and 9:42 make clear, in one case, that the man was not harmed and, in the other case, that the convulsion took place before Jesus' command. Luke 8:28 presents a stronger picture of the impotency of demons when they respond to Jesus with "I beg you" (cf. Lk 8:28) instead of Mark's "I adjure you by God" (cf. Mk 5:7; see Tannehill 1986:90). The authority of Christ over the demonic is also shown in the other stories of exorcism in Luke-Acts. The fact that Acts records the disciples continuing to perform some of these works (see Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16-18; 19:11-12) shows that authentication continues and that Jesus' authority continues as well (see Bock 1992:505).

As for the devil, Conzelmann (1960:16, 156f) shows that Satan plays a subordinate role in Luke's plan. Satan does not enter as a factor in the saving events. Conzelmann argues that in fact the only part the devil plays is the negative one of being excluded from the period of Jesus' ministry. Between the temptation and passion of Jesus, Satan is absent, then he reappears (Lk 22:3) and the temptations are back again but it is not explicitly stated that he is responsible for the passion. According to Conzelmann (1960:156-157), it is clear that in two passages, the range of the devil's power is more precisely defined. The reading of Luke 4:6 reveals that the worldly powers are at his disposal; but this authority has been "delivered" to him, which indicates his limitations. Furthermore, according to Luke 22:31, he has "asked to have" the disciples, which again demonstrates his dependence.

The connection between Satan and the evil spirits becomes clear in the story of a woman who had a spirit of infirmity, especially when we compare Luke 13:11 and 13:16. The exorcism in the story of a dumb person and the ensuing Beelzebul controversy also reveals the connection between Satan and the evil spirits (see Lk 11:14-22). In Acts 10:38, he is the oppressor, which is the traditional conception. The passage in Acts 26:18 speaks of his power but it does not refer to redemptive history as a whole, but to the event of conversion as it concerns the individual (cf. Witherington 1998:745; Kistemaker 1990:898). In his study of the theology of Luke, Conzelmann (1960:157) comes to a conclusion that it is clear that the statement that human beings are under the devil's power does not serve to lessen personal responsibility but to underline the call to repentance. Having given a broad sketch of demonology in Luke-Acts, it becomes significant to narrow our focus to a few stories of power encounter in Lucan theology in order to illustrate our point of discussion further. To help us in this, we turn to the following stories: The Beelzebul controversy, Simon Magus, Elymas the Sorcerer, the anonymous slave-girl and the power encounter in Ephesus.

3.5.7.2 THE BEELZEBUL CONTROVERSY

Ferguson (1984:18) believes that the fullest amount of teaching in the gospels on demons is called forth by the Beelzebul controversy (Lk 11:14-23; Mk 3:22-30;

Mt 12:22-30; cf. 32-34). Concerning the literary genre of the Beelzebul pericope all the synoptists agree that a controversy is involved (see Syx 1992:167). Zimmermann (1978:185) derives three common characteristics in the controversy, namely, the “act of Jesus, question of the opponents, answer of Jesus”.

Garret (1989:43) draws attention to the fact that before the actual Beelzebul controversy, Luke, in the preceding two chapters, relates several important incidents involving healings and the casting out of demons (9:1-5; 10:1-20). The Beelzebul controversy is therefore the climactic confrontation between the kingdom of God in Jesus and that of Satan.

In both Matthew and Luke, the Beelzebul controversy is introduced by an act of Jesus, the exorcism, whereas this miracle story is, significantly, omitted in Mark. Various interpretations are advanced in trying to find solutions to this omission. For some, the absence of the exorcism in Mark is sufficient reason either to claim that Mark did not know Q or hold that the miracle story was missing in Mark’s oral Q-tradition (see Syx 1992:168). In the opinion of Guijarro (1999:120), the narrative introduction and the initial question of Mark’s version (Mk 3:23) are due, most probably, to his redactional activity. It can be argued that Mark chose to omit an introduction of this sort when incorporating this unit into his narrative (Sellew 1988:100-101; Twelftree 1993:103-104; Ling 1961:18-19; cf. Syx 1992:169). At any rate, the exorcism does not appear in Mark and as to why the omission, is something that is beyond the scope of our exploration here.

In spite of its brevity, the exorcism contains a complete healing account with the description of the ailment (a dumb man), the act of healing (the demon cast out), the confirmation of healing (he spoke) and the reaction of the bystanders (“they were astonished” - see Mt 12:22-23; 9:32-33; Lk 11:14). The healing or exorcism appears to have drawn different reactions from the bystanders. The identification of the accusers is different in the three gospels (Mt: Pharisees; Mk: Scribes; Lk: some of them) and this makes it difficult to know exactly who the original accusers of Jesus were (Twelftree 1993:104). As for the reason why the accusers rose against Jesus, remains a matter of speculation. Perhaps they were jealous of the popularity of Jesus (Ferguson 1984:18; see also 1 Sam 18:7). It could also be that the accusers were incensed after the people who had witnessed the

exorcism asked, “Can this be the Son of David?” (Mt 12:23). Realising the honour of Messiahship that people were willing to bestow on Jesus, the Pharisees (in the Matthean version) felt inclined to react negatively. The accusers of Jesus resorted to name-calling and labelling (cf. Malina and Neyrey 1991a: 97-122; see also Wenham 1975:295; Giujarro 1999:128).

In their accusation, the opponents of Jesus insinuated that he was in league with a more powerful demon who enabled him to subdue lesser demons. The prince of demons here is named Beelzebul, who is identified with Satan in Luke 11:18. Wagner (1996:146-147) objects to the identification of Beelzebul with the devil himself. He says that Beelzebul is “so powerful that some confuse him with Satan himself. Beelzebub is known as ‘the ruler of the demons’ (Lk 11:15) but he rules these demons under the high command of Satan”. Wagner concludes by saying, “Beelzebub is not Satan”. Though Wagner’s statement purports to introduce something new into the Beelzebul pericope, it lacks sufficient substantiation to inspire confidence. There is general congruence among scholars that Beelzebul is identified with Satan in the pericope. De Blois (1986:301) agrees that “The three terms *Satanas*, *diabolos* and *Beelzebul* refer to the same cosmic adversary and opponent of God”. Penny and Wise (1994:633) also support the view that, in the synoptic gospels, the Semitic word *Beelzeboul* is used as the equivalent of *satanas* and the ruler of demons (see also Marshall 1978:470, 472; Stein 1997:43-45; Garrett 1989:44).

The derogatory accusation that Jesus was Beelzebul (Mt 10:25) or demonised (cf. Jn 7:20; 8:48) or that he was mad (cf. Jn 10:29; Mk 3:21) or involved in magic (as in the Beelzebul controversy), appears to have been rather common. The charge had been made against John the Baptist that he had a demon (Lk 7:33). It appears to have been a stock charge against anyone who acted contrary to the usual norms of behaviour (Ferguson 1984:19-20).

By claiming that Jesus was in league with Beelzebul in his exorcism, the Jewish accusers thought that they had categorised him and his ministry in worst terms because among the Jews it would apparently be used as an alternative name for Baal Shamayin, that is, the chief god of Canaanite religion or the leader of the Israelite god’s rebel angels (see MacLaurin 1978:156f; Sellew 1988:104).

Ferguson (1984:18) says that Beelzebul is usually derived from Baalzebub (2 Kgs. 1:2; see De Blois 1986) and he also adds that this word, 'Beelzebul', was a Hebrew pun ("lord of the flies") of the name of a Philistine or Canaanite god. In his observation, Ferguson draws a conclusion that Beelzebul is apparently the same as Belial (Beliar) encountered in the intertestamental literature. In the New Testament, Beelzebul is the name derived from the Aramaic form which meant "lord of the high house" or "lord of the temple" (see MacLaurin 1978:156-158). Sellw (1988:104) even suggests that the name, 'Beelzebul', might well have been one of the potent names invoked by magicians and exorcists, just as Jesus' own name was soon to become. But the responses of Jesus to the accusation of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul, reveal that he never accepted this interpretation (Guijarro 1999:128).

In the response of Jesus to the accusation that he was in league with the prince of demons, several things come to light (see Marshall 1978:471; Ferguson 1984:20-24). In the reply of Jesus, it becomes clear that Satan would not be conducting civil war in his own kingdom. If Satan is casting out his own subordinates, this would be folly and a sign of weakness and confusion in the kingdom of evil. Sellw (1988:103-104) says that Jesus, in his response, employs a proverb from everyday wisdom about the instability of divided states of warring households. The image of the kingdom at war and a house (hold) divided could certainly have been commonplace in the socio-political realities of mid-first-century Palestine (cf. Brown 1983:366-367; Hollenbach 1981:565f). The pronouncement by Jesus of the divided kingdom that is laid waste and a divided household that falls was revealing in terms of the state of the kingdom of evil (Lk 11:17-18; cf. 21-22). What also becomes clear in the reply of Jesus is the larger consideration that presents the essential unity of the kingdom of evil. The demons function under a prince or ruler and are his subordinates. Evil may have varied manifestations but ultimately there is only one principle of evil. Instead of a world dominated by warring demons (a pagan and polytheistic conception), Jesus saw one kingdom of Satan (cf. Ferguson 1984:20). The Jewish exorcists might deal with local manifestations of demonic activity, but Jesus saw his work as demonstrating that the whole dominion of evil was being conquered. The demons functioned as part of the larger whole.

Again, Jesus in his reply to the accusation that he was in alliance with Beelzebul, reminded his accusers that there were Jewish exorcists going about casting out demons, or at least claiming to do so. Jesus' question, "By whom do your sons cast them out?" was found by the accusers to be both tricky and intriguing. For the Jews to ascribe Jesus' exorcisms to Beelzebul or Satan was implicitly to attribute exorcisms performed by their own wonder-workers or exorcists to the same agent (see Marshall 1978:471; Ferguson 1984:20). The logical consideration was that if the Jewish exorcists were working by the power of God, then so was Jesus.

Another consideration advanced by Jesus was that if it was indeed only by the power of God that he cast out demons, then the *basileia* (kingdom) or rule of God was being manifested. The phrase "finger of God" (Lk 11:20; par. Mt 12:28 - "Spirit of God") is of significance here. The protasis of this phrase alludes to the deliverance power of the Exodus contest between Moses and the magicians of Pharaoh (Ex 8:19; see Garrett 1989:45; Woods 2001:245). On that occasion, the Egyptian magicians were finally forced to conclude that the power by which Moses worked his signs was superior to the power that they themselves utilised. They admitted that indeed the power tapped by Moses must be divine or as they said "the finger of God". In as far as who has preserved the original version from Q between Matthew ("Spirit of God") and Luke ("finger of God"), Meier (1994:407-411) and Crossan (1983:180) conclude that we cannot be sure. For Ferguson (1984:20-21) the two phrases are equivalent in meaning. Of great importance for us is the fact that Jesus' exorcisms herald the kingdom of God. As the kingdom of Satan diminishes, the kingdom of God grows proportionately (Garrett 1989:45). While the accusers interpreted the exorcisms as a threat to the political order as they (exorcisms) drew crowds (Oakman 1988:112), Jesus considered them as a sign of the presence of the reign of God (see Chilton 1982:559). Guijarro (1999:127) contends further that the main purpose of Jesus' responses was not to clarify what kind of exorcist he was, but to make clear the cosmic and political implications of his exorcisms.

The ensuing metaphor of the strong man (Lk 11:21-22; Mt 12:29; Mk 3:27; *Gospel of Thomas* [GThom] 35) who is overpowered by a stronger man, may be seen as a striking affirmation of Jesus' power and a very meaningful illustration

of the significance of Jesus' ministry in general and his exorcisms in particular (see Ferguson 1984:22). Unlike Matthew and Mark who employ the imagery of robbery, Luke utilises military terminology ("fully armed", "guard", "armour", "overcome", "spoil"). The feeling among some scholars is that Luke, in his careful shaping of this passage, has apparently been influenced by Isaiah 49:25 and/or 53:12 [LXX] (see Syx 1992:172; Noll 1998:134; Garret 1989:45). The possible allusion to Isaiah 53:12 ("Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors") is, according to Garret's (1989:45) view, usually overlooked or at least downplayed, probably because at this point in the narrative it seems irrelevant. But Garret is of the opinion that perhaps Luke is building on a perceived connection between Jesus' earthly control of demons and what will happen at his impending death and resurrection (see also Kingsbury 1991:79f; Noll 1998:134; Arnold 1992:81).

Though there is no doubt about the defeat of Satan in the parable of the strong man, there are different interpretations as to how this defeat actually took place. Ferguson (1984:22-23), for example, sees Satan as a strong man who dwells in a fortified palace and this leads him to think of this world as enemy-occupied territory. Satan, as its ruler, has a fortress to protect its ill-gotten possessions. But there comes one stronger than he and, according to Syx (1992:176), the "stronger" man is already mentioned in Luke 3:16/Matthew 3:11; in both Luke 3:16 and 11:22, Jesus is the one to whom the expression refers. The conqueror liberates the fortress, takes Satan's power and takes charge of his possessions for his own use (Ferguson 1984:23) or for redistribution purposes (Robbins 1991:272; cf. Schweizer 1984:194; Oakman 1988:119).

Gooding (1987:223) comments that "strong and fully armed as the enemy was, by means of the incarnation a stronger than he began to invade the prison, overpower the tyrant, and talk to the prisoners". Gooding further says that since then the stronger than the strong - by his death - has invaded the deepest of the enemy's dungeons and broken his last stronghold. Humanity, in bondage to Satan has been set free (see Ferguson 1984:23; Col 2:13-18; Heb 2:14-15; Eph 4:7-13). What is interesting in Gooding's comment is that, unlike many scholars who associate the defeat of Satan only with the exorcisms, death and resurrection of

Jesus, he appropriately points out that the incarnation signifies the initial step in the victory process of Christ over the evil one. It represents the invasion of the strong man's fortress. The act of the stronger man (Jesus Christ) signals God's intervention in the affairs and plight of humankind in a world infested by demons under the rule of Satan. Therefore, when we speak of Christ's victory over the devil, the incarnation cannot be separated from the exorcisms, death and resurrection. They all form part of the integral whole: The defeat of Satan and the ushering in of the kingdom of God in Christ.

In relating the parable of the strong man, it is significant to note how Luke differs from Mark and Matthew. The Marcan and Matthean versions refer to "plundering" or "spoiling" the man's goods (Mk 3:27; Mt 12:29). Thus, according to Robbins (1991:272), in the plundering imagery, the powerful action invades and takes away what a person possesses. In contrast, the Lucan illustration evokes a system where power is used as a means to gain access to the wealth of strong men and distribute it to others. Robbins further observes that in the Lucan version the strong man is not bound, nor are his goods viewed as stolen. The armour in which he trusted is taken away and his goods are divided among others (cf. Lk 19:8). Schweizer (1984:195) interprets this as even placing more emphasis on someone who is stronger, who brings "peace" through his victory and vanquishes a false confidence based on possessions.

Contrary to the Lucan version, both Matthew and Mark present the strong man as bound. As to when the strong man was bound is a matter of scholarly speculation. Some assume that the binding of the strong man took place in the temptation (cf. Foerster 1971:159; Arnold 1992:76). The statement of the seventy-two disciples who joyfully reported, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name" (Lk 10:17), upon which Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Lk 10:18), has led some thinkers in theological studies to contend that the exorcisms acted as the binding or demise of the devil. Another view states that the victory of Jesus over the devil occurred at the cross and the resurrection (e.g. Arnold 1992:79; Foerster 1971:159; Gooding 1987:223). Garret (1989:58), by some intricate explication of Isaiah 14:1-27 and also using some other documents like *IIQ Melchizedek* and Revelation 9:1-11, arrives at a suggestion that the exaltation of Christ to the heavenly places spelled the demise or fall of Satan

from the position of authority. Whatever position or angle is adopted as to how and when the strong man was bound, there is general congruence that the binding of the strong man does tell of the defeat of Satan by Jesus at some point. Regardless of what it alludes, the parable of the strong man implies “that during his earthly ministry, Jesus vanquished Satan in some way albeit not fully comprehensible in human experience” (Page 1995:107). The parable suggests that Satan suffered an unprecedented defeat at the hands of Jesus (see Khathide 2000:87). Ladd (1959:48) is quite categorical in his conviction of Satan’s demise: “Satan is bound”. Prabhu (1994:158) adds, “Satan’s rule is ended”. Green (1981:49) understands the binding of Satan as meaning that the devil has no rightful authority over human beings; he is simply a usurper and his power is curbed.

As Page (1995:107) rightly points out that though the devil is defeated, this is not fully comprehensible in human experience. Garret (1989:58) says that though Satan was fallen from heaven, he still remains on the scene because he has not yet been made a “footstool for Christ’s feet”. The apparent contradiction of the devil who is defeated by Christ but is still active in his hostile work to God and the church can be best explained by the already and not-yet schema whereby God’s kingdom has come into the world in Christ but not yet fully revealed. Arnold (1992:82) explains it thus: “Christians face the unique tension of having conquered Satan by virtue of their identification with Christ’s work on the cross (cf. 1 Jn 2:13-14) and needing to continue the war with Satan while they still live in this world during the present evil age”. New Testament scholars describe this paradox as an “eschatological tension” - the “now” but “not yet” of our Christian lives.

The new age has dawned, the kingdom of God is present, but only partially. The Lord Jesus makes it clear that in his own person, the kingdom or reign of God has already entered human history (see Green 1970:60-61 Shenk 1983:207-208; Ladd 1994; Khathide 1999a:51). To the question of the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God is among you” (Lk 17:20-21). Ridderbos (1962:61) explains that the evidence that the kingdom of God has come, is the overthrow of the wicked one and the evil spirits. Also, the presence of the kingdom of God in Christ is manifested in

his preaching-teaching of the kingdom and in the miraculous demonstrations of the power of the kingdom (Wimber 1992:30; Burgess *et al* 1988:523; Ridderbos 1962:65-76; cf. Lk 16:16). But Shenk (1983:208) correctly sounds a reminder that the kingdom of God is to be understood eschatologically. It was inaugurated by Jesus but has not yet reached its fulfilment. In agreeing with this stance, Burgess *et al* (1988:524) add: “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” when the Son of Man will come in power and glory (Mt 24:30; Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26). The binding of Satan in the parable of the strong man should therefore be comprehended within this context and understanding.

According to Ferguson (1984:23), Luke 11:23, which states: “He who is not with me is against me and he who does not gather with me scatters” emphasises that there can be no neutrality in the conflict between Christ and Satan. Wimber (1992:40) describes this conflict and says that

in our battle with Satan there are no demilitarised zones.
There is never a lull in the fighting. We are born into the
fight, and unless the Day of the Lord comes, we will die in
the fight.

The theology of the kingdom of God is essentially one of conflict and conquest over the kingdom of Satan (Ladd 1974:51).

But the Beelzebul pericope will not be complete without touching on the evil spirit who has come out of a man but after not finding a resting place says, “I will return to my house whence I came from” (Lk 11:24) - a teaching of Jesus which illuminates a fact of which his contemporaries were already aware that those who had been exorcised did become repossessed (cf. Ling 1961:21). This is evidenced in the exorcism of a young boy when Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of him and never enter him again (Mk 9:25). That this was a possibility, and was recognised among the Jews to be likely, is evident from the words of Josephus, who, in praise of the exorcistic formulas of Solomon, says that these

will drive demons away “so that they never return” (*Antiquities* 8.2.5). In the opinion of Ling (1961:21), the significance of this teaching of Jesus on the subject is that it widens and brings the story not only to refer to the evil spirit which possesses the individual man but the evil spirit which possesses the whole generation. Following this very line of thought, Gooding (1987:225) says that in this story, Jesus was urging his contemporaries that, although the Judaism they belonged to had been purged of idolatry and thoroughly reformed by exile, they had to ardently seek the gift of the Holy Spirit. Schweizer (1984:195) cautions that no one can remain neutral like an empty house; either the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) or an unclean spirit will dwell there.

In the Beelzebul controversy, we learn several lessons about demonology and the conflict between Christ and Satan. Unlike the Jewish exorcists of the time who viewed demons in an atomistic way, Jesus regarded evil forces as operating as a single entity under one ruler, Satan. The casting out of demons by the power of God, since no other agent comes into question, is a sign of the presence of the kingdom of God. The role of the Holy Spirit in exorcisms cannot be underestimated. In ushering in the kingdom of God and its diverse activities, the Holy Spirit plays a pivotal role. He is the source of Christ’s power and that of his church. Though the hostility of the devil and his demons is still experienced by God’s people and the rest of creation, their authority has been dealt a serious blow in the person, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. The incarnation forms part of this victorious process. By virtue of the church’s identification with Christ, especially the cross, believers share in the victory of Christ over the evil forces. In this conflict, people are encouraged to stand on the victorious side of Christ. Lastly, there is a warning that it is dangerous to exorcise demons without replacing them by something good, for example, seeking the gift of the Holy Spirit or appropriate the kingdom of God personally and collectively.

3.5.7.3 SIMON MAGUS (ACTS 8:4-25)

In his commentary on the historical aspect of the early church, Kistemaker (1990:294) says that in Jerusalem, Satan’s opposition to the church came in the form of the deceit of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), the imprisonment of the apostles (4:3; 5:18), the death of Stephen (7:60), and the great persecution

(8:1b). In Samaria, Satan employs different methods to thwart the growth of the church. He uses a man named Simon Magus, known in Samaria as the sorcerer (see also Witherington 1998:283).

As for the lexical overview of the meaning of the word *magoi*, Bruce (1951:184; cf. *idem* 1988:166; Moulton 1913) states that the *magoi* were originally a Median caste, a pre-Zoroastrian class (Herodotus i.101, 140), but he also goes on to say that the word is used in an extended sense of practitioners of various kinds of sorcery and even quackery. This Simon Magus of Acts 8 seems to be depicted by the narrator of Acts in this light.

Simon Magus plays a prominent part in post-apostolic Christian literature as the first heretic, the father of Gnosticism (Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.16; see Bruce 1951:183). Justin Martyr, who himself came from Samaria (see Stott 1990:148), in his *Apology* 1.26, tells how Simon by his magic power secured a following of devotees not only in Samaria but also in Rome, to which he went in the time of Claudius (*First Apology* 26.2). Justin's statement that he was honoured in Rome with a statue dedicated to *Simoni Deo Sancto* seems due to the misreading of an inscription to an ancient Italian deity which commenced in this manner SEMONI SANCO DEO FIDIO, 'to Semo Sancus the god of oats' (*CIL* vi. 567). In defence of Justin, Bruce (1951:184 - see footnote) feels that it is quite possible that the error was not Justin's, but that the Simonians in Rome (see Meeks 1977:137-142) regarded this or a similar inscription as providentially applicable to Simon, and used it for their worship (cf. Tertullian *Apol.* xiii.9: '*cum Binonem Magus Statua et inscriptione Sancti Dei inauguratis*').

In the *Acts of Peter* 4-32, Simon is said to have corrupted the Christians in Rome by his false teaching and made authorities ill-disposed toward them, but to have been worsted at last in a magical contest with Peter (cf. Bruce 1988.166). But it is in the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* that the Simon legend is mostly curiously elaborated. In these writings, he not only appears as untiring adversary of Peter but seems, to some extent, to serve as a camouflage for Paul. When all this is compared with the basic story in Acts, the feeling among some scholars (cf. Bruce 1988:166-167; Garret 1989a:73) is that Luke knew more about Simon than he recorded; in this account he relates only what he

judged relevant to his purpose. Klauck (1994:98) in his observation, though, believes that what appears in the apocryphal and some post-apostolic literature about Simon Magus are only later embellishments of the basic story in Acts 8:4-24 (cf. Spencer 1992:126-127).

With a flashback, Luke introduces Simon who had previously practised magic and fascinated the people (v. 9). According to Luke, Simon had claimed that he, himself, was somebody great (cf. 5:36) while the people gave heed to him (v. 10-11) because of his magical artistry so much so that “they accepted his own account of himself and regarded him as the grand vizier of the supreme God, the channel both of divine power and of divine revelation” (Bruce 1988:167; cf. *PGM* 4.1225-29). In the people’s confession that “this man is the divine power known as the Great Power” (v. 10), Kordel (1986:162) says that we could deduce that Simon probably taught, “I am the Great Power of God”, meaning “I am God incarnate, and the proof of my claim lies in my magic”. Since most magicians in the first century practised for money (see e.g. Plato *Laws* 909A, B; Philo *Special Laws* 3.100f; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 15, 16; Juvenal *Satire* 6.546; Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 8.7), this makes Garret (1979:286-288) to conclude that Simon too obviously practised for money again. Hermas cites this trait as one of the characteristics distinguishing the “soothsaying” (*manteuein*) false prophet from the prophet who is divinely inspired: the former “lives in great luxury and in many other deceits, and accepts rewards for his prophecy, and if he does not receive them he does not prophesy” (*Hermas Mandate* 11.12). Although there is sufficient evidence that avarice was characteristic of magicians in the first century, it is also true that in Acts Simon does not ask for money, but rather offers it (Garret 1989a:70). But Garret (1979:288) also remarks that, “If he [Simon] was willing to pay money for the power of conferring the spirit by the imposition of hands he would certainly intend to charge for the commodity when he passed it on”. The very fact that Luke has Peter say of the Spirit as God’s free gift that cannot be bought (8:20) further casts Simon’s character in a bad light as a heavy money-minded person.

But before discussing the confrontation of Simon with Philip, Luke prefaces the narrative in this manner: “Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miracles he did, they all

paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:5-8). Luke discloses the full content of Philip’s message, that is, the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (v. 12). The proclamation of the dynamic saving rule of God in Christ by Philip led to exorcisms and many healings. By employing the phrase “kingdom of God”, Luke uses it to illustrate “that Philip stressed the kingship and sovereignty of God in this world in opposition to the powers of Satan which Simon displayed through his magic” (Kistemaker 1990:297). Upon hearing the message of the kingdom that Philip was preaching, and seeing the miracles performed by him in the name of Jesus, many Samaritans “were baptised, both men and women” (v. 12). Luke also mentions that Simon believed and was baptised. According to Klauck (1994:98), we see that in the narrative, the Christian preachers are more than a match for Simon Magus and consequently he acknowledges their superiority by becoming a believer and getting baptised, himself. Klauck believes that we may presume that the responsive faith and subsequent baptism happened with the best intentions though he later relapses again motivated by his greed for more money and more spiritual power (see also Spencer 1992:122-126). Against the views that “Simon never converted at all” (Witherington 1998:288) or that “he views baptism not as sign of entering into a relationship with the Triune God but as an initiation into fellowship with that powerful spirit” (Kistemaker 1990:297), the opinion of Klauck and Spencer of seeing a relapsed faith in Simon is more attractive considering that “it is difficult to shed former perspectives” (Krodel 1986:163). This is well exemplified by the ethnocentric attitude of Peter (see Gal 2:11-21) for which Paul rebuked him. Peter’s behaviour occurred despite the fact that he was part of the core of the early disciples of Christ. In the case of Simon whose behaviour could not be condoned, in my opinion, it was a matter of urgently needed Christian discipleship than necessarily a lack of faith or conversion.

After hearing that Samaria had accepted God’s word, they sent Peter and John there to check out the reports. Peter and John did not invalidate the work of Philip by starting over with the Samaritans (cf. Lk 9:54; Jn 4:9); rather they press forward by praying for the Spirit to fall on them. They placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. In the view of Witherington (2001:192), here, as elsewhere in Acts, having the Spirit is the *sine qua non* of being a

Christian. Indeed, according to Luke's opinion, there was no such thing as a Christian without the Spirit (cf. Acts 19:1-7; see Khathide 1999a:103-134; 2002:86) This observation is also alluded to by Müller-Fahrenholz (1995:xii) who notices that the Spirit dimension in the Trinity has been notoriously overlooked by classical God-talk. But, according to Acts, this was not the case in the ancient church. The experience of the Holy Spirit formed part of a person's initiation process into the Christian faith, together with conversion and baptism.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money so that he could also do the same (vv. 18-19). Luke does not explain what Simon saw in real terms. Krodel (1986:165) thinks that Simon perhaps had a magical understanding of the Spirit (see also Keener 1993:345). He speculates that when Simon saw what the apostles could do, he saw his chance of advancing to the position of super magician within the church. What Simon wanted was control of the Holy Spirit. He aspired to be a Christian magician with the power to transmit the Spirit to others. But in Peter's response, we read that the Spirit is God's free gift which no human being controls and that money cannot buy (v. 20). Peter curses Simon, upbraiding him for his evil heart (8:20-21, 23). But interspersed with Peter's words of condemnation is what appears to be a ray of hope for Simon: Peter tells him that he should repent of his wickedness and ask the Lord whether the intent of his heart might be forgiven him (v. 22). Assessing Simon's humble response is difficult (see Garret 1989a:72) in which he asks Peter and John to intercede on his behalf, "that nothing of the things you have spoken may come upon me" (v. 24). What makes it difficult to judge is whether Simon was sincere and genuine in his repentance. Some writers ask whether Simon, in requesting the prayers of the apostles, was motivated by fear, that is, wanting to escape punishment of the Lord. What is intriguing, though, is that the Bible has revealed to us only Simon's request for prayer and nothing more.

In his narrative, Luke leaves the reader with some significant clues in our understanding of the mission of the church. The church is under constant attack from Satan; if not by persecution, it is magical deception. As in Samaria, the church runs the risk of having its miracles, healings or exorcisms being understood as the better and stronger form of magic. Magic and all its related forms are not up-

rooted once and for all but remains a latent danger also for Christian believers, who more than once relapse (see Klauck 1994:99). The church is, nevertheless, assured of the Spirit's ability to handle manifestations and deceptions of magical artistry in the advance of its mission. The other thing that Luke concludes with in this narrative is that those who may wish to turn their backs on magical practices should be assured of the church's willingness to intercede for them and not judge them.

5.7.4 ELYMAS THE SORCERER (ACTS 13:4-12)

The story of Paul and Bar-Jesus (Elymas) has in many ways puzzled and stretched the minds of many commentators of the New Testament (see Garret 1989a:79). Nock (1972:187-188) has even gone to the extent of characterising the story as lame, among other things. But since these points of contention are not our main focus, we can, in short, agree with the observations made by Garret (1989a:80) that the narrative appears to be full of unlikelihoods or inconsistencies. But Garret also points out that Luke was not as inept a narrator as many commentators would suggest. Nevertheless, the analysis of the mythological background to the Bar-Jesus account and its literary function within the narrative of Luke-Acts, will suggest that the story made a definite and important point. Despite Nock's (1972:188) assessment of the story as poorly contrived, he lists three points made by it: "First it represented the Roman authorities as very sympathetic at the outset of Paul's active ministry in the Gentile world; secondly, it gave to Paul a *Gottesurteil* comparable with that declared by Peter on Ananias and Sapphira; thirdly, and this was perhaps important, it represented Christianity in very contrast with *magia*". Garret (1989a:80) also adds that the story "tied in nicely with other incidents in the two-volume account".

The conflict with the magician on Cyprus is the first significant event on Paul's first missionary journey. In the narrative, we are told that Barnabas and Saul (as he is still called in Acts 13:1-2 by Luke) are sent out by the church of Antioch in Syria, which served as their home base for several years. They go down to the next port, Seleucia, embark there, sail to Cyprus (13:4), reach Salamis at the east end of the island (13:5) and cover 100 or so miles to Paphos (see Klauck 1994:94), the capital of the island with the Roman administration, at the opposite

end (13:6). There they met not only the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus (see Witherington 1998:399-400), who shows interest in the gospel, but also a Jewish magician named Bar-Jesus in his entourage. Luke's silence about other mission stops along the way indicates that the Paul/Elymas incident is the only one that interests the evangelist (see Haenchen 1971:402). But perhaps the evangelist's focus on the incident is because Luke states that they went to Paphos at the invitation of the proconsul (v. 7). According to Witherington (1998:400), Sergius Paulus invited them presumably because they appeared to be travelling philosophers or rhetors because they offered public teaching. Garret (1989a:80) also observes that Saul (alias Paul) and Bar-Jesus (alias Elymas) are the central human characters in the narrative. Paul's companions, Barnabas and John, play distinctly subsidiary roles, and even the character of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, functions primarily as a foil for the confrontation between Paul and Elymas.

For a better understanding of the confrontation, Luke lists six things describing the portrait of Bar-Jesus (see Klauck 1994:95-97). First, Luke calls him a magician, a profession that Luke does not look at favourably (cf. Philo *On the Special Laws* 3:100-101). Second, in Acts 13:6 Luke adds a second attribute of false prophet, thus evoking the Old Testament which relates of the true prophet, who speaks and acts as God's messenger, and his opponents, the false prophets, who speak in their own name and act in their own interest (cf. Jer 23:9-40; 2 Chr 18). Third, Bar-Jesus is identified as a Jew. Klauck (1994:96) points out that, "first-century Judaism displays some fairly strong tendencies to become mixed up with more popular and unorthodox religious practices". Fourth, it is something to do with his proper name, Bar-Jesus. Jesus is a common Jewish name in the New Testament (cf. Jesus who is called Justus in Col. 4:11) and that is generally also true for the use of the patronymics, composed with *bar*, 'son', the Aramaic equivalent to the Hebrew *ben* (see Klauck 1994:96). Luke seems to take special delight in this combination, referring not only to Barabbas, 'son of the father', in the passion story (Lk 23:1 par.), but also to Barnabas, 'the son of encouragement' in Acts 4:36, and two different persons called Barsabbas (Acts 1:23; 15:22). But Bar-Jesus, nevertheless, means 'son of Jesus', and "Luke indicates that he recognises the hidden potencies and dangers of this name" (Klauck 1994:96). In Acts 13:10, Paul launches a counter-attack with the open address: "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness ...". Fifth, Luke

informs us that Bar-Jesus “was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus”, probably serving as his court theologian, as his adviser and perhaps as his astrologer (this specialisation could be indicated by a peculiar feature of his punishment in v. 11: he will be ‘unable to see the sun’, which he needs for calculations - Klauck 1994:96; cf. *Antiquities of the Jews* 20:142). Sixth, in v. 8, Bar-Jesus gets a new name ‘Elymas, the sorcerer’ (magician - for that is the translation of his name) opposed them (see Yaure 1960:297f). Elymas saw in the Christian missionaries a threat to his prestige and livelihood (Witherington 1998:401; Stott 1990:219; Klauck 1994:96). So he tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

This attempt the apostle saw as an extremely serious attack from the evil one so that he now confronted Elymas as Peter confronted Simon Magus in Samaria (Stott 1990:219). Luke chooses this moment to inform us that “Saul ... was also called Paul” (v. 9). It was appropriate for Luke to mention Saul’s new name now as he moves into increasingly non-Jewish contexts. He does not call Paul ‘Saul’ again (see Hemer 1985:179f).

At this juncture, Garret (1989a:80) sees Paul and Bar-Jesus as human combatants who in turn represent superhuman figures. On the one hand, Paul acts under the power of the Holy Spirit. In the introduction to the episode, Luke has noted that the Spirit set Barnabas and Saul aside for the entire first missionary journey (13:2) and dictated to them their itinerary (v. 4). Furthermore, just before Bar-Jesus is rebuked (v. 9), Luke describes Paul as “filled with the Holy Spirit”. On the other hand, Bar-Jesus is closely linked with the figure of Satan. Paul calls the magician-false prophet a “son of the devil” and “enemy of all righteousness”. Paul also accuses Bar-Jesus of being “full of all deceit and all fraud” (cf. Barret 1979:289). The proximity of this vitriolic charge (v. 10a) to Luke’s description of Paul as “filled with the Holy Spirit”, serves to contrast these characters in the sharpest terms possible; Luke would have us see Bar-Jesus as controlled by Satan, the very antithesis of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the confrontation between Bar-Jesus and Paul is also a confrontation between the Holy Spirit and the devil (cf. *Martyrdom of Isaiah* 1:8-9; 2:1; *Jubilees* 48:9-11; *Testament of Naphtali* 8:6; *CD* 5:18-19; *Hermas Mandate* 11:3).

The opposition of Elymas to the message of salvation preached by Paul, makes the apostle to react in holy wrath. Paul, empowered by the Holy Spirit, curses Elymas with blindness and thus exerts his apostolic authority and this episode parallels Peter's rebuke of Simon, the sorcerer (8:20-23; see Kistemaker 1990:462). From the curse of Paul on Elymas, we realise a few things: First, it is not Paul who punishes Elymas, but the Lord: "And now the hand of the Lord is against you" (v. 11a). Second, we see the Lord's mercy and grace when Elymas is told that his punishment would only be temporary. Third, God's affliction on Elymas with a scourge of blindness causes him to live in confinement and therefore probably hindering his work as the proconsul's astrologer (cf. Klauck 1994:96). Paul could relate to this condition; in his state of physical blindness his spiritual blindness was removed so that he was able to understand God's purposes (Acts 9:8-18; see Kistemaker 1990:463; Bruce 1951:258; Chrysostom *Hom. 28; Letter of Aristeas* 316). In the sharp conflict between Paul and Elymas, Paul triumphs while his opponent gropes in darkness: "Immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him" (v. 11b). The immediacy of divine punishment descending upon Elymas astounds the proconsul who sees in Paul a true prophet of the Lord and Elymas, the fraud. In the story we are told that Sergius Paulus, seeing what had happened, was brought to faith in Christ (v. 12) whereas it is not stated that Elymas repented and believed.

Luke evidently wants us "to discover some hidden parallel between the Jewish itinerant preacher and miracle-worker Paul and the Jewish professional magician with the telling name Bar-Jesus, between the now-true prophet and the false prophet" (Klauck 1994:97). In the view of Williams (1964:156), this story proves the superiority of Christianity over even a form of magic which could impress a Roman official and it also balances the story of Peter and Simon Magus, suggesting that Paul was as good an apostle as Peter. By stressing that Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit when he confronted Elymas, Luke endeavours to show the difference between miracles whose source is God (the Holy Spirit) and those that are magic-inspired whose author is the devil. In the Bar-Jesus incident, one can discern a pattern of conflict between good and evil, between the purposes of God and the purposes of Satan (Garret 1989a:87). In this episode, Luke brings his reader a dramatic power encounter in which the Holy Spirit overthrew the evil one, the apostle confounded the sorcerer and the gospel triumphed over the occult (see Stott 1990:220).

It is notable that Johnson and Tannehill come up with somewhat amusing explanations of the Bar-Jesus incident (cf. also Garret 1989a:84f). Johnson (1992:227) says, “Perhaps we are to see Saul, at the moment he takes on his new and proper identity as Paul the Apostle, fighting the final battle with the ‘Jewish false prophet’ within him, blinding the hostile magician that is his former self at the moment he assumes his role as ‘light to the Gentiles’” (see Acts 13:47). Tannehill (1990:15), on the other hand, states, “Paul in denouncing Elymas is rejecting his own former personality and value structures, which remain threatening potentialities within himself”. Although these explanations by both Johnson and Tannehill seem attractive adornments, they should not distract our focus from the basic story of what Luke says, namely, the confrontation between the power of the Holy Spirit in Paul and the power of Satan in the life and profession of Elymas, the magician-false prophet. It is also evident that Luke intends showing his community that God’s power is victorious over the kingdom of darkness.

3.5.7.5 THE PHILIPPIAN SLAVE-GIRL (ACTS 16:16-18)

In Acts, Luke gives a history of how the church progresses from the infancy stages. In addition, he also relates how Satan tries to obstruct the work of God’s servants. For instance, in Samaria the sorcerer offered Peter and John money to obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit (8:18-19); on the island of Cyprus, Elymas opposed Saul and Barnabas by trying to persuade the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, not to believe in Jesus Christ (13:7-8). Likewise, in Philippi, Satan uses a demon-possessed girl to thwart the work of the missionaries (see Kistemaker 1990:592).

On the way to the place of prayer, a slave girl who has a spirit of divination (and not just demented or mad - see Barclay 1976:124; cf. Bruce 1951:315). Luke writes that she has a spirit called Python, which translators render “divination” (see Wright 1978:558-559). The word *Python* referred to the legendary snake that guarded the Delphic Oracle, a sanctuary in central Greece, but was slain by the god of prophecy, Apollo. Apollo was thought to be embodied in the snake and to inspire ‘pythonesses’, his female devotees, with clairvoyance, although other people thought of them as ventriloquists (see Plutarch *de defectu oraculorum* ix.414 E; cf. Trebilco 1989:51f). Luke regards the slave girl as possessed by an evil spirit (cf. Stott 1990:264). Luke also tells us that the demonised girl was exploited by her owners for whom she made a lot of money by fortune-telling (v. 16).

Empowered by the spirit in her, the slave girl follows Paul and Silas for many days, crying out, “these men are servants of the Most High God and proclaim to you a way of salvation” (v. 17). The term ‘Most High God’ is a bit confusing here. For Witherington (2001:260; 1998:495), the term ‘most high god’ reflects the existence of a pantheon of deities dominated by a supreme being, Zeus or Jupiter. Witherington explains that ‘servants of the most high god’ is not a monotheistic remark, but simply a “recognition that they serve a very powerful deity perhaps indeed the most powerful one” (cf. *NewDocs* 1:25). Bruce (1951:315) understands the term ‘Most High God’ as a divine title current among both Jews and Greeks and thus provided them with a common denominator in referring to the Deity because, according to him, the Jewish title is a translation of the Hebrew *El Elyon* (cf. Mk 5:7; Nm 24:16; Isa 14:14; Dan 3:26; 1 *Esdras* 2:3). In the opinion of Stott (1990:264), the term ‘Most High God’ as a term of the Supreme Being, was applied by the Jews to Yahweh and by the Greeks to Zeus. Williams (1964:194) explains that the Greek *Hypsistos* was the name for Yahweh not only among Greek-speaking Jews but also among Gentiles who worshipped Yahweh without accepting all the demands of Judaism. In his gospel and Acts, Luke uses the expression *Most High* seven times with reference to God (see Lk 1:32, 35, 76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48; 16:17). In the Septuagint, the term generally refers to God.

Another unsettling thing in the statement of the demonised girl was the confession that “these men ... proclaiming to you the way of salvation” (v. 17). The term *soteria* was a current term among Gentiles as well as Jews; as used by Gentiles, it combined the idea of salvation in the more spiritual sense with that of bodily healing (see Bruce 1951:316). According to Kistemaker (1990:593), in itself the confession is noble provided that it comes from the heart of a believer and in the form of the declaration of faith. Witherington (2001:260) believes that Paul is rightly disturbed by the girl’s pronouncement, for it not only leaves a false impression, but also comes from a dubious source. Kistemaker (1990:593) views the acknowledgement as coming indirectly from Satan, who, by using this demonised girl, is trying to diminish the effectiveness of Paul’s ministry. Kistemaker contends that if Paul had accepted the acknowledgement without discernment (see 1 Cor 12:10 - “to another distinguishing between spirits”), he would have given the devil credit and thus approved his motives.

After many days of being followed by the demonised slave girl with her shouting, Paul becomes grieved or dismayed by this inappropriate and unwelcome kind of publicity (see Stott 1990:265; Kistemaker 1990:593). His distress leads him to turn and exorcise her by saying to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her." Obeying Paul's command, the spirit leaves her (v. 18). As Jesus healed the demon-possessed people in Israel, so, through his servant, Paul, he casts out the demon from the slave girl in Philippi. As Jesus gave his apostles power over unclean spirits (Mk 6:7), so he endows Paul with the same authority (see Kistemaker 1990:593). The result is that the demon instantly leaves the girl. Her owners lose a valuable source of income and their fury brings unpleasant consequences for the missionaries (Acts 16:19-40).

Klauck (1994:99) sees in the episode a demonstration that Christians have other options than consulting fortune-tellers and pagan soothsayers who are clearly inferior. Luke also incriminates the exploitation of human beings like the poor slave girl through merciless owners only interested in their profit. In the story we also observe that, as in the case of Christ with evil spirits, the demonised girl correctly identifies the servants of the Most High God and their message of salvation. This correct identification of what is true by the demonised girl, as is common with most mediums, usually leads to more enslavement by Satanic forces. Such imitation of the truth by the mediums, who are basically agents of the kingdom of darkness, is aimed at drawing people away from God. In the Old Testament, consulting mediums or fortune-tellers was forbidden probably because their source of information was not God (Ex 22:18; Lv 20:6; Dt 18:10-13; cf. 2 Ki 21:6).

The deliverance of the slave girl leads Krodel (1986:308) to conclude that all healings performed in Jesus' name manifest not only his superior power but the all-encompassing purpose of God, articulated in the words of Isaiah by Jesus in his inaugural address and continued by his servants in his name: "to proclaim release to the captives" by word and deed and "to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Lk 4:18). The defeat of the evil powers is essential to the establishment of the rule of God and his Christ (Lk 11:20). Although Luke does not explicitly refer to either her conversation or her baptism, the fact that her deliver-

ance took place between the conversions of Lydia and the jailer may cause a reader to infer that she too became a member of the Philippian church (see Kistemaker 1990:593; Stott 1990:265).

3.5.7.6 THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICT IN EPHEBUS

Wendland (1999:203) writes that it would be no exaggeration to say that the leading city of Ephesus, as well as the surrounding areas of Asia Minor, was possessed by the powers at the time Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesian church. Multitudes were afflicted by powers that were perceived to be diabolical in action and intention. They therefore had to be continually placated, counteracted or combated by supernatural means, namely, through a diverse range of magical practices (see Keener 1993:378) and via various appeals to Artemis (or Diana, as the Romans called her). In Roman lore, Diana was a symbol of virginity. But in the ancient metropolis of Ephesus, Artemis symbolised sexual fertility (see Boice 1997:328; Arnold 1992a:25-26). Boice describes the idols that represent Diana that have been discovered recently, as showing a rather grotesque, multi-breasted female figure.

Thus, Ephesus was both a centre of the magical arts, a home for magicians, sorcerers and charlatans of all sorts (cf. Arnold 1992a:14), and it was also the base for the prestigious cult of Artemis, which was manifested in particular by a magnificent temple dedicated to her honour. According to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 36.96), the temple measured 220 x 425 feet (55.10 x 115m). The grandeur and beauty of the temple led Antipater (*Anth. Pal.* 9.58) to classify it as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Greek historian, Pausinias (*Descr.* 4.31.8) declared that the size of the temple surpassed all known buildings (cf. Arnold 1993:250). Keener (1993:379) also adds that, as often religious piety becomes a thin cloak for personal economic interests, it was so in the case of the temple of Artemis which served as a bank as well as a temple and people from all over the world deposited funds there (cf. Acts 19:23-41). It was widely recognised as a place of asylum and sanctuary (see Witherington 1998:587).

Insofar as the universality of the cult of Artemis is concerned, Demetrius attested to her greatness when he said, "All who worship her in Asia and the whole world

will suffer the loss of her magnificence” (Acts 19:27). Archeologists have found evidence that the goddess, Artemis, was worshipped in at least 33 places in the Mediterranean world (cf. Newman and Nida 1972:373; Keener 1993:380; Morgan 1946:358). Her worship was conducted by eunuch priests called *megabyzoi* (Strabo xiv. 1.23; cf. Wheaton 1962:311). The silversmiths who made small votary shrines, portraying the goddess in a recess with her lions in attendance, or possibly souvenir models of the temple, caused the riot when Paul was ministering there (Acts 19:23-25; 20:1). Keener (1993:380) even goes on to say that in antiquity, Artemis was said to have commanded followers in visions to spread her cult. All this serves to illustrate some unusual spiritual activity in the city of Ephesus during the days of Paul. Arnold (1992a:38) rightfully describes the significance of Ephesus as “a strategic centre for Asia Minor - commercially, economically, in communications, and not the least of all, in terms of its religious influence” (see also Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4.10).

What was occurring in Ephesus, namely, the fear-laden interaction between the unseen world of spirits and the practice of magic on the part of the masses was characteristic of what was happening throughout the Hellenistic world in which there was belief that the spirit world exercised influence over virtually every aspect of life (cf. Wendland 1999:204). The goal of the magician was to discern the helpful spirits from the harmful ones and learn the distinct operations and the relative strengths and authority of spirits. Through this knowledge, means could be constructed (with spoken or written formulas, amulets, etc.) for the manipulation of the spirits in the interests of the individual person (Arnold 1992a:18). The potentially helpful spirits were thus enlisted by means of magic, either directly or through certain ritual specialists (diviners, magicians, etc.) in the aid of otherwise defenceless folk to provide the power necessary to protect them against both the covert influence and then overt attacks of virulent counterparts, or demons, as well as their human manipulators, that is, sorcerers.

It is within this context that even the worship of Artemis and related deities, especially *Hekate*, the goddess of the Underworld, should be understood. Artemis was believed to possess supreme cosmic powers which enabled her to exercise absolute control over all demonic forces, including the malevolent spirits of the dead. Arnold (1992a:23) remarks that it is no wonder then that she was enthusi-

astically worshipped and invoked by many of those residing in Asia Minor and beyond who were plagued by the constant fear of some spirit-related attack. There was a close link between this allegiance to Artemis and the practice of magic since people assumed that “the might of Ephesian Artemis lay behind the ancient (apotropaic) formula, but, more than that, the power also of primitive magic and religion” (Arnold 1992a:23). Thus, in this syncretistic age, one mode of worship typically incorporated and complemented elements of another, with the appeal to Artemis for divine protection often appearing, for example, in some magical rite designed for the same purpose. This explains the connection that made Artemis also a prominent figure in the popular practice of astrology and angelology whereby believers attempted, through various ritualistic techniques, to alter their present undesirable state or a certain predicated fate by controlling the astral powers of the universe (Arnold 1992a:28; 1996:20-31; Pattemore 1994:119). This was also evident in the Hellenistic mystery religions (see Metzger 1983:66f; Green 1970:22f) in which adherents actively sought some manner of intimate mystical contact with the divine (cf. Wendland 1999:205).

This world that was obsessed with the mystical and/or spiritual power, helps us to comprehend better the message and ministry of Paul to the Ephesian community and other communities. Luke depicts Paul following his usual pattern in Acts, showing him initially spending his days in the city preaching about the kingdom of God in the synagogues of the Jews (Acts 19:8). For three months this strategy works, but then some of the Jews become stubborn and malign the Way before the crowds (v. 9), with the result that Paul is compelled to withdraw with his disciples. For the next two years he spends his time arguing daily in the hall of Tyrannus, “so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (v. 10).

It is at this point that Luke relates that God did extraordinary miracles through the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs and aprons were carried away from his body to the sick and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them (v. 11). Kistemaker (1990:685) observes an interesting parallel in Acts. He says that after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, God performed extraordinary miracles through the apostles (2:43; cf. 5:12). Before the Spirit came upon the Samaritans, God worked miraculous signs through Philip (8:6, 13).

When the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples in Ephesus, God made his power known through miracles effected by Paul. God had already given both Paul and Barnabas power to perform miraculous signs and wonders in Iconium during the first missionary journey (14:3). Another parallel pointed out by Kistemaker is that of Peter's shadow falling on the sick who were healed when he passed by (5:15); Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons cured the sick. Handkerchiefs (Latin *sudaria*) and aprons (Latin *semicinctia*) would be used by Paul in his trade as a leather-worker or tent-maker (see Williams 1964:221). Kistemaker (1990:685) says this refers to Paul's cloths that were used to remove perspiration and to protective coverings that likely were soiled and stained from daily use in the workshop. These items were taken to the sick who, upon touching them, would be healed; evil spirits would leave demon-possessed people. But Witherington (1998:579) is of the opinion that the image that is conjured up is that Paul's reputation as a miracle worker got around and people came to see him while he was at work, and upon their request he gave them items of his clothing, used in his trade.

Garret (1989a:91) notices that Luke's organisation of the narrative parallels his organisation of the story about Philip and Simon Magus: There, too, Luke depicted a missionary who, expelled by the Jews, initiates a highly successful ministry of preaching the word and healing. There, too, the picture of successful missionary activity serves as a foil for an ensuing portrayal of reprehensible deeds by a wonder-worker who is outside the Christian fold. Philip's healing actions and missionary message had been regarded by Luke as mutually reinforcing: release from the grip of unclean spirits and of paralysis and lameness had visibly enacted Philip's proclamation of the release brought by "the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus". So also now, Luke likely views Paul's remarkable healings in Ephesus as consistent with the message that he preaches, indeed as part and parcel of that message. In her view, Garret (1989a:91) says that in depicting Paul as bringing about the obedient departure of diseases and unclean spirits, Luke implies that the authority of the spirits' lord, Satan, who strives to keep the possessed and diseased under his control, has been eclipsed by the authority which is invested in Paul to heal and about which he speaks.

Evidently, Paul had used the name of Jesus in performing miracles of healing and of ridding people of evil spirits (see Newman and Nida 1972:367). Luke now tells of certain Jewish exorcists who seem to have looked upon the name of Jesus as another magic formula by which they could chase out evil spirits for profit (very similar to the understanding of Simon Magus in 8:19). This is another evidence that Jews and Jewish things played a prominent part in ancient magic; papyri reveal the use of magic of such Jewish names as Abraham, Saboath, Iao or Iabe (Yahweh), etc (see Bruce 1951:358). The name of Jesus was used by those who were not his disciples (cf. Mk 9:38; Lk 9:49f). The Paris magical papyrus 574 (lines 3018ff) contains, "I adjure you by Jesus the God of the Hebrews". Such use of the name of Jesus was later censured by the Rabbis (cf. Tosefta, *Hullin* ii.22f; TJ *Shabbath* xiv.4.14d).

As "success encourages imitation" (Witherington 1998:580), Luke relates that seven sons of a certain Sceva, a Jew and a chief priest (his identification is a much debated issue - see Bruce 1951:358; Newman and Nida 1972:366-367; Kistemaker 1990:688), tried to exorcise evil spirits by using an incantation that says, "I adjure you by the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out" (see Josephus *Ant.* 8.42-49). In depicting some of the Jewish exorcists as mentioning "the Jesus whom Paul preaches," Luke indicates that the exorcists were patterning their own actions after those of Paul (see Garret 1989a:92). Witherington (1998:580) says that this bears witness to the syncretistic environment that existed in Ephesus. One day, when the seven sons of Sceva tried their magical formula, the evil spirit responded as follows: "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" Luke's description of the evil spirit who talks through the mouth of the demon possessed person, parallels accounts in the synoptic gospels (cf. Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24; Lk 4:41). In these accounts, the demons acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. In Ephesus, the demon, hearing the formula spoken by the exorcists, responds with full knowledge: "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" (Acts 19:15; see Kistemaker 1990:689).

Realising that the Jewish exorcists had no power or authority, the demon vents his wrath on the seven sons of Sceva. The demonised man, given superhuman strength, leaps on the exorcists and subdues them. Luke describes the demoniac giving the exorcists such a beating that they narrowly escape from the house in

which they were. Luke tells us that they were so overpowered that they fled from that house naked and wounded (v. 16). Doubtless, Luke here engages “in the humorous and burlesque style” (Klauck 1994:100; see also Witherington 1998:581). The incident shows, on the one hand, the embarrassment and lack of authority of the Jewish exorcists and, on the other, the promotion of the cause of the gospel. In showing the failure of the exorcists or magicians (v. 16) and the success of Paul in driving out evil spirits (v. 11), Luke indicates that Paul, the humble leather-worker, has more power than the magicians (cf. Gen 41:8-25; Ex 7:11; see Keener 1993:379).

The consequences of this incident are far-reaching. Luke relates that “when this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour” (v. 17). According to Kistemaker (1990:689), through this incident, God confirms that he is in control of the situation. He thwarts Satan’s strategy of usurping Jesus’ power and thus displays his sovereign rule over the demonic forces even in the Gentile world. The result was that the name of the Lord Jesus became the topic of conversation both among Jews and Greeks in Ephesus. Lenski (1944:796) suggests that people asked themselves: “Paul used that name, and the demons were expelled; the exorcists used it, and were themselves crushed. What was back of that name?” Stott (1990:306) points out that, though there is power in the name of Jesus, that is, saving and healing power, as Luke is at pains to illustrate (e.g. Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10-12), its efficacy is not mechanical, nor can people use it second-hand. Garret (1989a:93) is of the opinion that what is important is not whether the exorcist “knows” the name of Jesus, but whether the demons “know” the exorcist as one who has truly been invested with authority to call upon that holy name. Such authority had been bestowed by Jesus upon his disciples during his earthly ministry (Lk 10:17-19; cf. Mk 16:17-18). On reflecting on the incident, Luke shows that the incident had a wholesome effect in that, when this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were “all” (stressing the all-encompassing nature of the incident - see Kistemaker 1990:690) terrified and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour.

The power encounter of Jesus with the kingdom of Satan was not yet complete. After healing and exorcism, came deliverance from occult practices (v. 18-19).

Luke describes how the power of the gospel arrested the widespread influence of magic in Ephesus. The city was a centre of magic arts, as archeological discoveries confirm (see Wendland 1999:203; Arnold 1992a:38; Klauck 1994:100). The general practice of magic was so pervasive that even Christians were not immune (cf. Kistemaker 1990:690). Luke refers to Christians who had come to faith in Christ but who continued to practise the magic arts. Having heard about the incident involving the sons of Sceva, these believers realised that such magic practices were “deviant and inconsistent with the Christian faith” (Aune 1986:216). Luke tells that the erring Christians confessed and reported that they were practising magic. They realised that their behaviour was unbecoming to a Christian lifestyle and that they had to repent of their evil deeds. Kistemaker (1990:690) describes them as believers who were still practising divination and sorcery, interpreting signs and omens, engaging in black magic, casting charms, or consulting the dead - things that they were told that long ago God had forbidden these detestable practices (Dt 18:10-14).

Upon hearing the embarrassment and defeat of the sons of Sceva by a demoniac, these believers repented and turned from their evil deeds. We are told that those who practised magic brought their valuable books (see Newman and Nida 1972:369) to be burned on a bonfire. Luke’s term “books” or “scrolls” probably refers to magical papyri which were rolled up in small cylinders or lockets used as amulets around the neck (see Keener 1993:379). Some of these documents containing magical incantations were known as *Ephesia grammata* (Ephesian letters or writings).

The Ephesian believers who were obviously convicted by the word of God and his almighty acts, showed their repentance by bringing their books or magical papyri to be burned, something which was common in antiquity as a demonstration of the repudiation of the books’ contents (see Keener 1993:379). Books that were considered as dangerous or subversive, were burned. For example, Augustus is said to have collected whatever Greek or Latin prophetic writings in circulation that were anonymous or written by those of low repute, and burned them (*Augustus* 31). Livy speaks of the burning of books in the sight of the people that were subversive of true and authorised religion (Livy 40.29.3-14; cf. Jer 36:20-27; 1 *Macc.* 1:56). Witherington (1998:582), however, shows us that

unlike other books or documents that were seized and burned in antiquity, the owners in the Lucan narrative are voluntarily burning their own books. In view of the fact that Luke stresses the worth of books, it is clear that their act was of spiritual significance. Instead of realising the monetary value of their magic spells by selling them, the willingness on the part of the believers to throw them on a bonfire “was a signal of genuineness of their conversion” (Stott 1990:307). Witherington (1998:583) writes: “These actions of public renunciation are seen as clearing a path for the gospel, or can be said to be the proper negative response to pagan religion by those who had turned to the Christian faith.”

It is clear from the spiritual conflict in Ephesus that Luke viewed magic, divination, sorcery and other occultic practices as altogether Satanic and evil. The pericope reveals that he would not tolerate even the briefest continuation of magical or Satanic practices by the Ephesians after their profession of belief. The connection of verse 20 with the whole incident shows that the purgation of magic in the midst of God’s people led to the word of God spreading and prevailing mightily. The obstacle of the practice of magic in Ephesus, which led to trafficking in evil spirits and its concomitant loyalty to Satan, had been overcome. Consequently, the word of God grew, showing its superior power over the kingdom of the forces of evil (see Garret 1989a:96-99; Witherington 1998:583). The picture given by Luke here is that of a shrinking dominion of the devil as the word of God “grew”.

3.5.7.7 CONCLUSIONS

The examples of power encounter that we have listed from Luke-Acts, namely, the Baalzebul controversy, Simon Magus, Elymas (Bar-Jesus), the anonymous Philippian slave-girl and the spiritual conflict in Ephesus, serve to illustrate Luke’s belief in the sufficiency of the gospel of Christ for people who profess the Christian faith. In these episodes, Luke seems to be challenging the split-level faith of the early believing community. Luke wholeheartedly condemns dependence on occultic practices like magic, divination, sorcery, astrology, etc. for believers. Luke appears aware of the contamination of the faith of the young believers in the world where magic and other occultic practices prevailed. He also uses instances of confrontation with magic and evil spirits to show that the demise of

Satan has come and the kingdom of God in Christ inaugurated. By defeating the magicians and winning away their adherents, who include the Samaritans, Sergius Paulus and the residents of Ephesus, Christian missionaries demonstrate that their authority surpasses that of Satan. Another interesting observation is the interrelatedness between the occult and economics. In one way or another, money plays a role in the actions and reactions, especially among those benefiting from occultic or magical practices. The fear of loss of income was paramount in their minds. In the defeat of the magicians or occult practitioners, Luke also shows how the message and ministry of Christian missionaries challenged the ungodly, demonic, long-established, religio-economical and social ways and structures in which people in the first-century Mediterranean world found themselves. Instead of living in fear of spirits and fate, thus exposing themselves to be victims and captives of magical agents, the people could get hope in the proclamation of the liberating message of Christian preachers. What is also obvious in the incidents discussed above, is that Luke points beyond the visible human arena to the invisible spiritual one, where the Holy Spirit repeatedly meets the spirits of the devil and defeats him. Luke's anti-magic apology is discernible in his insistence that it is ultimately God who is active in all the miraculous ministry of Jesus and his disciples. Even the demons testify to the difference between Christian miracle workers and magicians, acknowledging the right of Christians to use the name of Jesus but denying the right of magicians to do likewise (Acts 19:15).

3.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have sketched through the theology and special interests of the author of Luke-Acts, showing his emphasis on, inter alia, the marginalised in society and women, and how Jesus responded to their needs. Of special interest again is the author's focus on the role of the Holy Spirit and prayer in the life of Jesus and in the church's mission of proclaiming God's dynamic rule over all the forces of the enemy. In his two-volume work, like other evangelists and other New Testament writings, Luke seems to show no doubt in believing that the invisible world (with its human agents) impacted on the visible world. In his writings, Luke acknowledges the existence of the devil, spirits and the use of magic as part of apotropaic measures that people used against the forces of evil. What we also notice in Luke's writings is that Christ has power and authority over the

forces of the enemy and in turn he has delegated this authority to his followers. Their authority is a gift from Jesus (Lk 10:19) and, ultimately, from God (Acts 8:20).

In the next chapter, our focus turns to the belief in spirits in Africa, which generally shares some commonalities with the first-century Mediterranean communities, especially as exemplified by the Lucan audience.

CHAPTER 4

THE AFRICAN SPIRIT WORLD

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the subject of the African spirit world is something that has been either neglected or overlooked by traditional Christian theology. Anderson (1991:25) feels that this is a subject to which Christian theology must relate for a more effective witness in Africa. Bediako (1995:97) apportions blame on African theology which he thinks has done a marvellous function in stressing the centrality and uniqueness of God in African tradition but unfortunately has left the wider spirit world of African primal religions - divinities, ancestors, natural forces - unaccounted for. This vacuum that has been left by traditional (western) Christian theology, or African theology according to Bediako, has resulted in tremendous theological and spiritual implications for Christians in Africa. Generally, the dilemma for African Christians is whether to follow the God of the Bible who, in a unique way, revealed himself in Jesus Christ or to continue to simultaneously be attached to traditional medicine - or spirit-specialists.

The African spirit world, which is an important and indispensable dimension of the African religious reality, and which is akin in various ways to that of the New Testament times (see Malina *et al* 1996:14; Mugambi 1989:56f; Pomerville 1985:77; Ukpong 1995:13), offers a serious challenge to Christian theology if the church hopes to present the whole counsel of God in Africa in a meaningful and impactful way. Such an investigation will go a long way towards giving the church in Africa a much-needed, long-awaited and hard-fought for, African identity. Already some African scholars (and others associated with church ministry in Africa) have identified this lacuna and have documented valuable contributions towards addressing this need and in this study we will make use of their findings (e.g. see Ukpong 1995:13; 1999a:283; 2000:3f).

2 TERMINOLOGY: “AFRICAN?”

As we intend dealing with the African spirit world, it is significant for us to point out right from the onset problems surrounding the term “African”. To speak of ‘African culture’ or ‘religion’ or a characteristically African society is to make a huge generalisation, because Africa includes so many diverse peoples from so many various backgrounds. Any generalisation is bound to be an oversimplification (see Kaphagawani and Malherbe 1998:210). If we make any claims about ‘African’ beliefs or religions or customs or knowledge, then those claims should, strictly speaking, be equally applicable to a community of the Bedouin tribe in the Sahara, to the Masaai people in East Africa, to the business people in Accra, to the Khoisan people of the Kalahari, to the Ethiopian shepherds, to the African people living in the exclusive northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Pobe (1979:18) is quick to point out that *homo Africanus* is a multiheaded hydra, in much the same as *homo sapiens* is a multiheaded hydra.

It is a fact that cannot be denied that Africa has a plethora of cultures. Even within one country there may be remarkable differences based on tribal background. Geographically, Africa is a very heterogeneous continent (see Mugambi 1995:153; Kudadjie 2002:62). It strides across the Equator and the two tropics, with both the northern and southern tips touching the temperate zones. Politically and historically, during the scramble for Africa by western nations, Africa was colonised by different nations with the resultant diverse western languages imposed on various parts of the continent. Even the acquiring of liberation was achieved at different periods with South Africa getting its freedom last of them all.

It is also to be acknowledged that all the major missionary religions have made an impact on the continent with varying degrees and intensity (see Kanyandago 2002:18; Kudadjie 2002:62). Christianity and Islam have had the most influence on the continent, although the other oriental religious beliefs are increasingly making inroads on the continent as well. In all of this, the African cultural and religious heritage is the foundation upon which all invading religious traditions are superimposed. Although, according to Barret (1982), the African Traditional Religion is statistically the smallest group (than Christianity and Islam), its influence is very

strong, and quite evident in the daily lives of the people, whether they be traditionalists, Christians, Muslims or people of other faiths.

Realising such diversity and the problematic use of the term “African”, some scholars have tended to go for the context or culture-specific route which is intended not to try to come up with views which are supposed to apply to all groups on the continent, but rather to describe and discuss the views of specific cultural groups (see Teffo and Roux 1998:136); because the problem is further compounded by migrations caused by urbanisation, famine and wars and by the very fact that, like any society, the African society is a living, dynamic society (cf. Kudadjie 2002:63). Oduyoye (1986:52) feels that for theology in Africa to be authentic and relevant, it must reflect a particular context. She further maintains that a monolithic construction of African theology would be unrealistic, given the variety in the continent of historical experience, political systems (traditional and colonial), economic systems and the impact of primal religions.

Having raised these reservations about the generalisation of the term “African”, we nevertheless utilise it here, bearing in mind that it may be misleading and dangerous. If it is used, we need to become aware that a great deal of descriptive work needs to be done. In our case, when we talk about the African spirit world, we believe that we are outlining and discussing views which are alive in a fairly large part of Africa and which can serve as representative of religious beliefs in Africa. Moreover, in all this debate about ‘African’, one would maintain that there is a sense in which an African is distinguishable from the Asian or European or the American. There is a certain Africanness about the culture and religious beliefs and practices that can be recognisable and discernible in large parts of Africa. In spite of the diversity of cultures, there is ample evidence of sufficient recurrent themes and patterns common to indigenous African societies. Such common features warrant the usage of the talk ‘African’, though bearing in mind variations that may exist on any particular theme or pattern. Though the diversity in Africa makes our task difficult, it does not mean that such an enterprise cannot be undertaken, albeit with limitations, of course.

4.3

KEY ELEMENTS IN THE AFRICAN SPIRIT WORLD

4.3.1

VITAL FORCE

In history and anthropology, there have been various attempts to depict African cosmology with one term (cf. Theron 1996:2). It is usually described in terms of power or force. The general anthropological term used for this impersonal force, is *mana*, which is a Melanesian word, and was a concept introduced and described by R.H. Codrington in his book, *The Melanesians* (1891). Robert Marett introduced this term into anthropology, and developed theories about it (cf. Van Rheenen 1991:19; Smith 1936:30).

In religio-cultural terms, the person who propounded the idea of vital force was Tempels (1959) who said that there is a radical conceptual difference between Africans and non-Africans on the essential nature of beings and entities in general, and human beings in particular. Africans, according to Tempels, conceive of entities or beings as nothing more than essential energies or vital forces. For Tempels (1959:51), Westerners hold a static conception of 'being' while Africans believe in a dynamic one. This is echoed by Mbiti (1969:203) when he states, "[for Africans] the universe is not static or 'dead'; it is a dynamic, 'living' and powerful universe" (see also Taylor 2001:44-51). Gehman (1989:67) confirms this by saying that this belief "in mystical power filling the universe is common throughout Africa". Ukpong (1995:9) explains a basic feature of the African worldview in the belief in the divine origin of the universe and the interconnectedness between God, humanity and the cosmos. In this belief, according to Ukpong, the entire universe is seen as participating in the one life of God and there is supposed to exist a network of relationships between God, humanity and the cosmos with the human being at the centre such that actions of human beings affect not only their relationship with one another but also with God and nature (cf. Anyanwu 1981:90-92). This life or force manifests itself in people, animals and things (cf. Theron 1996:2). Consequently, reality in Africa is viewed in unitive terms and not dualistically whereby it is composed of matter and spirit, profane and sacred, secular or religious, etc. (see Ukpong 1995:8). Rather, reality is seen as a unity with two aspects that are visible and invisible dimensions in which

human persons, dead or alive, inhabit the same world (see Ikenga-Metuh 1981:52; Liehart 1961:28; Steyne 1996:60-61).

The vital force or dynamism or energy can be explained as the practice and/or belief in hidden, mysterious, supersensible, pervading energy; powers, potencies and forces (cf. Imasogie 1983:54; Van Rheenen 1991:208). This power is accessible to those whose consciousness has been expanded through training or occultic powers. Such people are not only able to become aware of this dimension of the universe, but they can also use it for their needs to help or harm others. Therefore, many practices and rituals exist to control and to increase this power. Access to this power is hierarchical in the sense that God has the most and absolute control over it, the spirits and the living-dead have portions of it; and “some human beings know how to tap, manipulate and use some of it” (Mbiti 1969:203).

Because this cosmic power is understood to be limited, there is competition between living beings to get more of this power (see Theron 1996:2). If one person in the community rises above the other, it is traditionally understood that this happens at the expense of somebody else. The belief is that that person is using some ritual, medicine or magic in order to get more power, and this entails that power is taken from somebody else. This is illustrated in the case of someone killing somebody and then mutilating them for the reason of having more power. In *isiZulu*, it is called *ukuthwala* (simply strengthening oneself) in order to be more powerful than other people. Based on the knowledge among Africans that the vital force can be tapped, used and manipulated, it is therefore natural that people would believe and practise magic which can either be good or evil (Mbiti 1969:199; see also Holland 2001:132). Evil magic involves the belief and practice of tapping and using this power to do harm to human beings or their property. In such situations witchcraft and sorcery become operational. This, naturally, includes other related practices. However, we also need to point out that belief in evil magic is based on, or derives from fear, suspicion, jealousies, ignorance or false accusations. People fear to leave around their hair, nails, clothes and other articles with which they normally are in direct contact with, in case their ‘enemies’ will use them and work evil magic against them (see Mbiti 1969:200).

On the other hand, the use of good magic is accepted and esteemed by society (cf. Mbiti 1969:198). It is mainly the specialists, and particularly the traditional diviner-healers and rainmakers who use their knowledge and manipulation of the mystical power for the welfare of their community. It is used in the treatment of diseases, in counteracting misfortunes and in warding off or diluting or destroying the evil power of witchcraft. The traditional healers, diviners and herbalists provide amounts of mystical power to people in the form of charms, amulets, powder, rags, feathers, figures, special incantations, cuttings and incisions on the body. All these are used to protect homesteads, families, fields, cattle and other property (see Mbiti 1969:198). Babies, for instance, are made to wear amuletic coils round the neck, wrist or waist in order to protect them from evil magic (see Knappert 1995:25). From time to time, these amuletic objects meant to protect families and property are renewed because of the belief that after some time they lose their effectiveness. Apart from traditional specialists, in some areas in Africa, we also find some African Independent (Initiated) Churches who specialise in dealing with this power. Some members of these churches are told by their prophets and prophetesses (see Van Rheen 1991:152; Mbiti 1969:199) to wear ropes around their waist both for healing and as an apotropaic measure. In this, we see in some way that even church-going people in Africa are not untouched by the belief in the vital force or power.

Nature, human beings and the supernatural form a cosmic unity, a total community in which all are involved reciprocally (Theron 1996:3). As already indicated, these aspects of the cosmos are organised in a hierarchy of powers, which influence each other. In most of the African cultures, the Supreme Being as maker and creator is placed at the top of this hierarchy. Beneath are the lesser divinities, spirits and ancestors. Human beings and nature are next in this order. This structure is also seen in the strong emphasis on age and seniority. In this cosmic unity comprising the visible and invisible dimensions, the balance and harmony between all these aspects and powers must be maintained. If this harmony, balance or rhythm of life is disturbed in various ways through magic, witchcraft, disrespect, or transgression of the taboos and rules of society, diviners are consulted to investigate the cause of the breakdown. To restore the balance of relationships, diviners would recommend the appropriate remedy, whether it be the offering of sacrifice to the offended spirits, the imposition of punishment to guilty individuals,

or otherwise (see Khathide 1999a:72-73; Mulago 1991:120-121; Theron 1996:4-6). The idea of reconciliation, that is, to restore harmony or to bring balance or equilibrium back to a person's experience of his or her world, is of paramount importance in the African's religio-cultural reality (see Steyne 1996:135; Awolawu 1979:137; Tippett 1972:138-139).

2 THE SUPREME BEING

Parrinder (1976:39) correctly points out that

From the earlier view that African religion was crudely fetishistic, with an idea of God where it existed being an importation, informed opinion has now swung round to the conviction that most, if not all, African people have had a Supreme Being as an integral part of their worldview and practised religion.

There appears to be a convergence of thought in as far as this position is concerned. Idowu (1973:135) states that the Supreme Being is "one ultimate" of African religion. Tempels (1959:20) maintains that the African people have been having the most pure form of the concept of God, the Supreme Being and Creator. In his contribution to the subject, Mbiti (1970) shows how in Africa, behind simple expression of belief, there often lives a profound faith in God as Father, Creator and Maker (cf. Mutwa 1998:560-565).

As if he were going against a stream, Nyirongo (1997:11), among very few others, criticises theologians who claim that the Africans worshipped the true God before they came into contact with the gospel. Nyirongo's argument is based on the premise that the Africans' knowledge about God is not founded on what God has decreed as being the right way to seek and know him. In opposing this standpoint, Burnett (1988:37) says that it is worth noting that the peoples of Africa believed in a Supreme Creator-God long before the arrival of Christian missionaries. Mbiti (1970:80) goes further to say that the concept of God or Supreme Being in Africa shows similar characteristics as those of the Christian God (see also Khathide 1999a:73).

African theologians have been keen to show the relationship between the concept of God in pre-Christian African religions and the Christian God. Bediako (1995:97) believes that this must be reckoned an important achievement by African theology as it is also validated by the fact that in virtually every Christian community in Africa, the Christian name for God is usually a divine name hallowed in the pre-Christian religious tradition for the Supreme God. Missionaries and Bible translators in Africa used the traditional African concepts and the names of God as means of transmitting the gospel of Christ to Africa (cf. Turaki 1999:162; Tutu 1978:366; Setiloane 1978:402; Sawyerr 1968; Dickson 1979).

In traditional Africa, the Supreme Being or God is known by many names. To illustrate this continuity of God between the pre-Christian era and the period of Christian missionaries, almost all the names of God are used by both Christians and traditional religionists (see Oleka 1998:75-76). Most of the names of God are descriptive of his nature and attributes. For instance, the general name for God among the Yoruba is *Olorun* meaning “owner of the sky.” He is believed as the creator of all things, the almighty, and all-knowing, the giver of life and breath and the final judge of humankind (Parrinder 1962:34). One of the Yoruba names for God is *Orise* which means “the source-being which gives origin to all being” or “the source of all beings” (Idowu in Oleka 1998:75). Among the Igbo, he is called *Chukwu*, which is a combination of two Igbo words: “Chi”, meaning God, and “ukwu”, meaning “great, lofty and immense.” The Ngombe of the Congo know him as *Akongo*, the creator of the universe, the moulder of human beings like a potter. He is called beginner and unending, almighty and inexplicable, who is closely related to each individual as a guardian spirit, giving good fortune or bad, easily approachable, though he has no temples or idols (see Parrinder 1962:34-36). Among the Akan of Ghana, *Odomankoma* is a name for God that means “creator” (Oleka 1998:76; cf. Onyinah 2002:41; Burnett 1988:36). The Baganda (of Uganda) call him *Katonda*, which refers to creator, protector and helper of the helpless. To the Kikuyu of Kenya, God is *Mulungu*, who lives on four sacred mountains, and is all pervading and invisible. He is known as “the possessor of whiteness” and One who demonstrates his power in the sun, moon, stars, storm and rain, and rainbow.

In Southern Africa, God, as Supreme Being, is often understood monistically, like in other parts of Africa, as “the source and mover of all the powers, from whom life-force flows through the spirits to the people, animals and plants” (Crafford 1996:13). God’s existence makes the whole of existing reality a field of force, a sacred environment which may not be drastically altered (see Mugambi 1989:56f; Khathide 1999a:72). Some of the names for God among Southern African peoples are *Xikwembu* (Tsonga), *Mwari* (Shona see also Moyo 1987:13), *Modimo* (Sotho-Tswana - see Setiloane 1976; Oosthuizen 1977:267), *Mudzimu* (Venda). In isiXhosa, the traditional name *uQamatha*, gives way to the Khoi-Khoi name *uThixo*, which has found complete acceptance among those who speak isiXhosa in the eastern Cape. The Zulu names for God include *uMvelinqangi* (the first one), *uNkulunkulu* (the Great great one), *uMdali* (the creator), *Simakade* (the long-lived one), *uMenzi* (maker; see Ndwandwe 2000:186; Krige 1950:280; Callaway 1970:1f; Hofmeyr and Pillay 1994:xx).

All these names for God that were used before the pre-Christian era have found usage in Christian communities as well. This shows continuity in the African religious thought. It also proves that Africans had the concept of God long before missionaries came to the continent.

Turaki (1999:145f) is of the view that, because of the abundant presence of the awareness that the Supreme Being exists in traditional religious thought in Africa, it is not necessary to overstate this fact again, or to prove God’s existence to Africans. The existence of God is common knowledge to most Africans, if not all. Turaki’s concern, though, is that we only need to ask what the content of this concept or the awareness of the existence of God is. In response to this challenge, Bosch (1973:68) agrees that Yahwe or Elohim is the same as *uNkulunkulu* or *Modimo* and, at the same time, he is not the same. For Bosch, *uNkulunkulu* is the “meeting place” between Yahwe and the Zulu people (amaZulu). *UNkulunkulu* is the “picture of Yahwe” and he is the place where Yahwe becomes relevant to them in their traditional existence. Bosch maintains that in *uNkulunkulu*, God, through Christ, enters into the world of the Zulu. In support of Bosch, it is to be accepted that the Yahwe of Israel or the God of the Bible has a connecting link with the concepts of God in Africa (cf. Ps 19:1 - 4; Rm 1:19-20) and that in and through Jesus Christ, he is calling us to a unique relationship

with him. Though the concepts and names of God in Africa might be deemed inadequate to fully reveal the God of the Bible, it is to be acknowledged that not only the missionaries and Bible translators found their usage helpful in transmitting the message of Christ, but also, in a positive sense, it shows that biblical and Christian theological ideas can be adequately presented through the vehicle of traditional languages. Furthermore, biblical and Christian theological concepts and ideas can be transmitted in the vehicle of a religious framework which is common to both Christianity and the traditional religions. This makes dialogue between Christianity and African traditional religions possible. Isizoh (2001), Sanneh (1989), Walls (1996), Bediako (1995), among others, have all stressed the significance of this commonality and continuity.

Though there is a general consensus about the awareness of the existence of God in Africa, the issue of how he relates to humankind and creation still vexes and stretches theological minds. There is a school of thought that believes that God, though good, is not meddlesome, nor does he interfere; he does not concern himself with other people's business (see Sawyerr 1970:9; Onyinah 2002:42; Idowu 1973:153; cf. Bosch 1973:74). The overriding concept of the transcendence of God usually means that most of the time the Supreme Being is remote from the everyday affairs of the people (cf. Zinzindohoue 2001:137; Anderson 1991:14). It is for this reason that some writers speak of the Supreme Being as *deus otiosus* - a withdrawn, uninvolved divinity which is not directly concerned with everyday life. Yet others will also refer to God or Supreme Being as *deus absconditus* - the concealed, remote God who is approached mainly through mediators or prayer (cf. Crafford 1996:13; Burnett 1988:37).

Another school of thought believes that God is immanent in the traditional African religious thought. Mbiti (1970:12) writes that many foreign authors harp on the note that for African peoples, God is "too remote" and virtually excluded from human affairs. Mbiti rejects this as false. He illustrates this by saying that for the Akan people, God is seen "as being in and beyond the past" (Mbiti 1970:12; cf. *contra*. Onyinah 2002:42). Mbiti (1970:14-15) believes that from all the appellations and sayings about God, it emerges clearly that God as spirit has no limit and transcends all boundaries. For Mbiti, God is omnipresent and there is no vacuum of existence which he does not fill up; he is or has the most abundant

reality of being, lacking no completeness and possessing all fullness of being (ibid).

And yet another school of thought maintains that the traditional African views of God reveal a certain ambivalence: the Supreme Being is at the same time very far away (transcendent) and very near (immanent; see Anderson 1991:13; Taylor 2001:84; McVeigh 1974:128). Seoka (1997:4), in support of this position, says that God in Africa is believed to be a “living power, ‘Wholly Other’ and infinitely greater than him/herself (or any other creation), a Power mysterious, *mysterium tremendum et fascimans* because though unseen, yet it is present and an urgent reality.” Furthermore, Seoka states that to an African, this Power mysterious was and is and shall always be present. This Power mysterious invokes that which is divine in human beings and seeks to reconcile the fallen nature and brings it back into a living self and everything around it. According to Seoka (1997:10), in spite of the conception of God as transcendent, Africans believe in the possibility of a real relationship with God who has revealed himself through natural objects and phenomena, and also storytelling and objects. Although Seoka’s position is closer to what most Africans believe about God’s relation to human beings, in my opinion at least, he still suffers from what many African theologians have been criticised for, that is, using western philosophical and theological categories to define and interpret traditional concepts of God. This is what Ela (1986:122; cf. 125) refers to when he says the “traits by which African identity is defined belong to a western conceptual heritage” (see also Turaki 1999:161).

In summary, undoubtedly there is evidence of the belief in the Supreme Being in Africa. Although there are divergent views as to how he relates to his creation and human beings, a position that appears to capture the Africans’ understanding of God, albeit broadly, is that God is “indeed a transcendent Being who is at the same time immanent” (Moyo 1987:14). In Africa, the Supreme Being is understood to be the source of all life and being. There may be some other spiritual beings associated with the deity but the same cannot be confused with him. He is acknowledged, among other functions, as creator, sustainer, guardian and judge. It is also accepted that God is spirit, sovereign and above all. Perhaps the view of God’s understanding by Africans is well summarised by Pataki’s statement:

To Africans, God is the Supreme Power, and the whole of African belief is deeply entrenched in Him. The concept of God, therefore, is widely known and enjoys full support from Africans. God is referred to as the Creator and Father-of-all-creation, including both man and the heavenly bodies, the oceans and the sky. He is strongly perceived as more than just a parent or guardian. He represents life, hope, love, courage and eternity (in Madiba 1996:271).

4.3.3 SPIRITS

4.3.3.1 THE ORIGIN OF SPIRITS

Africans do not believe only in the Supreme Being but also in divinities and spirits. For example, Awolalu (1979:20) writes that the Yoruba “hold the belief that as the Supreme Being created heaven and earth and all the inhabitants, so did He bring into being the divinities and spirits ... to serve his theocratic world” (see also Alupona 1991:27).

Insofar as the origin of spirits is concerned, there is no agreement among scholars. Idowu (1973:169) argues that divinities are derivatives from Deity, spirits who have no beginning and probably no ending. According to Idowu, Orisa-nla (arch-divinity among the Yoruba), is definitely a derivation partaking of the very nature and metaphysical attributes of Olodumare (see also Idowu 1962). Farrow (1969:34) points to diverse origins of spirits: “Some of them, according to mythology of the country, were always spirits, of divine origin, existing prior to all creation; others are deified men; others again are the spirits of animals, trees, rocks, etc.” On the contrary, Fadipe (1970:262) denies the concept of divine derivation among the Yoruba, saying that, “All the Orisa of Yorubaland are generally acknowledged to be in every case traceable to a human being”. As for Mbiti (1969:79), there is no clear information what African peoples say or think about the origin of spirits because, according to him, some spirits are considered to have been created as a ‘race’ by themselves. These, like other living creatures, have continued to reproduce themselves and add to their numbers. This makes Mbiti conclude that most peoples in Africa seem to believe that the spirits

are what remains of the human beings when they die physically. Mugambi (1989:64) cautions, though, that we need to differentiate between spirits that were once human (ancestral spirits) and those that were never human. Yet Mugambi does not tell anything about the origin of the spirits that were never human.

Yet another view on the origin of spirits is represented by Parrinder (1949:26) who says, “Any of the divinities worshipped in West Africa seem to have come from the personification of natural forces, since all the universe is thought to be peopled with spirits. Others are deified ancestors. Some have a double quality, both human and divine combined.” All these divergent opinions about the origin of spirits are indicative, to a large extent confirming what Mbiti (1969:79) says that generally there is no clear information what African peoples say or think about the origin of spirits. There is a general consensus though about the ancestral spirits as those of people who have once lived.

4.3.3.2 DIFFERENT TYPES OF SPIRITS

Beliefs about the numbers, names and orders of spirits vary among different African peoples (Olowola 1993:33). According to Mbiti (1969:78), “myriads of spirits are reported from every African people, but they defy description almost as much as they defy the scientist’s test tubes in the laboratory”. If we pursue the hierarchical consideration that includes divinities, Mbiti is of the opinion that the spirits are the ‘common spiritual’ beings beneath the status of divinities, and above the status of human beings. They are the ‘common populace’ of spiritual beings.

Except for the ancestral spirits that form the bulk of the populace of spiritual beings (cf. Anderson 1991:76), there is another significant category of spirits that is generally referred to as ‘nature spirits’. There are various theories as to the actual identity of the ‘nature spirits’. Willoughby (1932:1) sees ‘nature spirits’ as being ancestors who were buried in or near that particular natural phenomenon, and who, with the passing time, had ‘degenerated’ to being identified with that phenomenon. Idowu (1973:174-175) also supports the theory that the ‘nature spirits’ were once human (see Mugambi 1989:79). But another school of thought holds that ‘nature spirits’ were never human (see Mugambi 1989:64). Though

'nature spirits' do not feature prominently in Southern African peoples (see Krige 1950; Schapera 1953; Mönnig 1967; Hunter 1979), in other parts of Africa, however, their existence and role are abundant (see Willoughby 1932:1-118; Anderson 1991:75; Wiredu 1998:190; Parrinder 1976:50).

In the category of 'nature spirits', there is often an overlooked dimension and that is the role of female divinities or spirits. Jell-Bahlsen (2000:38) attributes this neglect to the suppression of the colonial administrators and the religious fanatics from various churches. This has led to the concentration on the conservative male aspects of custom, at the expense of the dynamic, innovative and creative female side of custom (see also Jell-Bahlsen 1998a). To fill in the lacuna, Jell-Bahlsen (2000:38f) then presents a case study of the water goddess, Uhammiri/Ogbuide, the spirit woman of the Ugwatu/Oguta Lake and the role she plays in the lives of the rural Oru Igbo. Uhammiri's husband is the river god, Urashi. The divine pair harbours cosmic balance, creation and procreation. Some of the functions of Uhammiri are that she presides over the crossroads of life, death and rebirth. She also compensates for losses and disappointment. Her priests and priestesses often are renowned leaders of various illnesses (see Jell-Bahlsen 2000:39).

In the Zulu tradition, God was understood in relation to the actions of uNomkhubulwana, the daughter (*inkosazana*) of uNkulunkulu (God). UNomkhubulwana was believed to have come out on the same day that a human being came out of the earth (see Ndwandwe 2000:189; Krige 1950:282-283). She was regarded as the mouth of God or a type of earth mother associated with agriculture, spring rain and fertility (Thorpe 1991:37). In times of drought or floods or when worms had eaten mealies, uNomkhubulwana was asked for rain (see Berglund 1976:64). According to Mbiti's (1969:78) report, uNomkhubulwana was said to be the 'Queen (Princess) of heaven' of great beauty. The rainbow, mist and rain were emanations of her glory, and she was surrounded by light. She was believed to be a virgin, and taught women how to make beer, among other useful arts. UNomkhubulwana presided over the growth of the corn and some of the Zulu people in spring time would hold dances on the hills in honour of her (see Krige 1950:283).

Insofar as the female side of the universe in Igbo cosmology is concerned, Achebe (1986) says that among the many deities of the Igbo pantheon of gods and goddesses, the supreme mother goddess known as Uhammiri/Ogbuide in Ugwuta and the mother earth goddess Ani/Ala are the most prominent, ever-present spirits in Ugwuta and its environs. Achebe (1986:20-25) further explains that as divine mother, the water goddess is imperial in challenging or confirming a person's destiny. She is not only present but also pivotal for one's entry into and exit from this world. The divine woman is believed to be an eternal, intrinsic and dominant force of human nature, existence, life course and destiny (cf. Jell-Bahlsen 2000:45).

As touching the unique case of the Rain Queen of the Lobedu people of South Africa, Knappert (1995:205) is of the opinion, and correctly so, that we must distinguish between these Lobedu rain queens who are a succession of female rulers named Modjadji and the great goddess whose incarnations on earth these queens are. It is this connection between the human and the mythological that makes the incredible reputation of the Rain Queen a religious phenomenon. The Lobedu people believe that they were protected by their Goddess of Rain against the invasions of the Zulu hordes of the early nineteenth century, since just the mention of her name struck terror in the hearts of her people's enemies who, when they approached her kingdom, would be struck by magic and die of unknown causes. She could send drought and even swarms of locusts to her enemies. Among the people of Lesotho, Mantsopa was believed to possess some of these extraordinary powers (see Hodgson 2003:210).

The belief in the female deities does not appear to be a modern phenomenon, though. De Villiers (2002) makes an interesting inquiry into the *Queen of Heaven* in Jeremiah 7:17-18 and 44:15-24. De Villiers (2002:620) observes that the *Queen of Heaven*, as mentioned in Jeremiah, is not an insignificant goddess, because the whole catastrophe of the exile is attributed to the worship of her. Before the exile, Yahweh, who claims to be the true God of Judah, is concerned about this worship. In Jeremiah 7, Yahweh forbids his prophet, Jeremiah, to carry out the duties of his office: he may no longer pray for, nor intercede on behalf of the people. Yahweh is angry because the *Queen of heaven* is worshipped and not he. In reading Jeremiah 44, we discover that Yahweh has carried out his punishment on Judah. By this time, some people had gone into exile and some

had fled to Egypt, and Jerusalem was in ruins. In spite of the judgement of God's wrath, evidence shows that the refugees from Judea, who fled to Egypt, continued to worship the *Queen of heaven* (Jr 44:17). A papyrus dating from the 5th century B.C., found at Hermopolis in Egypt, mentions the *Queen of Heaven* among the gods honoured by the Jewish community living there (see also Vriezen 1998:31-58). The story of the *Queen of Heaven* serves to illustrate that the female side of custom or religion is an old and enduring one despite various attempts to suppress it (see Jell-Bahlsen 2000:38; de Villiers 2002:626; Olupona 2000:xviii).

Another type of spirits that require mentioning are the anthropomorphous spirits, often visible to some people, which are ogre-like little creatures, often with sexual connotations (Anderson 1991:77; Knappert 1995:241-242). The best known in Southern Africa is *uTikoloshe* or *Hili*. *UTikoloshe* can look like a human child for it possesses magic powers and is very vicious. *Tikoloshes* are believed to be agents of witchcraft and are said to be as sexy as satyrs and reportedly mating with females. Obviously *uTikoloshe* is understood in male terms (cf. Rheeders 1998:37-38) whose victims are mainly women and children. The origin of these spirits is not speculated on, they are simply believed to exist (Anderson 1991:77). A discussion on the understanding of spirits in Africa will be incomplete if something is not said about evil spirits, to which we now turn.

4.3.3.3 EVIL SPIRITS

Anderson (1991:77) correctly observes that one of the functions of a diviner is to determine the identity of, and exorcise 'evil spirits'. It is to be noted that in traditional Africa, ancestors are never referred to, nor considered, as evil spirits.

In nearly all African societies, it is thought that the spirits are either the "origin of evil or agents of evil" (Mbiti 1969:204). In various churches in Africa, prayers for deliverance from 'harmful' spirits are sought and offered (see Laurent 2001:333). In those churches, the idea of demons or devil is tied up with the concept of bad spirits (Kiogora 1993:54). Evil spirits are believed to cause various maladies and madness (Mbiti 1969:204). If a person, who is sick or suffering, has exhausted the remedies and diagnostics available at the hospital, and

after the family has concluded that the evil in question does not come from a medically related cause, the solution suggested is for the afflicted person, often together with his/her family, to consult a diviner as to what the matter is and why the sickness or affliction persists (see Knappert 1995:228; Mary 2001:318). The belief is that if something or sickness is beyond medical expertise, it has spiritual causes that are ascribed to evil spirits or *izinto zabantu* (human-induced spiritual activities; cf. Pobe 1979:100; Umeagudosu 1992:22).

The working of (evil) spirits is also seen when it comes to magic and/or witchcraft. For example, telekinesis is, for the African spirit-expert, the removal of an object by a spirit-master without touching it. A spirit-master simply commands his/her servile spirit, invisible for other spectators, to move it for him/her. In South Africa, especially among African communities, some families complain that objects are moved in front of their eyes without any visible hand moving them. People attribute such activities to the work of evil spirits, who often are controlled by sorcerers and witches.

There is also a belief that some people fly, being carried by the spirits they command (see Knappert 1995:228; Parrinder 1963:145). Those who do not fly (at times like fire balls) are believed to ride on animals, especially on owls, antelopes and leopards, all nocturnal creatures. In Southern Africa, the baboon is also said to fall into this category. It is obvious, therefore, that in African cultural and religious belief, there is this close connection between spirits and some animals. Spirits can hear, see, speak and appear in dreams to people, in human form or disguised as animals (Knappert 1995:228; cf. Kiogora 1993:54; Holland 2001:9; Rheeders 1998:37). Among the Nguni people especially in the eastern Cape, the *impundulu* is probably the most feared familiar. He is a lightning bird, associated with thunder and lightning, causing death to people and beasts, and failing crops. He is blamed when lightning strikes, and is thought to suck blood from his victims, causing illness in the chest area. Still among the Nguni people, there is *isithunzela* which is supposedly a corpse dug from its grave and controlled by witches to do evil deeds. These 'zombies' are also used to cultivate the land of the witches, saving them from performing this heavy task (see Rheeders 1998:38).

Daneel (1971:134) also writes about *ngozi* (avenging) spirits among the Southern Shona of Zimbabwe (cf. Anderson 1991:78). Daneel says that the “avenging spirit is never a member of the afflicted person’s patrilineage”. However, *ngozi* spirits may be understood as evil because they are “the most formidable, dangerous, and therefore the most feared ... but this does not imply moral wickedness” (ibid). Daneel (1971:133) explains the avenging spirit as “of an aggrieved person that comes back after his death to demand justice and retribution for the unrepaired wrongs that were done to him during life”. In the case of an aggrieved member of a family becoming an avenging spirit after death, the senior members of that family know what ceremony to conduct in order to appease the dissatisfied spirit (see Mbiti 1969:84). Among the Zulu people (amaZulu), a wandering spirit is called home through a special ceremony called *ukubuyisa* (see Ndwandwe 2000:207; Lamla 1981:16-17).

4.3.4 ANCESTORS

4.3.4.1 ANCESTORS: THE REALITY

A belief in ancestral spirits seems to be the most prominent feature in the African traditional religion because it always resurfaces in one way or another (see Krüger, Lubbe & Steyn 2002:34; Zulu 1998:182; Clark 2001:182). This indicates the significance that ancestral belief plays in the African worldview. But Steadman and Palmer (1994:177) contend that even in societies where the dead are not consciously and explicitly worshipped, there is reference and dealing with ghosts, shades, souls, totemic plants, or cults of the dead. Hammond-Tooke (1981:23) explains the difference between cults of the dead and ancestral religion/worship in this manner: “Cults of the dead, then, do not typically involve the idea that the dead support and assist the living: rather it is the living that are concerned with the well-being of their dead. It is a one-way traffic - whereas the relationship of living and dead in ancestor worship is two-way”. Hammond-Tooke illustrates this in the African context by referring to the Dahomeans of West Africa who clearly distinguish between the dead, *chio*, and the ancestors, *tovodu*. The Dahomeans have complex ceremonies to transform some of the dead into ancestors. Hammond-Tooke further advances his argument by mentioning the ancient Greeks who had elaborate cults concerning belief in ghosts and shades,

and he also mentions the Jews who commemorate the dead by name at their New Year and Day of Atonement (cf. Le Roux 1999:249). These rites, Hammond-Tooke (1981:23) contends, do in no way constitute an ancestor cult. Though this subject is attractive and worthy of a proper inquiry, it is beyond the parameters of the topic at hand.

In Africa, as ancestral belief is a living tradition among many tribes, it is not surprising that most Africans have been exposed to the issue of ancestors whether directly within their own families or indirectly from their neighbourhood (see Zulu 1998:182). To a large extent, it is something whereof almost every African is conscious, even if they may not be directly involved therein (see Turaki 1999:34; Zahan 2000:10). In his poem entitled, *Breath*, Birago Diop attempts to capture this dimension of the African religious reality by these words:

Those who are dead have never gone away,
They are at the breast of the wife;
They are in the child's cry of dismay
And the firebrand bursting into life.
The dead are not under the ground.
They are in the fire that burns low;
They are in the grass with tears to shed,
In the rock where whining winds blow.
They are in the forest, they are in the homestead.
The dead are never dead.
(in Sonyika 1975:44-46).

Because of this awareness in the African's mind, ancestors are called "the living dead" (Mbiti 1969:83; see also Mitchel 1977; Gehman 999; Triebel 2002:188). The interaction between the living and the dead is made possible "because the world of the ancestors is ontologically both analogous and contiguous to that of mortals, that is, there is no difference in kind between worlds" (Teffo and Roux 1998:141). Again, according to the African spirituality, every person is a nexus of interacting forces so that he or she is capable of communicating and interacting vertically - with God, and deities, ancestors, and other spiritual forces including

mystical powers and horizontally - with fellow human beings (see Danfulani 1992:48).

As Africans are generally community-oriented people, it is understandable that the relationship between the living and the dead is appreciated and, if at all possible, maintained. It is therefore not surprising that the ancestors influence the thinking, the life and the behaviour of the living. On the other hand, the ancestors also depend on the living in a sense that only if they are remembered, only if attention is paid to them through veneration and the offering of sacrifices will they exist as ancestors (see Triebel 2002:189). This mutual interdependence serves to indicate, among other things, that in Africa the individual cannot live in isolation and apart from fellow human beings because life is understood in communal terms (see Maimela 1985:66). It is against this backdrop in African spirituality that ancestors are incorporated into a very sensitive network of relationships because they are not 'dead' but 'living' and this is based on the perception that says that life cannot be terminated even by death itself (see Mbiti 1969:108; Triebel 2002:188).

4.3.4.2 ANCESTORS: DESCRIPTION AND IDENTIFICATION

In Africa, human ageing is a biophysical phenomenon but it confers also on the individual a new status (see Beller 2001:21). When a person grows in age, he or she as an elder, comes closer to the ancestors and after death will pass either to linear or cyclic time. In the linear model, the ancestor is supposed to have an existence for a period, but he or she does not return to have further human existence. The cyclic model assumes the possibility of a reincarnation of the ancestor in the form of a newborn child (see Burnett 1988:62-64). Although Beller (2001:21) emphasises that people in death pass from the linear to the cyclic time, which is the case in the ancestral beliefs of some African tribes like the Ga people of Ghana and the Nilotic peoples of Eastern Africa, such as the Maasai or Karimojong (see Burnett 1988:63), in Southern Africa, the tendency is that ancestors pass to linear time. The reincarnation of the ancestors in newborn babies is foreign to most of the peoples of Southern Africa (see Lamla 1981f; Hammond-Tooke 1981:22f; Callaway 1970:127;228; Krige 1950;159f).

In terms of the Southern African context, Zulu (1998:183) describes ancestors as those who have died but continue to exist in the land of the dead (cf. Beller 2001:21). But death alone is not a sufficient condition for the dead person to be given the title of being an ancestor (Hammond-Tooke 1981:24; Zulu 1998:183). Zahan (2000:11) says “the notion of ancestor implies the idea of selection”.

People who die a premature death cannot be categorised as ancestors (Imasogie 1983:57). Instead, they are people who must have ‘died well’, that is, dying a ‘natural’ death, full of years, after having delivered one’s message to one’s own, and to have had a funeral and burial (Kabasélé 1991:118). An ancestor is someone who “has reached a great age and who, during his lifetime, has acquired a vast experience of life, human beings and things” (Zahan 2000:11). In Africa, a person who ‘died well’ is a person who was not killed by lightning, did not drown or commit suicide, was not killed by accident or some ‘ill-reputed’ disease such as leprosy, smallpox, etc. (Kalu 2000:57; Zahan 2000:11). Should death come before the allotted time, according to Imasogie (1983:57), the person’s soul lingers around as a ghost for some time until the life-span originally given him or her is completed (cf. Nyirongo 1997:80; Burnett 1988:58).

The ancestor is expected to must have lived a morally worthy life (see Lumbala 1998:111). They must have ‘lived well’ (Kabasele 1991:118), that is, have led a virtuous life (cf. Kalu 2000:57). They must have observed the laws - have incurred the guilt neither of theft nor a dissolute life (cf. Triebel 2002:188). Again, the ancestors must not have been wrathful persons or quarrelsome ones, or have dabbled in sorcery or witchcraft (see Kabasélé 1991:118; cf. Nyirongo 1997:79).

As ancestral belief is based on the notion of family as best characterised by the famous sentence of Mbiti (1969:108): “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am”, the ancestors, for them to be regarded as such, must have left descendants on earth because if one has had no progeny, there will be no role to play like that of mediation (between God and human beings). Zahan (2000:11) explains that “only he who is an organic member of the family, of the lineage, or of the tribe to which he belongs can be an ancestor”. This automatically excludes slaves or outsiders, who, even if integrated into a social unit, can never attain the status of ancestor (cf. Triebel 2002:188; Kabasélé 1991:118).

It is to be noted that in ancestral belief there is no gender differentiation; both males and females could be ancestors (Kalu 2000:57). According to Zulu (1998:184), the matrilineal families tend to have more female ancestors, while patrilineal families tend to have more male ancestors.

As we have in some way established the identity of who ancestors are, we can now deal with how they communicate with the living, their role and also important aspects of veneration and worship.

4.3.4.3 COMMUNICATION AND MANIFESTATION

In Africa, the relationship between the living and the living-dead is a dynamic one. It is accepted that the ancestors are still in some way part of the community of the living and thus they are correctly called the living-dead (Mbiti 1969:25; Gehman 1999). In describing this relationship between the living and the living-dead, Triebel (2002:188) says, “They are dead, they died and were buried, they are physically dead, but nevertheless they are still related to the living and they still influence the lives of the living”.

The inter-dependence and mutual relationship of the living people and the ancestors show itself in various ways. For example, the living communicate with the dead by regular ritual sacrifice and invocation, the priest or officiant at which is the family head, or the senior group representative where ancestors of alrger groups are being addressed (see Kiernan 1995:22; Callaway 1970:171f). In return, the ancestors reveal themselves through dreams by stating their names or through calamity, sickness, barrenness or bad luck, to mention a few (Zulu 1998:184; see also Berglund 1976:197; Callaway 1970:228). Though not all dreams are believed to have been sent by ancestors (see Anderson 1991:80), “dreams sent by the ancestral spirits can always be recognised, for they mostly come with a message from the dead” (Krige 1950:287). If the living fail to understand the message of the ancestors, they employ the services of a diviner or *isangoma* who, as a link between the ancestors and the living (or between the spirit world and the physical world) is able to interpret the message of the ancestors for the living (see Ndwandwe 2000:215).

Ancestors may manifest themselves as animals; the appearance of a harmless snake is commonly interpreted as a propitious symbol of good fortune (see Nyirongo 1997:83; Kiernan 1995:23). Among the amaZulu, when an *idlozi* or *ithongo* wishes to revisit the world of the living, he/she does so in the form of a snake. There are certain distinct and well-known kinds of snakes that are definitely regarded as spirits or spirit-snakes (see Kige 1950:285f).

Owing to the inter-dependence and mutual relationship between ancestors and the living, it is therefore of significance that harmony and cooperation exist between them. If the relationship between the ancestors and the living falters, it needs to be restored or healed through an appeasement ceremony that usually involves a ritual sacrifice.

4.3.4.4 THE ROLE OF THE ANCESTORS

In Africa, the family and the community are not limited to those presently alive: they include members of the past and also future members (see Kalilombe 1994:126). The death of the individual is seen, in a sense, as “a social elevation” (Mbiti 1969:81) because death in the African’s mind does not represent the end of human existence, but rather a change in status (Zahan 2000:10). In fact, the death of the individual is perceived as the necessary condition for becoming an ancestor (see Beller 2001:22).

Having passed through death, the ancestors, having become prominent members of the invisible world, are believed to share in mystical powers not ordinarily available to those presently alive. The general belief is that the ancestors are nearer to God. Those that are departed of up to five generations, who are still within a Sasa period (see Mbiti 1969:83), are believed to be still around and are part of the families and the community. They understand fully what is going on and they share in the preoccupations and projects of the living members, and are intimately interested in what is going on (Kalilombe 1994:126).

The *amadlozi* or *badimo* play the function of ensuring good ordering of social relationships among the biologically living and the fertility and well-being of human beings, their crops and stocks (Setiloane 1976:65; cf. Awolalu 1979:61).

Based on the notion that the ancestors are in a special position, that is, near to God and that they have mystical power, they are taken as natural guardians of their relatives on earth and can act as mediators with God (see Mbiti 1969:83; Setiloane 1976:43; Kalilombe 1994:126; Skhakhane 1995:109). The living expect help of the departed in their fight against the evil forces that pervade the world and threaten them at every turn (Ndwandwe 2000:209; cf. McVeigh 1974:29; Hexham 1987:22-23).

As guardians of law and order, the ancestors act as representatives of ethical values, traditions and activities (see Triebel 2002:189). This flows from the understanding that ancestors have established the norms for the good life and serve as the protectors of tribal morality (McVeigh 1974:7). Offence in the ethical and moral values by the living is ultimately offence against the ancestors who, in that capacity, “act as the invisible police of the families and communities” (Mbiti 1969:83; cf. Zahan 2000:11; Ray 1976:146; Zvarevashe 1987:245).

Setiloane (1976:65) correctly summarises the role of the ancestors as basically parental - protective, corrective and aimed at the welfare of the family and the whole group (cf. Zulu 1998:184-188).

4.3.4.5 ANCESTORS AS MEDIATORS

The special role of the ancestors is generally considered as that of being intermediaries between God (the Supreme Being) and the human being or between the spirit world and the world of the living. Mbiti (1969:83) describes the ancestors as “the closest links that men have with the spirit world”. For Mbiti, the living dead are bilingual: they speak the language of human beings with whom they lived until ‘recently’; and they speak the language of the spirits and of God, to whom they are drawing nearer, ontologically. Having passed through death, the ancestors are considered nearer to God, the invisible *par excellence*, with whom they are able to communicate and to whom they can more effectively present the needs of those alive (see Kalilombe 1994:126; Mbiti 1969:83; Ndwandwe 2000:210). Because of their closeness to God, the Source, the ancestors are believed to know the living relatives more intimately (Kabasélé 1991:124). Though the ideal of mediation is crucial to the understanding of the role of ancestors, it is

something that is still imperfectly developed in African religious thought (see Vilakazi 1965:89).

4.3.4.6 VENERATION AND WORSHIP

The relation of the living people to their living dead has been described by scholars in various ways. Nyirongo (1997:87) explains the relationship between the living and their dead as “demonic illusions” because, according to him, it is impossible for the living to commune with the dead. He goes so far as to say that it is the demons which masquerade as ancestors. On the other hand, Mulago (1991:130) argues that, “From the viewpoint of Christian faith, we can see absolutely nothing at odds in principle with the practice of making ancestors and other dead person’s beings the object of veneration, or even of a religious cult, provided that this does not exclude the worship due to the Supreme Being”. For Tlhagale (2001:45), believers need to understand that, “Faith in God as the all-powerful father, as the all-merciful mother, as creator and foundation of all being, has dethroned the ancestors from the human-made pedestal”. This, in short, serves as an illustration of the divergent representative opinions of how scholars, African and otherwise, view the relations between the living and the dead.

But still, the fundamental question remains as to whether the relationship between the living and the dead is that of veneration or worship. Some scholars think that it is more of veneration than worship (see Anderson 1991:81; Krüger *et al* 2002:34; Zulu 1998:185). In his inquiry into the religious system in the Oruano Movement among the Herero people of Namibia, Pollitzer (1984:127) has found that the issue at stake in the movement is not worship but veneration because “the ancestors are not gods and they never become gods”. His argument is that there is no evidence of an apotheosis of the ancestors because their state is merely a prolongation of their life on earth, with certain powers and prerogatives added. Among the amaZulu, the ancestors are considered as mediators (between the Supreme Being - uNkulunkulu or uMvelinqangi) and nothing more. The ancestors are not called ‘*onkulunkulu bethu*’ (‘our gods’ - see Ndwandwe 2000:264). Fasholé-Luke (1974:211) prefers the term ‘veneration’ than ‘worship’ because African people, according to him, make a distinction between the worship they offer the Supreme Being [God] and the ‘worship’ they offer the ancestors.

Bediako (1995:224) thinks that the distinction made by Fasholé-Luke is an important one, although it does not get us out of the fundamental problem. Pöllitzer (1984:126-127) believes that the issue of veneration and/or worship has to do with terminology. He thinks that the issue of ancestor veneration has been irrevocably and wrongly prejudged and put into the category of religion by western missionaries, theologians and ethnologists. He maintains that it makes far more sense to interpret ancestor veneration in social, than religious, categories.

In this viewpoint, Pöllitzer is not alone. Sharing in this school of thought are other notable theologians in the African continent. The Nigerian theologian, Idowu (1973:186), states: “Certainly, the cults of the ancestors do not constitute African traditional religion; and it is a gross error to equate them with religion ... Thus the cults are a means of communion and communication between those who are living on earth and those who have gone to live in the spirit world of the ancestors”. Ela (1987:33) indicates that the offerings for the ancestors are “signs of respect”, “symbols of the continuity of family”, and “simply a command of the love of children” towards parents. In Ela’s opinion, these offerings are “only an ‘anthropological’ reality” and not related to religion at all (cf. Ma 2002:203; Triebel 2002:192).

Though this viewpoint of seeing the ancestor veneration (worship) as a social rather than a religious phenomenon is a valid attempt in resolving this matter, it still leaves us with some puzzles. Triebel (2002:192) says that, although we are encouraged not to talk about ancestor worship, this view does not take into account the fear of the ancestors that is part of the ancestor cult. Triebel (2002:193) argues that, “if one interprets African religion as theistic, centred on the belief in the one God, one cannot accept that the ancestors have their own independent religious function” (cf. Sauma 2002:325). Moreover, this view appears to be influenced by a western anthropological perspective in which reality is divided into different categories (e.g. social and religious). In Africa, such a dichotomous or even trichotomous approach to reality is foreign because all of life is believed to be a unit (see Oduyoye 1979:11; Khathide 1999a:2). Again, other African theologians (e.g. Mbiti 1969:83; Bediako 1995:223f) do not seem to share the position that the ancestor practices is more of a social phenomenon than a religious one.

Although most Africans prefer the usage of “veneration”, to “worship”, when it comes to ancestral belief, there are still practices that may tilt the argument to worship, itself; for example, the building of altars (see Zahan 2000:13) upon which sacrifices are offered to the ancestors. At such a ritual ceremony, there can be no doubt that the ancestors are invoked; they are the addressees of these prayers and the invocation of God is missing (see Triebel 2002:193). In the opinion of Balz (1995:8), it is the attitude of the venerating (or worshipping?) persons that count the most. They feel that they know that they themselves depend on the ancestors, who are the guarantors of life. Another intriguing aspect in those involved in the ritual sacrifice is their tendency to say that they are praying to God and their ancestors (*Modimo le badimo* - cf. Setiloane 1967:65, 71; Pöllitzer 1984:126). In that sense, ancestors appear to attain a new status, that of being equated to the Supreme Being. It is for this reason that many missionaries in the past and in the present have regarded ancestor veneration as the centre of African traditional religion and as something opposed to the worship of the true God. They condemned it as an offence against the first commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me.”

Some African scholars and churches have responded in various ways in trying to resolve the ancestor debacle. For instance, at the Church of the Province in Kenya in *A Kenya Service of Holy Communion*, the ancestors are mentioned in the liturgy:

Gracious Father we heartily thank you for our faithful ancestors and all who have passed through death to the new life of joy in our heavenly home. We pray that surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, we may walk in their footsteps and be fully united with them in your everlasting kingdom.

It is clear that the tendency in some churches is to incorporate the ancestral belief in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints (see Fasholé-Luke 1974:214; Bediako 1995:223-230; *Indulgentiarum Doctrina II.4*). Others, like Kato (1975:36f), do not consider positively the role played by the ancestors in the pre-Christian background of Africans (see also Nyirongo 1997:87). Triebel (2002:195-196)

proposes that the celebration of Holy Communion may include traditional rites of ancestor veneration. He says such a decision and specifics must be worked out by African theologians and churches, themselves. According to Mbiti (1991:130), there is a difference between veneration and worship. He says that naming the dead in prayers and performing rituals show respect for the living-dead but “this does not and cannot mean that they are worshipped” (ibid 130).

4.3.4.7 CONCLUSIONS

Within the African traditional religious framework, the ancestors were never considered as evil spirits. Though dead, they were believed to be living in the spirit world performing such roles as mediators between the Supreme Being and the living because they were believed to be closer to him by virtue of their state (of death). As death was taken as passage into another form of life, actually a prolongation of life on earth rather than termination thereof, the ancestors played basically a parental role of protection, provision and correcting aimed at the welfare of the whole group. African theologians and churches are still struggling how to respond appropriately and biblically to the issue of ancestral practices, especially among Christians. It is clear, however, from the views we have surveyed, that ancestors by virtue of their status of not being ‘gods’, have never been and cannot be, worshipped or given the same status as God or the Supreme Being.

4.3.5. SORCERY AND WITCHCRAFT

4.3.5.1 BROAD DEFINITIONS

While the role of the ancestors is understood to be at most punitive, their intervention is admonitory rather than vindictive (Kiernan 1995:23). It is taken for granted that they always act in a socially supportive role. But, in the words of Kiernan, “the same cannot be said of another kind of human mystical agency, witches and sorcerers, who also are given prominence in the explanation of misfortune” (ibid; cf. Shorter 1998:67). Magesa (1997:179) maintains that, “In African Religion, an understanding of witchcraft is central to understanding wrongdoing as evil”. Bosch (1987:41) adds: “The witch ... in traditional African society is the author of evil *par excellence*”.

In answering what witchcraft exactly is, many scholars distinguish between witchcraft and sorcery (e.g. Evans-Pritchard 1958:9-11; Parrinder 1970:133-137; Shorter 1985:99-100). According to Lagerwerf (1985:5), the main difference between a sorcerer and a witch is that the former achieves his evil end by magic, whereas the latter, often a woman, achieves hers by mystical power inherent in her personality - a power that does not require the help of magic (see also Bosch 1986:45). Sorcerers are individuals who deliberately employ magic against other people by means of *umuthi*, *dithhare* (“medicines”), incantations or spells. It is a technique which people can acquire and then practise. Witchcraft, on the other hand, is considered as an inherited capacity for causing evil to others, a mystical and innate power and a kind of supernatural quality, of which the witch may not even be aware (cf. Magesa 1997:179-181; Hammond-Tooke 1998:7). A witch (Swahili *muroji*; seSotho-Tswana *moloji*; isiZulu *umthakathi*) can be an old woman who, by her mere presence, makes a child ill. She does not do anything, though she may be accused of casting the evil eye on the child, supposedly because she is jealous, not having any surviving children of her own (see Knappert 1995:257; Bosch 1987:4). It is for this reason that some young children are found with amuletic gadgets around their wrists or necks. This is an illustration of positive or good magic.

Though anthropologists and sociologists may seek to distinguish between sorcery and witchcraft, African societies do not often draw such an academic distinction between witchcraft, sorcery, evil magic, evil eye and other ways of employing mystical power to do harm to someone or their belongings. They are all categorised as “enemies of life” (see Magesa 1997:161f). The belief in some scholars is that witches and sorcerers are influenced by evil spirits in their wicked deeds (see Parrinder 1970:138; Bourdillon 2000:176; Boakye-Sarpong & Osei-Kwedie 1989:8-9; Nyirongo 1997:186-188). In that sense, they fall under one category.

As witchcraft is a universal phenomenon, it is of importance that we establish its meaning, especially in reference to early modern Europe, because that is where it possibly made its impact felt. Bosch (1987:41) is of the opinion that understanding European witchcraft is vital because it has had some influence on the way scholars, both western and African, have interpreted African witchcraft (cf.

Parrinder 1970). When early modern Europeans used the word “witchcraft”, they would refer, for example, to the practice of harmful, black, or maleficent magic or the performance of harmful deeds by means of some sort of extraordinary, mysterious, occult, preternatural or supernatural power (cf. Levack 1995:4). This type of magic would include the killing of a person by piercing a doll made in that person’s image, inflicting sickness on a child by reciting a spell, bringing down hail on crops by burning enchanted substances, starting a fire by leaving a hexed sword in a room, and causing impotence in a bridegroom by tying knots in a piece of leather and leaving it in his proximity. These acts were usually referred to in Latin as *maleficia*. The agents of *maleficia* who were called *malefici* or *maleficae* were believed to have owed their powers to having made a pact with the devil (see Parrinder 1970:60f; Bosch 1987:41). These witches were supposedly holding secret meetings known as covens, sabbaths or synagogues, at which they adored the devil and practised infanticide and cannibalism. Several papal bulls from the late Middle Ages reveal that the Catholic Church had completely accepted the existence of witchcraft as believed by the masses. This led to the persecution of witches throughout Europe. Similarly in South Africa, especially in Limpopo (Northern Province), people suspected of witchcraft have been executed by members of the community, in most cases even without a formal trial (see Ralushai *et al* 1986; Teffo & Roux 1998:43; cf. Bourdillon 2000:176).

Although beliefs comparable with those of European witchcraft have been known in many parts of the world, it is in Africa that the study of witchcraft has gained particular interest because of its religio-cultural impact on societies. In Africa, witchcraft, as a term, used more popularly and broadly, would describe all sorts of evil employment by individuals who have access to mystical power and whose activities are performed in a secret function to harm other people and their belongings (see Mbiti 1969:202; cf. Parrinder 1970:138; Knappert 1995:275; Maghbouleh 1981:22). According to Mbiti (1969:202), “in a non-scientific environment belief of this type cannot be ‘clean’ from fear, falsehood, exaggeration, suspicion, fiction and irrationality”. This belief is found in every African village and it affects everyone. It is part of the religious corpus of beliefs.

4.3.5.2 THE REALITY OF WITCHCRAFT

Idowu (1973:175) states that, “In Africa it is idle to begin with the question whether witches exist or not ... To Africans ... witchcraft is an urgent reality”. Berglund (1976:269) cautions that, “A denial of the presence of sorcery and witchcraft is a denial of the existence of activities of evil”.

Despite all the efforts of missionary activity in Africa, sorcery and witchcraft are a reality in the lives of many people including Christians. Lagerwerf (1987:1) laments the fact that the churches did not always seem to take their members’ fears of witchcraft, seriously. Even discussing matters relating to witchcraft, was impossible as it was not encouraged. In many cases, experiences with witchcraft and also interaction with other spirit beings were swept under the carpet and continued to exist away from the eyes of the missionaries. Bosch (1987:42) attributes the theological inadequacy of missionaries to the fact that they were children of the Enlightenment and tended to deny the existence of the supernatural forces located in human beings as well as the reality of spirits in general and the “living-dead” in particular (cf. Silvosio 1994:103; Lagerwerf 1987:14). Owing to this inability of the gospel of the missionaries to engage the spirit world, many devoted Christians in sub-Saharan Africa were left with little or no choice but to cling to traditional religious ways to ward off evil spirits and attacks of witchcraft. Imasogie (1983:23) says that, because of the inadequate western presentation of the gospel in the African context, “In times of existential crisis many respectable African Christians revert to traditional religious practices as the means for meeting their spiritual needs”.

Another reason why witchcraft was not taken seriously by missionaries or by Westerners, in general, is because witchcraft, magic, sorcery and other such phenomena are normally not considered as objects of scientific study because they are not based on empirical observation (see Teffo & Roux 1998:143). Indeed, by scientific criteria, these powers are rejected as unreal and belief in them is generally classified as irrational, if not outright unintelligible. It could also be that the denial of the existence of witchcraft is the barbaric way in which witches have been hunted down and executed mercilessly (Bosch 1987:41; Teffo & Roux 1998:143; Parrinder 1970:17f). The early modern churches in Europe and some

communities in Africa have been rigorously involved in trying to eliminate witches in their midst (see Parrinder 1970:35; Teffo & Roux 1998:143; Levack 1995).

To Westerners, in general, and missionaries, in particular, it seemed self-evident that the belief in witchcraft or sorcery was something 'traditional' that would automatically disappear with modernisation. But this way of thinking is not compatible with the actual development in Africa today. Throughout the continent, discourses on sorcery or witchcraft are intertwined, often in quite surprising ways, with modern changes (Geshiere 1997:2; cf. Lagerwerf 1987:1). Because of the strong belief in the existence and reality of witchcraft, Africans employ mystical power for curative, protective, productive and preventative purposes. They wear, carry or keep charms, amulets and a variety of objects on their bodies, in their possessions, homesteads and fields (see Mbiti 1969:203). In some homes, both in the rural and urban black South Africa, one may even find a symbol of the cross made out of medicinal concoction at the top of each door which is meant to ward off spirits of evil and other attacks of witchcraft.

The argument that says that witchcraft is illusionary does not hold water in the African context. In the African continent, witchcraft is believed to be real and to overlook this fact is to fail to "scratch where it itches" (Kraft 1979:150) in the lives of people. This is exactly what the oversight of the missionaries was, who were influenced by the Enlightenment-rooted presuppositions and whose worldview had its axiom as, "If you can't prove its existence scientifically, it does not exist". In the western worldview, most people act as if the spirit world and thus witchcraft, does not exist, although they may pay lip service thereto (see Kraft 1989:88; Khathide 1999a:64; Jacobs 1992:147).

The fact that witchcraft, magic and similar phenomena cannot be considered as objects of scientific study, owing to the fact that they are not based on empirical observation (see Teffo & Roux 1998:143), cannot simply lead to the denial of the existence. To such a negative attitude, Dominique (2000:31) retorts by saying, "A merely scientific explanation of the phenomenon does not get to the heart of the matter", and he goes on to say that, "Witchcraft beliefs cannot be explained fully by one science alone since they fulfil various functions in the life of the traditional society" (ibid:32). In order to prove the reality of witchcraft, some

researchers like Willis *et al* (1999) have made it their responsibility to show how witchcraft has impacted the Zambian communities and villages. Within the African epistemological framework, the existence of witchcraft is never called into question. It is therefore clear that witchcraft as a phenomenon is still a factor to be reckoned with in Africa (Ralushai *et al* 1996:59). It is part of the religious corpus of belief (Mbiti 1969:202).

4.3.5.3 WITCHCRAFT - A UNIVERSAL PHENOMENON

Teffo and Roux (1998:143) contend that the paranormal activities of witchcraft are not just an African peculiarity because the history of every human society shows evidence of such beliefs and practices although in Africa they have been more pronounced than in other communities elsewhere in the world. Several authors have shown clearly that witchcraft is not just a unique African experience but that it occurred and still occurs in highly industrialised regions like Europe and America (see e.g. Levack 1995; Parrinder 1970; Taussig 1980; Barstow 1994). To illustrate the universality of the phenomenon of witchcraft, Maghbouleh (1981:122-133) makes a survey of the belief in witchcraft among the Hindu, the Buddhists, the Chinese, the Jews and even among the Christians (see also Burnett 1988:133). Although witchcraft is a universal phenomenon, it should be acknowledged that the fear and hate of witches have been more common in Africa than other regions of the world.

4.3.5.4 THE SOCIAL ROLE OF WITCHCRAFT

According to Bourdillon (2000:187), one of the social functions of belief in witchcraft is social control and the preservation of order. As part of the process of socialisation, adults tell children not to behave in certain ways for fear of being attacked by a witch, or for fear of appearing to be a witch. In Bosch's (1987:43) view, witchcraft fulfils an important social role in that it provides a channel through which people can deal with hatred, hostility, frustration, jealousy and guilt. Singleton (1980:14-15) believes that the witch epitomises the exact opposite of what a given culture considers normal and normative. Another aspect that Singleton (1980:31) mentions about witchcraft is that even though beliefs in witchcraft prevent progress, it is only a certain progress they prevent, namely, the progress

of the few privileged ones at the expense of the majority. Thomas and Luneau (1975:87-90) mention, among other social functions of witchcraft, the promotion of homogeneity in society in the sense that everyone who deviates from traditional patterns of life and behaviour will more easily become suspect of witchcraft. They also state that witchcraft serves to justify the socially unacceptable, yet necessary social developments such as formation of new sub-clans. Division and separation are of themselves unacceptable, so accusations of witchcraft provide the necessary opportunity for them to happen and to be sanctioned (Dominique 2000:32). Similarly, accusations of witchcraft justify people in breaking off social relations that have become intolerably strained (see Bourdillon 2000:188).

Bosch (1987:44) sees witchcraft as functioning as an arm of law and politics (cf. Bourdillon 2000:188), and as a stimulus to economic distribution (cf. Singleton 1980:31). It also serves as an outlet for anxiety and as a means for making the dark unknown manageable (see Adeney 1974:385). Perhaps the most single socio-spiritual function of witchcraft is that it plays an integrative function in that it prevents the formation of severe neuroses in both individuals and communities (see Bosch 1987:44). It helps people in Africa deal with the mystery of evil (cf. Dominique 2000:32). Magesa (1997:179) describes "Witchcraft as the human embodiment of evil". The witch, as it were, according to Shorter (1998:67), takes the place of the devil. In Africa, witchcraft is considered as anti-social and as something that systematically contradicts all the values of society. Witchcraft, therefore, is something that cannot be placated; it is something to be eradicated at all cost.

In the African context, whatever the 'rational' explanations that the sophisticated may find for witchcraft, we cannot remove the fact that such beliefs express a very real human experience of the dreadful mystery of evil present and active in their midst in a very real way (cf. Dominique 2000:34; Beattie 1963:53). However, it is also undeniable that witchcraft accusations tend to proliferate in situations of social instability and change. In technologically advanced societies, instances of witchcraft may be secretly acknowledged because it becomes too scandalous to discuss such matters in public and such talks are discouraged as barbaric and primitive.

4.3.5.5 THE NATURE AND ACTIVITIES OF WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft can manifest itself in various ways and at different levels of human existence. For example, its destructive effect can show itself at personal, physical, familial, social and cosmic level (see Dominique 2000:33-34).

Among the AmaZulu, while ordinary illnesses and those of old age are accepted, other disruptive forces are viewed as evil and have to be explained before a remedy can be sought (see Thorpe 1991:45). It is believed that the two major causes of (abnormal) illnesses can be either the ancestors' punishment for some breach of duty by an offending individual or, what is greatly feared, illness or affliction that is human-induced through evil magic or witchcraft (*ubuthakathi*). In the case of the ancestors, *isangoma* or *isanusi* (a diviner) would recommend a certain ritual to restore the damaged relationship between the living and the dead. When it comes to the seeds of malicious anger or ill-feelings resulting in witchcraft, the diviner is quick to pinpoint such causes (see Krige 1950:299; Thorpe 1991:46; Taylor 2001:130).

The modus operandi of the witch can be briefly explained as follows: The witch, who is generally a female, goes out at night and meets in an assembly with other witches (see Parrinder 1970:138; Thorpe 1991:46). In travelling to meet with other witches, she can do that by leaving her earthly body. In carrying out their nightly hunt for victims, the witches often ride on animals, especially the baboon. Sometimes they do not ride on animals but they metamorphose themselves into them, for example, the wild cat, owl, etc. The witches also employ mystical evil creatures as *utikoloshe*, the *impundulu* or the lightning bird and zombis (*imikhovu*) that witches are believed to raise up from dead bodies to do their wicked bidding (Thorpe 1991:46; cf. Dominique 2000:34; Knappert 1995:257; Parrinder 1970:43).

Another mode of travelling for witches is flying, which is "one of the oldest strands of witchcraft belief, and strangely enough one of the most enduring" (Parrinder 1970:42). Levack (1995:44) states that the belief in the flying of witches provides an explanation for the ability of witches to attend secret nocturnal gatherings in remote areas without their absence from home being detected. This belief

in flying witches is very ancient and widespread. Parrinder (1970:44) writes that in Hindu superstitions, witches used spells to enable themselves to fly through the night to places of meeting or to cemeteries where they fed on corpses. In the case of medieval Jewish belief, women were believed to fly with unbound hair to nocturnal assemblies. In Africa, it is still believed that witches fly to their meetings as nightjars, bats, owls and fireflies (cf. Parrinder 1970:42-46; Levack 1995:45).

Magesa (1997:185) relates that when secretly active at night, witches prefer to be naked, performing their dances while holding or actually spurring fire. They handle excrement, urine and vomit for purposes of harming people through the life force that these materials represent. Witches also enjoy soiling their neighbours' yards and other property with these materials. One of the heinous things done by witches is their participation in cannibalistic banquets (see Dominique 2000:34; Thorpe 1991:46). Because of the witches' craving for human flesh, they are often found assembled in graveyards. According to Magesa (1997:185), among the Ga, Azande, Ibo, Nupe and Lobedu, this "eating" of human flesh is not physical but "spiritual", in that it is the soul or the psyche - the actual vital force - of the victim that is "eaten" (cf. Setiloane 1976:52). But the eating of human flesh can be an actual "physical" exercise among some tribes in Africa (see Magesa 1997:185-186; Parrinder 1970:50-53).

The activity of witches is characterised by sorcery, invisibility and loathsome behaviour (cf. Thorpe 1991:46; Magesa 1997:185). Some of their activities include the harming of victims with the 'evil eye', digging evil medicine in the ground where the victim will pass or send 'death' from a distance (see Mbiti 1969:201). Setiloane (1976:53) also tells that by applying evil medicine on a person's hair, body-dirt, footprint, shadow, and other things similarly related to a person's body, or by making a clay image of him or her (cf. Parrinder 1970:56), witches find it possible to affect a person's *seriti* (or vital force) so that all things, including living things and persons (including children) react negatively to him or her. Setiloane also mentions a popular belief that a very skilled *moloi* or *umthakathi* (witch) can direct lightning (as often happens in the Limpopo Province in South Africa) to strike a particular person (see also Teffo & Roux 1998:143; Parrinder 1970:57).

Witches break all the accepted norms of society (see Magesa 1997:185). They reject kinship ties and loyalties and will as readily harm a kinsperson as anyone else. In actual fact, a general condition of ‘graduating’ into a witchcraft sorority or fraternity is to kill and eat the flesh of a close relative (ibid).

Sex plays an extraordinary part in witchcraft (Maghbouleh 1981:130; cf. Melanchton 2002:519; Nm 25:1-13). Witches adhere to no sexual taboo (Magesa 1997:185; cf. Parrinder 1970:37). They commit incest and cause other people to do so, or at least, to have incestuous dreams. Likewise, witches are known to engage in sexual intercourse with spirits and animals. Magesa (1997:185) explains that this is possible because witches possess the power to change themselves into spirit-like beings at night and go to the witches’ assemblies while their physical bodies remain at home (cf. Thorpe 1991:46). In southern Africa, *utikoloshe* is understood in heavy sexual connotations (cf. Knappert 1995:241-242; Thorpe 1991:46).

Among other activities of sorcerers and witches, Setiloane (1976:51-53) also mentions *boloi ba molomo* (sorcery of the mouth; cf. Sanders 1995:209) *boloi ba pelo* (sorcery of the heart) and *sejeso (isidliso)* which is generally known as ‘African poison’.

This brief description of the nature and activities of witchcraft serves to indicate the central place it holds in the understanding of the African belief system. Magesa (1987:186) believes that all these anti-social activities can be summarised in one sentence: “Witchcraft is the enemy of life.”

4.3.5.6 GENDER AND WITCHCRAFT

In Africa, there is a general belief of associating witchcraft with women (cf. Parrinder 1970:138). Kinoti (1996:241) says that there seems to be some sense to making a partial connection between gender power struggle and a woman’s regenerative and mystical powers. In almost all African cultures, menstruation is associated with women’s secret power often expressed also in witchcraft as antithetical to men’s secret power (see Olupona 1991:6). The blood (in this case

menstrual blood) which is a symbol of life (cf. Lv 17:11) as some believe, has some potency to also destroy.

The stories of witchcraft by women abound in Africa. For example, the Nande of the Democratic Republic of Congo believe that among them live the *avali*, singular *omuli*, literally 'one who eats.' An *omuli* is a woman or a girl who 'eats' the soul (*kirimu*) of another person who will subsequently die of 'consumption' (see Knappert 1995:225). In Kenya among the Luo, *sihoho* is the power of the evil eye. *Jasihoho* is a woman who is believed to be possessed by a spirit and who may be referred to as a witch (see Kinoti 1996:238-239). Such a woman is possessed by a spirit which is keen to harm or revenge itself for bad treatment during its life in the community. *Jasihoho* is believed to have an evil eye and therefore to be able to bewitch someone merely by looking at them (see also Bourdillon 2000:186-187).

Associating women with witchcraft could possibly stem from the fact that they depict a deep sensitivity towards the invisible and spiritual realities (see Mbiti 1991:69). It could also be that people who are oppressed, such as women and the poorer classes in class-stratified societies, feel empowered by being involved in witchcraft activities (see Omoyajowo 1983:317). In polygamous relationships, for instance, where jealousy and possessiveness reign supreme, witchcraft accusations tend to be rife. But it also needs to be noted that a wife, particularly a newcomer to a marriage clan, can easily become a scapegoat (see Kinoti 1996:241). In the extended family, the suspected witch, who is usually a close or distant relative, can be said to be harbouring ill-feelings or be envious of prosperous family members (see Bosch 1987:46).

As accusations of witchcraft are so widespread in Africa, many women have fallen victim to the anger of their communities, which sometimes result in executions of witches who happen to be women. The trials are often not formal. In such executions, mob justice becomes the order of the day (see Teffo & Roux 1998:143; Kinoti 1996:239).

3.5.7 WITCHCRAFT AND DEVIL-WORSHIP

In the early modern European definition of witchcraft, it was not only the performance of *maleficium* that was mentioned. The other concerned the relationship that existed between the witch and the devil, who was believed to be the supernatural foe of the Christian God and the personification of evil (see Levack 1995:8-9; Parrinder 1970:73f; Seligmann 1997:178). A witch was a person who not only performed harmful magic but who also made a pact with the devil and paid some homage to him. At the centre of most learned witch beliefs was the devil, the source of the witch's magic, the partner with whom she concluded the pact (see Levack 1995:29). Understood this way, witchcraft was therefore diabolism, the worship of the devil. This belief, coupled with other things like the demonisation of heresy, infanticide and cannibalism, led to alerting people to the danger of witchcraft by the church and state in 13th and 14th centuries (e.g. Gregory IX *Vox in Rama*; Innocent VIII *Summis Desiderantes Affectibus*). As if the encyclicals by the popes were not sufficient, two Dominicans by the names of Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer added the most notorious of such manuals called the *Malleus Maleficarum* ("Hammer of Witches"; cf. Shorter 1998:69).

In terms of witchcraft in the African continent, there is no historical evidence that it was ever associated with the worship of the devil. In any way, the devil-concept in Africa was brought about by western missionaries. In the traditional African belief system, witchcraft was not linked to any one supernatural figure. It is now that people involved in the spiritual warfare paradigm and deliverance ministries are finding a direct connection between the devil and witchcraft. Though there might have been some tentative suggestions before of associating diabolism (Satanism - *ubusathane*) and witchcraft (*ubuthakathi*; see Berglund 1976:269; Bosch 1987:43), it could be more of Christian influence than a traditional African belief.

Maghbouleh (1981:125) makes an interesting observation that witchcraft is nowhere associated with the devil or Satan in the canonised Jewish texts (see also Cohn 1975:60). But, having stated this, it should also be mentioned that a survey

of the New Testament reveals references to uncanny powers and magical arts that are condemnatory (e.g. Acts 8:18-24; 13:8-13; 16:16-18; 19:18-19).

5.8 ERADICATION OF WITCHCRAFT

In Africa, since death and misfortune are ascribed to witchcraft activities, it is not surprising that from time to time various societies try to eliminate all witches and witchcraft (see Bourdillon 2000:188). Bosch (1987:48) says, "Because of belief in witchcraft, then all reality is divided into wholly good and the irredeemably bad. Everybody is either on the side of the angels or on the side of the devil. There are no shades of grey." In response to particular misfortunes, occasionally a community may become obsessed with witchcraft and as a result witchcraft-cleansing or witch-eradication movements emerge as happened in Europe (cf. Levack 1995; Parrinder 1970:17; Seligmann 1997:178). After witches have been sniffed out through divination, they are punished by their communities "through stoning, beating, paying of fines and death" (Mbiti 1969:201). A relatively benign form of witchcraft eradication may be found in independent churches in which the accused witches may be treated sympathetically as unfortunate persons possessed by evil spirits and therefore 'not responsible for their actions'. Prophets claim to see witches, and then to exorcise the evil spirits from them, providing the kind of therapy frequently associated with possession trances (Bourdillon 2000:189).

Bourdillon correctly points out that, "although any society may contain individuals who readily break its most fundamental norms, in a witch-hunt innocent people may suffer and have their lives ruined in the mass hysteria of a community that believes it has found a means of ridding itself of all its fundamental tensions and frustrations" (Ibid:190). The problem with this mentality is that after the witch-hunt exercise, the community may be lulled in some way to think that their frustrations are over. This false hope and misplaced sense of security may lead the affected community to be trapped in an endless cycle of frustrations as problems continue to emerge. Another problem is that if the diviner is ill-disposed towards the suspected witch, his or her personal feelings may take preference over "expected objectivity". In family situations, witch-hunts often put considerable strain between the new *umakoti* (bride) and her mother-in-law or all the in-law mem-

bers because she (i.e. *umakoti*) ends being the accused person. This serves to illustrate that even though witchcraft and subsequent witch-hunts may have a social function in the community, they are not without problems. Bosch (1987:56) also rightly points out that to attribute every misfortune and every inexplicable failure or accident to a witch or sorcerer, subverts the possibility of true repentance, conversion and faith. Instead of constantly blaming evil on witchcraft, Africans need to learn to accept responsibility for their actions and limitations.

4.3.5.9 PROTECTION AND FORTIFICATION

In Africa, belief and claims about witches and witchcraft are neither metaphorical nor mere symbolic representations. Since witchcraft activities “are as real to the traditional African as scientific claims are to the modern scientist” (Teffo & Roux 1998:143), it would not be surprising therefore for most Africans to believe in apotropaic measures to ward off witchcraft and sorcery attacks. People resort to diviners and healers to supply them with protective objects (see Mbiti 1969:201). The rationale behind this is that the good use of magic will counteract the evil use thereof, provided, of course, the user’s medicine is more powerful than that of the enemy or the attackers. The purpose of the user is to feel safe and protected. Prevention against *boloi* or *ubuthakathi* (witchcraft) may include the employment of charms, amulets, medicines taken orally or externally applied or by incision. This may also involve the use of articles on the roof or in the fields, the doorposts of the house or the corners of the yard or homestead (see Setiloane 1976:54; Mbiti 1969:201; Knappert 1995:90-91).

When it comes to the church, the general feeling is that “the people have not been sufficiently armed to fight against witchcraft and sorcery, in spite of many years of Christian teaching” (Mbiti 1971:9). According to Lagerwerf (1987:136), most of the mainline or historic churches are well aware of this need, but have to face the problem that the message of God’s caring love, prayers and the sacraments are experienced by many Christians as not fully adequate in assisting them to deal with witchcraft and the fear it brings.

In order to try to meet this need, in the Roman Catholic Church, devotional objects like holy water, the rosary, medals and prayer books often seem to replace

the traditional amuletic objects rejected by the missionaries. The Protestant churches, on the other hand, rejected devotional objects from the very beginning and, as a result, have lost and continue to lose many members to African Initiated Churches and Pentecostal/Charismatic movements, which as part of their liturgical experience, try to provide intimate and supportive structures, thus giving concentrated attention to healing and also mobilising spiritual reserves to counter the aggression of sorcery and witchcraft (Kiernan 1995:124; cf. Makhaye 1973:161; Sprunger 1973:169-170; Khathide 2002:347-348). Christians who decide to stay within the mainline or historic churches, especially where ministries of healing, deliverance and exorcism are lacking, tend to “lead a dual life” (Lagerwerf 1987:37), what other scholars would call “split-level” Christianity (see Bulatao 1992; Pobe 1996:2; Imasogie 1983:23), in which deeply committed Christians faithfully attend church services on Sundays but feel compelled, in times of existential need, to go to a local shaman for healing, to a diviner for guidance or to an exorcist for deliverance from spirit oppression. Some scholars, among them Imasogie (1983) and Hiebert *et al* (1999), feel that it need not to be so, given the spiritual repertoire available to Christians as found in the Bible (see also Milingo 1984).

4.3.5.10 CONCLUSIONS

African people, like other peoples in the world, believe in witchcraft because many things happen that they can explain in no other manner. In such cases, the evidence as interpreted within the African worldview, would point to the occurrence of witchcraft. Witchcraft, as part of its socio-cultural function, provides through its symbols an explanatory framework within which people are afforded an opportunity to intellectually cope with the tensions and frustrations that confound them. As witchcraft appears to explain the frustrations and problems, witch-hunts seem to provide a solution to them. In order to cope with witchcraft activities, people use all sorts of amuletic objects acquired from diviners (*izangoma nezinyanga*), prophets and even from the church (e.g. Catholic Church) to ward off attacks of witchcraft and evil spirits. If the church (or churches) does not provide some ministry to help its members deal with the fear and occurrences of witches, it inadvertently allows its members into a biblically undesirable position of “split-level” Christianity. Although there may be scepticism about belief in witch-

craft, it remains a reality for many Africans, sophisticated and unsophisticated, rich or poor, alike. This vital aspect of the African socio-spiritual life, which was regrettably omitted or neglected by western theologians and missionaries with resultant disastrous effects, faces the African church with an ever increasing urgency.

4.3.6 DIVINERS AND HEALERS

Peek (1991:1) states that “every human community recognises a need for the special knowledge gained through divination”. In other words, divination is a universal phenomenon (see Danfulani 2000:87). But within a framework of a worldview that believes in the existence of witchcraft, spirits and powers, divination is a phenomenon that is taken more seriously (see Ndwandwe 2000:215; Abijole 1988:127).

Unfortunately, some cultures, especially those which are of Euro-American origin, tend to categorise divination as nothing else than a psychological technique or powers of telepathy and extrasensory perception designed to relieve anxiety and give a person confidence to face the vicissitudes of life (see Imasogie 1983:60). Peek (1991:3) says that the European tradition tends to characterise the diviner “as a charismatic charlatan coercing others through clever manipulation of esoteric knowledge granted in appropriate worth by a credulous and anxiety-ridden people”. Imasogie (1983:60) concedes that relieving anxiety may be one of the functions of divination. But this categorisation of diviners has been found by researchers like Peek and others not to be entirely objective. Peek (1991:3), in his enquiry, has found “diviners to be men and women of exceptional wisdom and high personal character”. Burnett (1988:182) contends that, unlike in the West where such a person (i.e. a diviner) may be placed in a mental hospital as being in need of psychiatric help, within shamanistic societies such a person is held in honour and is regarded as a useful member of society (see Jell-Bahlsen 2000:45; Olupona 2000:xvi).

Insofar as epistemology is concerned, Peek (1991:3) further argues that the western scientific tradition is but one way of knowing. The point that he makes is that the ‘one way of knowing’ which, in this case, is western science cannot claim

monopoly and discount other systems of knowing which have proved effective over the centuries, as invalid or primitive (see Mbiti 1969:203). Peek (1991:3) also indicates the difference between African divination and European systems of knowledge. He says that African divination systems involve a combination of “logical-analytical” and “intuitive-synthetical” modes of thinking while in the European tradition the separation of these modes is rigidly maintained (cf. De Boeck & Devisch 1994:100).

In Africa, the necessity of divination is made possible by the belief that there is no event or sickness that occurs without a spiritual or metaphysical cause, hence people must look beyond physical events to their spiritual etiology (see Imasogie 1983:60; Lagerwerf 1987:14-15). Different peoples of Africa have questions, problems and choices for which everyday knowledge is insufficient and yet action must be taken (see Peek 1991:2). The information is necessary in order for a person to respond effectively and that information is available often only through a diviner. Thus, divination continues to provide a trusted means of decision-making, a basic source of vital knowledge.

Divining processes and methods are diverse (see Van Rheenen 1991:176, 180; Peek 1991:2; Setiloane 1976:46), but all follow set routines by which otherwise inaccessible information is obtained. In almost all known systems of divination, some type of device is usually employed, from a single sliding object to the myriad symbolic items shaken in diviners’ baskets (see Chernoff 2000:265-267). Sometimes, the diviner’s body becomes the vehicle of communication through spirit possession (see Peek 1991:2). Some diviners operate self-explanatory mechanisms that reveal answers. In this category, we can include *isangoma* among the amaZulu. The session of the diviner and the client is characterised by shouts of *Vumani bo!* (“Do you agree?”) said by the *isangoma* upon which the client(s) would respond, *Siyavuma* (“We agree” - see Callaway 1991:27-35; Ngubane 1977; Shorter 1998:72). Yet other systems require the diviner to interpret cryptic metaphoric messages (cf. Cuthrell-Curry 2000:458). The final diagnosis and plan for action are rendered collectively by the diviner and the client(s). Peek (1991:3) says the critical input of the divinatory congregation, especially that of the consulter/adviser and the particularising discussions between the diviner and client(s), serves to demythologise the domineering diviner image.

Diviners are people who, by virtue of their extra sensitivity to spiritual reality and years of training (cf. Setiloane 1976:54-57, see under “the making of ‘ngaka’”), have become “fathers and mothers of secrets” (Imasogie 1983:60). They are able to decipher the past, the present and the future as well as uncover the human and the spiritual causes of events and the possible solution to their problems. According to Turner (1968:43), the diviner’s avowed aims, “is to make known and intelligible in Ndembu terms what is unknown and unintelligible”.

As the diviner is supposed to have the ability to move about between the natural and spirit worlds, he/she stands at the crossroads between the spiritual and human/physical worlds as an intercessor, mediator and a bridge of communication (see Danfulani 2000:87). The diviner, as an agent between the human and the spiritual worlds, “explores and exploits the mystical world to normalise, ameliorate, restore and reconcile estranged relationships for harmonious and habitable universe” (ibid). In cultures where ancestral belief is central, the diviner acts as an agent between the living and the living-dead (see Ndwandwe 2000:216). The diviner also uses a specialised body of knowledge in manipulating and controlling the spirit world for the benefit of the human and spiritual communities (see Danfulani 2000:87).

According to Mnyandu (1993:107), the duties of the diviners include the following:

- * to diagnose illness in his/her clients (cf. Magesa 1997:212);
- * to prescribe methods to heal them (cf. Krige 1950:298-299);
- * to establish cause of misfortunes (cf. Setiloane 1976:44);
- * to settle conflicts (cf. Danfulani 2000:89);
- * to predict future events (cf. Sogolo 1998:179);
- * to warn clients/community about problems to come (cf. Knappert 1995:70);
- * to mediate between community members and their ancestors (cf. Westerland 2000:152);
- * to intercede for the community to the ancestors (cf. Ndwandwe 2000:216);
- * to give counsel to the chief of the area (cf. Hodgson 2003:218-219).

Shorter (1998:72) is, however, critical of the diviners whose warnings of disaster are never put to the test. But this accusative generalisation could hardly be referred to people like Ntsikana, Mohlomi or Mantsopa (see Hodgson 2003:218).

Diviners/mediums believe they are called to be in the profession they are in. Their work is dependent on the ancestral spirits and, for that reason, they are seen as vehicles of ancestors (Ndwandwe 2000:217) or instruments of higher powers (Magesa 1997:216). One of the main functions of the diviners is to fortify the home or persons through the application of protective substances in order to ward off witchcraft or sorcery attacks. In some African Initiated Churches, the prophet may assume some duties of the traditional diviner by using, for example, water instead of medicine (cf. Shorter 1998:72). But some do combine the role, functions and methods of a diviner and a prophet. Though some diviners may be accused of charging their clients exorbitantly or even wild guessing, they nevertheless play an important role in bringing stability in the African symbolic universe.

4.4

THE AFRICAN DEVIL?

Some questions have been raised as to the reference to the devil in Africa as understood from the perspective of the Christian scriptures. Bosch (1987:40) indicates that, whereas Bible translators experienced no problem in finding African “dynamic equivalents” (see Kraft 1979:261; Bediako 1995:97) for the God of scripture, for example, *Modimo*, *Mwari*, *Nkulunkulu*, *Thixo*, et cetera, they usually could not find any such equivalent for Satan. The result was that in most cases they rendered “Satan” untranslated; they only Africanised the word (e.g. uSathane in isiZulu).

In some instances, though, translators endeavoured to come up with dynamic equivalents for “Satan” in the indigenous languages, for example, in the Yoruba Bible (Nigeria), “Satan” is translated as *Eshu*, the Ewe Bible (Benin) calls him *Legba*, whereas the Rundi Bible (Burundi) translates “Satan” with *Rwuba* (cf. Bosch 1987:40). Kato (1975:37) relates that among the Jaba people in North Central State of Nigeria, the spirits have always been associated with *Kuno* whom he equates with the Christian concept of Satan (cf. Imasogie 1983:29).

Mbiti (1969:204) reports that the Vugusu of Kenya say that there is an evil divinity which God created good, but later on turned against him (i.e. God) and began to do evil. This evil being is assisted by evil spirits, and all evil comes from that lot. Onyinah (2002:63) tells that missionaries translated the western devil in Akan as *Obonsam*, which is a derivation of *bone* (evil) and *sam* (thrown about in disorderly way). The term "*obonsam*", therefore would refer to a person who is an embodiment of scattered evil but, etymologically speaking, the term would designate a wizard or a male witch (ibid:63; cf. Meyer 1999:77). But Onyinah (2002:64) goes on to argue that the Akan do not attribute the cause of evil to one personified being. According to him, evil occurs when there is *mmusuo* which is anything, taboo or sin, which is done contrary to the law of the land, God, the gods, ancestors, community or one's neighbour.

In Southern Africa, there have been suggestions that *UmTyoli* (an accuser) in the Xhosa Bible is the indigenous equivalent for the Christian understanding of the devil. *UmTyoli* is conceived as an evil spirit found among the human beings who can be held responsible for bad and sinful things including certain dispositions shown by humans (see Hodgson 1982:95-96). *UmTyoli* is also regarded as the creator of evil things such as poisonous snakes, bats, owls and other creatures connected with witchcraft and sorcery. Hodgson (1982:95), however, contends that the *UmTyoli* concept appears to have been borrowed from the Khoi cosmology. In the Khoikhoi mythology //Gaunab, who is unambiguously associated with evil, is in conflict with Tsui//Goab, who is the giver of rain and abundance (see Kiernan 1995:18). Under the influence of missionaries //Gaunab assumed the role of the devil as did //Gamab among the San. Among the Khoikhoi, //Gaunab was regarded as the source of all evil. All sickness was thought to come from him, or his servants, the witches (cf. Westerlund 2000:153-159).

Having surveyed some of these African images of what could be referred to as representations of the Christian concept of Satan, it would appear that there is no figure in Africa that is truly comparable to the devil of the Christian scriptures. Bosch (1987:40) argues that in Africa there is no figure that is irrevocably, intrinsically and absolutely evil and the final antithesis to God as the Christians understand the devil to be (see Jn 8:44). *Eshu*, who is the closest being to the equivalence of the Christian concept of Satan, can be placated through prayers and the

offering of sacrifices (see Oduyoye 1983: 400f; Idowu 1966:81). For Bosch (1987), *Eshu* is “a devil with a likeable streak in him”, which disqualifies him from fitting the Christian concept of the devil. The other references (e.g. *UmTyoli*, *Obonsam*, *Legba*, etc.) appear to have been inherited from western missionaries. There is no conclusive evidence that there was in Africa the devil or the idea thereof as Christians understand Satan to be according to the scriptures.

SPIRIT POSSESSION AND EXORCISM

THE REALITY OF SPIRIT POSSESSION

For most westerners, the subject of spirit possession usually commences with the question, “Can spirit possession actually occur?” (Burnett 1988:162; cf. Silvos 1994:103-104). One of the contributory factors to this state of affairs is the worldview problem. According to Kraft (1989:88), westerners demonstrate a view that virtually ignores the spirit world so that it is not by accident that technologically oriented Euro-Americans easily find themselves treating people, the universe and even God as if they were machines (cf. Jacobs 1992:147; Wink 1986:6-7).

The other factor that makes the study of the subject of spirit possession difficult, is the lack of clear analysis. This is evidenced by books written on the subject which focus more on the descriptive elements, which frequently result in the details of the practice obscuring the major issues involved (see Burnett 1988:162).

In the history of the anthropology of religion, there have been various attempts to explain and understand spirits and spirit possession (see Behrend and Luig 1999:xiv). For example, for Lewis (1971:205), spirits were “hypotheses which, for those who believe in them, afford a philosophy of final causes and a theory of social tensions”. Zempleni (1977) tried to interpret the ancestor spirits which took possession of a Wolof priestess in reference to the psychoanalytical “family story”. Lambek (1996:238) referred to spirits as “products of imagination, partial constructions that are fictional but not simply fictitious”. Beattie (1977:4) called them “abstract qualities”. The early missionaries who came to the African shores with the intention of proclaiming the gospel, inadvertently demonstrated

ignorance in understanding and dealing with spirits and spirit possession. This was largely due to their Enlightenment-rooted presuppositions which, in essence, denied the existence of the spirit world (see Khathide 1999a:64; Hiebert 1983; cf. Mbiti 1976f). This caused early missionaries to simply fail to see a natural consequence of primal worldviews which allow for the interrelationship between the natural world and that of spirits and gods. The secular worldview, according to Burnett (1988:162), tends to exclude such a relationship, and so it questions the whole concept of spirit possession. It therefore seeks to describe these phenomena in physical, psychological and non-religious, terms.

Contrary to what the secular worldview says about spirits and spirit possession, anthropologists have shown that almost all primal societies believe in the possibility of an individual being possessed by an external spiritual being (see Burnett 1988:162). Behrend and Luig (1999:xiii) contend that, instead of the disappearance of spirits, there is a proliferation of spirit possession cults the world over, not only in African, Asian and Caribbean countries, but also in the midst of New York, Toronto and various towns in Europe. The proponents of the spiritual warfare school believe that our world is infested with spirits which are the agents of evil and wickedness (see e.g. Murphy 1992:viii-xiv). In the whole question of pastoral counselling and the activities of spirits, de Jongh van Arkel (1987:145) comes to a conclusion that

we cannot reject the possibility of demon possession, nor the ministries of deliverance and even exorcism just because some people who operate in this field are unbalanced and guilty of malpractice, or even because some methods have not been functional in certain cases. If we follow that line of logic, we should arrive at the same conclusion regarding medical care and even the ministry of the church.

In primal societies worldwide, the concept of spirit possession is never brought into question. Anthropological studies of possession, trance, shamanism, ecstasy and related phenomena, all of which fall under the rubric of altered states of consciousness, document human access to such states across the globe, includ-

ing the Mediterranean world, both present and past (DeMaris 2000:3; see also Pilch 1996:133f; Mary 2001:315f). Behrend and Luig (1999:xiii) rightly observe that spirits and their mediums are part of the local as well as transglobal cultures. Spirit possession is not just an African phenomenon; it is experienced globally. Burnett (1988:162) says that anthropologists have shown that over 90 per cent of all the societies in the world have some concept of spirit possession.

But it is in predominantly primal societies like in the African continent where spirit possession is mostly experienced because it is an acknowledged reality there (cf. Tlaba 2000:17-20). The African worldview/s allow for the occurrence of such phenomena. It is something that the church in Africa has to constantly wrestle with. Behrend and Luig (1999:xv) observe that relations between Christian churches and spirit possession cults exhibit the same features of intense competition. While African Independent (Initiated) Churches have integrated aspects of spirit possession and witchfinding cults into their services through prophetic and deliverance ministries, former missionary churches have been reluctant in this regard (see Luig 1977). The fact of the occurrence of the phenomena is illustrated by various studies that have been conducted in different communities on the African continent, for example, Mary (2001) on the people of Gabon, Ben-Amos (1994) Edo people, Giles (1999) Swahili people. Both Hurskainen (1985) and Peterson (1985) have written about possession among the Maasai. Boddy (1989) has documented the activities of the Zar cult in northern Sudan. This long list also includes investigations into witchcraft and spirit possession among the Congolese (DRC) by Masamba ma Mpolo (1984:149-167; 1984:39-56) and Hebga (1982) in Cameroon.

Perhaps the issue of spirit possession in Africa was highlighted by the ministry of exorcism by Father Emmanuel Milingo from Zambia (see Milingo 1984; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1981:99f). Milingo, after having been appointed Archbishop of Lusaka, felt pastorally obliged to respond to the desperate spiritual needs of Zambians. Those who were tormented by *mashawe* (spirit possession) - something that traditional healers understood and could deal with, came to Father Milingo for exorcism. Milingo (1984) emphatically underlines that his pastoral experiences had taught him the reality and power of the devil and his agents, and that they should be counteracted. Though Milingo drew a lot of criticism from his

colleagues and overseers in Rome, he was never convinced thereof that the gifts of healing and exorcism bestowed upon him were diabolical in source and nature. Milingo (1984:52) was strongly persuaded that ministers of the gospel had to respond pastorally and biblically to the problem of spirits and spirit possession than just accept co-existence with the enemy, the devil.

In brief, this serves to show that the problem of spirits as agents of evil in general and spirit possession in particular, is widespread in Africa. It is something which Africans acknowledge as real and something for which they seek help from African traditional healers, or from the church as in the case of Father Milingo or both.

4.5.2 SPIRIT POSSESSION: GOOD AND BAD

In studying spirit possession across many different cultures, a researcher begins to see various patterns (see Hebga 1982:99-121; Milingo 1984:32f; Lagerwerf 1987:66f). Burnett (1988:163) distinguishes between four types of possession. The first aspect of the possession phenomenon is mediumship in which the person claims to act as an intermediary between human beings and the spirit world (cf. Tlhagale 2000:45; Ndwandwe 2000:215). The focus here is one of communication between the spirit or spirits and the world of humankind. The second aspect of spirit possession, according to Burnett (1988:163), is shamanism, which has widely been studied by anthropologists. In this category, the practitioner claims to work in conjunction with spirits with the aim of achieving healing within the community. The third aspect of spirit possession can be called 'trance', or the 'mystic quest', in which the person seeks to enter into a mystic relationship with a god or spirit, with resultant ecstatic emotions. Finally, possession occurs when society claims that a person is under the control of a spiritual being. Spirits of evil can possess people and inflict all kinds of diseases and sufferings (Turaki 1999:176).

These different types or aspects of spirit possession have been grouped and labelled collectively by various theologians and anthropologists or anthropological theologians. These are sometimes grouped under altered states of consciousness (see Pilch 1996:133; DeMaris 2000:13). Altered states of consciousness

are defined as conditions in which sensations, perceptions, cognition and emotions are altered. These are characterised by changes in sensing, perceiving, thinking and feeling. Ludwig (1968:77f), in reference to altered states of consciousness, talks about alterations in thinking, disturbed sense of time, loss of control, change in expression of emotions, change in bodily image, perceptual distortions, changes in meaning and significance assigned to experiences and perceptions, a sense of the ineffable, feelings of rejuvenation and hypersuggestibility (cf. DeMaris 2000:13). While others prefer to call these different aspects of spirit possession altered states of consciousness, Cox (1995:81) prefers to label them as part of primal spirituality (cf. Khathide 2002:343f).

Spirit possession can also be divided into good and bad, positive and negative, or voluntary and involuntary phenomena. DeMaris (2000:4) explains that cultures like that of ancient Israel, as well as the rest of the Mediterranean world, recognise both positive and negative possession, and associate the former with ritual activity. DeMaris illustrates this by quoting the baptismal report to Jesus' entry into an altered state which was judged by society as positive rather than negative, that is, as a possession by the Holy Spirit and not by a demon. Most cultures consider negative possession as befalling individuals and is ritually unregulated; whereas positive possession happens to individuals or groups and is ritually controlled (Lewis 1989:48-49; Lee 1968:36-41). DeMaris (2000:19) attempts to elucidate the difference by saying that the regulated triggering of spirit possession in willing subjects through ritual means stands in stark contrast to sudden, involuntary, spontaneous possession which most cultures regard as potentially harmful and dangerous.

Insofar as spirit possession on the African continent is concerned, Mbiti distinguishes between what is good and bad possession. Good or positive possession, according to Mbiti (1969:176), occurs in this manner:

During possession the individual loses temporarily the control or exercise of his personality, and depicts or mirrors the influence or semi-personality of the spirit or divinity in him. Useful information is obtained from the spirit world, so people believe, whether or not that information is genu-

ine. For that reason, mediums are associated with diviners or medicine-men or priests whose duty it is to receive, relay or interpret the message received via the mediums.

Negative possession is explained by Mbiti (ibid:82) in the following way:

But on the whole, spirit possessions, especially unsolicited ones, result in bad effects. They may cause severe torment on the possessed person; like the spirit may drive him away from his home so that he lives in forests; it may cause him to jump into the fire and get himself burnt, to torture his body with sharp instruments, or even do harm to other people. During the height of spirit possession, the individual in effect loses his own personality and acts in the context of the 'personality' of the spirit possessing him. The possessed person becomes restless, may fail to sleep properly, and if the possession lasts a long period it results in damage to health. Women are more prone to spirit possession than men (cf. Knappert 1995:196; Lagerwerf 1987:66-71 Milingo 1984:44-45).

These are some of the characteristics and manifestations of spirit possession. There may be minor variations from one society to the other, but the main elements remain more or less similar.

In discussing controlled (positive) and uncontrolled (negative) possession, DeMaris (2000:18) points out that in first-century Judean society, as in other societies where possession is common, perceptions of it varied (cf. Bourguignon 1968b:13-15; Goodman 1988b:21). Such societies prize possession when those possessed, spirit mediums and healers, for example, bring vital information or the power to cure illness, to the community (see Mbiti 1969:82; Krige 1950:299; Ndwandwe 2000:215; Burnett 1988:171). Knappert (1995:157) explains that mediumship gives the possessed person a higher status in society, for example, women in male-dominated society gain respect from their hosting of some awesome spirit, even chiefly status.

On the other hand, societies react negatively to possession when it results in insanity or sickness (Sharp 1999:6; Lewis 1989:48-49; Heusch 1981:155-158). Primal societies recognise that when a foreign spirit intrudes into a human body, various manifestations may occur which may include sickness. Another manifestation could be a spirit's control over an individual's body so that it acts in a characteristic of the spirit rather than of the normal person (see Burnett 1988:164). Such manifestations and illnesses may lead a western medical person to conclude that the affected person needs psychiatric examination (Knappert 1995:196-197).

Spirit possessions, especially solicited ones, that occur in communities and individuals regularly depend on ritual activity to induce altered states of consciousness or to trigger entry into the state of possession, although spontaneous entry into such states does occur (DeMaris 2000:4). A person or group of people seeking to become possessed by a spirit may use a variety of different methods which are recognised by the particular society (see Burnett 1988:172). Rhythmic music and dancing with a strong beat is a common practice. Drums are commonly used in Africa, especially by *izangoma*, as they are among the *shamans* in many parts of the world. For example, the Hamadsha, a society of trance healers in Morocco, ritually induce their own possession by music, dance and self-mutilation, an event the public views with approval and enthusiasm. In their role as trance healers, the Hamadsha society members are vital to the therapeutic system of Moroccan society for, among other activities, they exorcise those possessed by devils or *jinn* (Crapanzano 1973:xi-xiv, 133-168; cf. DeMaris 2000:18; Behrend and Luig 1999:xiii-xvi). Almost similar things, with local variations, of course, can be observed in other spirit possession cults (see Colleyn 1999:68-78; Masquelier 1999:34-49).

A strange type of possession occurs when a medium-cum-prophet claims to be possessed both by the Holy Spirit and the ancestors almost at the same time or at different times. Though a rare phenomenon, a prophet at an African Independent Church service may speak on behalf of God (Holy Spirit) and for the ancestors. It may also happen that a person be possessed by the Holy Spirit at church while, at the same time, serving as a traditional healer/medium (*inyanga* or *isangoma*) at home. In his inquiry into the African Initiated (Independent)

Churches (AICs), Anderson (2000:287) reports that in some of these churches, the offices of prophet and diviner do coalesce. Sometimes, the prophet is the agent not only of the Holy Spirit, but also of the ancestors (cf. Daneel 1974:232; Sundkler 1961:200; Oosthuizen 1992:169). But it also needs to be noted that in other African Initiated Churches, prophets have simply taken over the function of the traditional diviner. This appears to be the case in the Zimbabwean churches, studied by Daneel (1974:224-225). The Shona “ultimately emphasise their dependence on the Holy Spirit” as the real revelatory agent (ibid:232; cf. Behrend and Luig 1999:xv).

5.3 ANCESTRAL POSSESSION

Mbiti (1969:81-82) observes that, “Spirit possession occurs in one form or another in practically every African society”. Spirit possession by the living-dead is commonly reported (ibid:86).

Spirit mediums or diviners in Africa are believed to be possessed by ancestors to communicate with the living (see Anderson 1991:83; Willoughby 1928:104; Ma 2002:207). Daneel (1971:100) speaks of how Shona ancestors communicate with the living by selecting a medium (*svikiro*) from among the living descendants. Mndende (1996:248) describes how among the amaXhosa, during the diviner’s dance (*intolombe*), the diviner will *nqula* (call in the form of praising) all the ancestors from both the paternal and maternal side. She or he would even call those on the grandmother’s side.

Mbiti (1969:172) relates how in Kampala (Uganda), he witnessed how a young man came to consult a diviner. According to the report, the young man sat down in the diviner’s room where a crowd of twenty-five to thirty people had gathered. One of the men started to sing a highly rhythmical song, and the rest of the crowd joined in with singing, clapping and rattling small gourds. The medium-to-be (i.e. the young man) sat quietly on the floor without even turning his head. The singing and rattling went on for about thirteen minutes when suddenly the young man’s hands began to tremble. Three or four minutes later he started talking in an entirely different voice (cf. Anderson 1991:83; Krige 1950:302). The singing stopped and the diviner could then talk with the medium for about fifteen min-

utes, in the middle of which the medium (or the spirit in him) requested another song to be sung. At the end, the medium jumped like a frog, banged his head hard on the floor and with his fist hit his own chest very hard twice or thrice. Then he was 'normal' once more. When Mbiti (1969:172) cross-examined him afterwards, he assured him (Mbiti) that he was not aware of what he said or did during the time he was acting as a medium. Daneel (1971:119) says that during the possession trance, the family may discuss their problems with the possessed medium; for they are actually talking with the ancestors. This is common not only among the Shona people but among the AmaZulu as well (see Krige 1950:302).

The story of mediumship as told by Mbiti, can be said to be representative of what happens throughout Africa. The desire of an ancestor to possess someone is usually signalled by a lengthy illness (cf. Appiah-Kubi 1981:27), with the targeted person beginning to grow delicate and eccentric, dreaming extraordinary and numerous dreams (cf. Kitshoff 1996:25) about wild beasts and serpents and also hearing voices telling him or her what to do and where to go (see Krige 1950:302-307; Anderson 1991:84; Daneel 1971:100). Spirits that come into people for reasons of mediumship are not considered harmful or diabolical; they are seen as friendly, are welcomed by people and remain briefly or temporarily in the mediums concerned (Mbiti 1969:173; see also Kato 1975:36; Skhakhane 2000:120-121). Most mediums are women, an issue we now turn to.

4.5.4 SPIRIT POSSESSION AND GENDER

A number of studies have sought to understand the psychological and sociological aspects of spirit possession trance states which are evidently more common among African women (see Mbiti 1969:173). Kinoti (1996:240) attributes the occurrence of spirit possession mostly among women, to the fact that possession trances are mostly sought by those who are oppressed, such as women and the poorer classes in class-stratified societies. Spirit mediumship is seen as a way for women who are "existentially inferior ... and jurally subordinate" (Kilson 1972:173), to resolve their emotional problems, whether they be frustration at male dominance (Lewis 1981), lack of avenues to gain self-esteem (Walker 1972:7), or ambivalence about maternal roles (Kilson 1972:171). Kinoti (1996:240) contends that by means of the trance state the weak, that is, the

poorer classes and women, try to achieve the power and respect which they lack in their ordinary roles; they seek to achieve justice. Kinoti maintains that they act out and pronounce their desires without rebuke, because it is not they who are responsible but the powers beyond which have possessed them. In a possession trance, the socially marginalised and disempowered are able to coerce others into paying attention to them (Zeuss 1979:186; see also de Rosny 1985:214-215).

But Ben-Amos (1994:119) feels that these assumptions about the status and functions of women's religious associations should be questioned. She refers to her study of the Olukun cult among the Edo in Benin City, Nigeria, to refute these assumptions because there the women's religious associations are not necessarily peripheral or low in status. In the worship of Olukun, women play a primary religious role as priestesses in both the urban and rural areas. According to Ben-Amos (ibid:119), "The status that urban Edo women achieve in this cult is permanent, not temporary, and the psychological benefits of participation are not temporary outlets but a real redefinition of self". Behrend and Luig (1999:xvii) further state that in Africa, spirits of various pantheons often establish their masculinity or femininity as fluid than fixed, offering gender as a continuum of qualities found in both females and males (cf. Cornwall 1994:126). Colleyn (1999:68), in negating popular assumptions about spirit possession, uses the *Nya* cult in Mali to show the case in point. The *Nya* cult is a rural cult; possession is the privilege of a minority of male members of a society into which they have been initiated; possessed men still belong to powerful lineages; their careers never begin as an illness; trance has no therapeutic value; possession confirms dedication to a specific localised deity; spirit possession is related to divination, a means of expression of a superior 'voice' and a shamanistic technique.

Though Ben-Amos, Colleyn and others emerge with interesting and significant aspects concerning spirit possession and gender, there is still overwhelming evidence that in most African societies spirit possession still remains a mostly feminine experience (see e.g. Mbiti 1969:173; Lagerwerf 1987:13; Kinoti 1996:230f). Hurskainen (1985) calls attention to the fact that among the Maasai spirit possession occurs almost exclusively among women and that the first, and by far the most efficient cure, is said to be that given by the churches. It is said to be

permanent, provided that the women continue to attend Christian teaching and Sunday services regularly (cf. Peterson 1985:174f). Kinoti (1996:240) reports that in many African Initiated (Instituted) Churches such as the Roho churches and the Akurinu churches of Kenya, women are constantly being 'possessed' of the Holy Spirit and are exercising charismatic roles even though ecclesiastical roles may still be out of reach. This makes Kinoti (ibid:241) suggest that there seems, partially so, to be a connection between gender power struggle and a woman's regenerative and mystical powers (see Olupona 1991:6). This issue of spirit possession and gender is worth further exploring in the light of the emerging dissenting voices on the subject.

4.5.5 EXORCISM

In Africa, spirit possession is not always to be feared. There are times when it is not only desirable but people induce it through special dancing and drumming until the person concerned experiences it (see Mbiti 1969:82). When the person is thus possessed, the spirit may speak through him or her, so that she or he plays the role of a medium, and the messages she/he relays are received with expectation by those to whom they are addressed. This can be referred to as positive or voluntary, spirit possession. It is deemed necessary for the livelihood and sustenance of the individual, family or community. People who experience such spirit possession are respected and held in high esteem by society (see Fisher 1998:125).

But when spirit possession is 'unsolicited' (Mbiti 1969:82) and when it results in bad effects driving the possessed person to leave home so that they live in forests, when it causes them to jump into the fire and get themselves burnt or torture their bodies with sharp instruments or harm other people, it is then that spirit possession is considered negative and anti-social. In that case, exorcism is sought. Exorcism is one of the major functions of the traditional doctors and diviners (*nganga/inyanganga*). When spirits 'endanger' (Mbiti 1969:82) a village, there are usually formal ceremonies to drive away those notorious spirits.

Among the Jaba people of North Central State of Nigeria (see Kato 1975:37), there are certain medicine-men who specialise in the 'profession' of exorcism. The instruments used in exorcism include a drum, calabash and a locally made

guitar. A date is set for the exorcising ceremony. The chief exorcist sings, calling the names of the spirits in the possessed person. The high volume attracts not only the possessed person into dancing, but also neighbouring women as well. After dancing for about two hours, the possessed person falls down as if dead, apparently from exhaustion. She lies for a while, then gets up renewed in strength. From that time the spirits leave her.

Knappert (1995:197) describes the exorcism ceremony along the Tanzanian coast in the following manner:

The treatment may last for two weeks and will be far from cheap. *Angoma* 'dance' will be organised which will last for a week for each spirit [cf. Schoffeleers 2003:267]. A goat will be slaughtered for the last and biggest dance which will take all of the last night of the exorcism ceremony. At the end of this dance, towards dawn, the patient will have to drink raw goat's blood, and she will be draped in cloths of three colours, namely red, white and black, and she will dance in the centre of the circle of women dancers. Suddenly she will have an attack of the shudders. Trembling all over her body she will shout and scream; this is the sign that the spirit wants to speak. The exorcists will ask the spirit: What is your name? The spirit will shout out its name, what it wants., through the woman's mouth. Finally, the exorcist will command the spirit: Go away, leave this woman in peace. The spirit will rise to the woman's head and go out through her mouth and disappear.

Knappert (1995:87) also reports that in Zimbabwe, if a person has been bewitched, the evil spirit has to be driven out by transferring it to an animal. Alternatively, the patient can be taken to a crossroads away from the village, where the exorcist will command the spirit to leave the body of the patient and to wait there at the crossroads until some unlucky traveller passes who will then, in turn, be possessed by the spirit.

In other African societies, more or less similar techniques are used in a ceremony of exorcism. Spirit possession with negative effects is something that each community must confront and deal with. The involvement of the church is critical in helping people deal with spirits and spirit possession. Perhaps it is against this background that the ministry of Father Milingo (1984) and others involved in the Christian ministry of exorcism need to be understood. By virtue of the church's mandate and desire to bring holistic healing to broken humanity, it has little option but to help those tormented by spirits.

4.5.6 CONCLUSIONS

Spirits and spirit possession are part and parcel of African socio-spiritual life. To overlook this aspect will be a missiological omission and miscalculation on the part of the church that hopes to fulfil its ministry on the African continent in an effective way. In order to accomplish the task of being an effective witness in Africa, the church needs to take cognisance of the African worldview which acknowledges encounters and interactions between the physical/visible and the spiritual/invisible worlds of which spirit possession is one of them. Though dealing with issues like spirit possession is admittedly complex and difficult because they cannot be empirically tested, the church is compelled to theologise on them because people on the continent believe in the encounters between the visible and invisible worlds and, in some real way, are affected by these interactions.

4.6 CHURCHES' RESPONSES TO THE SPIRIT WORLD

4.6.1 NEGATIVE AND NON-ENGAGING RESPONSE

When early western missionaries arrived on the African continent, they took a negative stand *vis-à-vis* the African spirit world. The belief in missionaries was that the converts to Christianity, after attaining some (western-based) education and religious instruction, would simply outgrow the idea of the existence of the spirit world, which, unfortunately, is something that has not happened two centuries down the line. The non-engagement of the missionaries in issues regarding the African spirit world was directly caused by the presuppositions of the Enlightenment of

which western missionaries were products (see Silviso 1994:103-104; Jacobs 1992:147; Kraft 1989:88).

Karanja (1999:37) also points out that the non-engagement stance by missionaries, especially among the Kikuyu, was caused by the fact that the missionaries did not want to pressurise their mission adherents or believers (*athomi*) to repudiate all Kikuyu customs lest they renounce Christianity (ibid:39).

In Africa, the legacy of non-engagement is felt more pronouncedly in the historic or mainline churches (see Lagerwerf 1987:36-37). Though the need is felt in these churches, they have to face the problem that the message of God's caring love, prayers and the sacraments are experienced by Christians as not fully adequate. As a result, the Protestant churches are losing many members to African Independent Churches or to Pentecostal churches. The evangelical movement in Africa, though it declares Christ's sovereign rule over the spirits, prefers to say little about the spirit world, concentrating rather on the salvation of the individual or 'soul', hoping that that experience will be a panacea for all other problems.

4.6.2 SPLIT-LEVEL OR DUAL SYSTEM RESPONSE

In situations where some forms of Christianity have been perceived as not dealing adequately with intercession for immediate and concrete needs in the culture, a great possibility exists of older patterns of magical intercession, divination, exorcism and even witchcraft, occurring among Christians. The feeling among these believers, as summed up by Schreier (1985:156), is that, "The Christian deity may be all-powerful, but that deity does not relate to that dangerous section of bush outside the village as well as a local deity does". Hence, the need to maintain relations with the local deity. Schreier blames this on the fact that Christianity can seem too abstract, too concerned with words, and not sufficiently able to meet the day-to-day needs.

Again, a measure of blame can be apportioned to the influence of the Enlightenment, of separating 'natural' and 'supernatural' realities (see Hiebert, Shaw & Tiènou 1999:16-17). According to Hiebert *et al*, the separation of visible and invisible realities gave rise to sciences that studied this world and the outcome was the

naturalistic explanations that had no place for God. Belief in the supernatural heavenly realities was relegated to the bottom of the ladder of human experience. Such a dualistic approach to life left no room for supernatural realities such as earthly spirits and spirit possession, witchcraft, ancestors and magic. These were ridiculed as fairy tales and belief in these was labelled as barbaric and primitive. Missionaries coming out of such a worldview, who brought the gospel to Africa, preached a message that left Africans with a perception that the God of the Bible was insufficient. This caused many African Christians to return to traditional ways of resolving issues in cases of existential crises. This unavoidably led to split-level, two-tier or dual Christianity in which many African Christians find themselves today. Some of this form of faith is overt but most of it is covert, away from the eyes and knowledge of church leaders.

4.6.3 A SYNCRETISTIC RESPONSE

Syncretism has become a loaded term, often with negative connotations (see Nussbaum 2002:99 - see also footnote). It is important, here, to give a description, albeit short, of what we mean by the term (cf. Anderson 1999:228; Schreiter 1985:144f; Hollenweger 1999:185; Beyers 2003:1). If we were to understand syncretism in a historical and mostly negative way, it would refer to the combining of elements of Christianity with folk beliefs and practices in such a way that the gospel loses its integrity and message (see Hiebert et al 1999:378; Murphy 1992:381). But if syncretism were to be understood in a positive light, it would refer to borrowing from “pagan” cultures, as has been the tendency throughout church history, in order to contextually and in an understandable way, present the New Testament message without substantially altering the basic tenets of the Christian faith (cf. Khathide 2002:351; Schreiter 1985:144). To this end, syncretistic borrowings should therefore be seen rather as signs of life than of the corruption of the gospel (cf. Irarrazaval 1998:258). Daneel (1991:26) distinguishes between a syncretist distortion in which the essential features of the gospel become blurred and the legitimate indigenisation or contextualisation, in which Christian communication is adapted and rendered intelligible without forfeiting crucial scriptural truths.

In the instance of people in different cultures borrowing elements from Christianity and incorporating them into their own religious structures, it would amount to nega-

tive syncretism. Anderson (2000:203) illustrates this by relating a phenomenon in South Africa of diviners who may consider themselves Christian, although they are usually not. Anderson maintains that even their healing power is specifically not Christian, coming directly from guiding ancestors. Oosthuizen (1987:76) has also observed that some believers in the African Independent Churches use ropes of different colours round the body, ankles and neck, the vestments, the stars, the beads, the pieces of string round the wrists in order to protect or fortify themselves against evil forces. Then there is also “washings” (*isiwasho*) whereby holy water is used to wash off the negative magic or get the evil forces out of the system. All these objects are believed to have “power” which come from God, the Holy Spirit and ancestor spirits (Oosthuizen: *ibid*; cf. Ma 2000:72).

Another form of some syncretist distortion is found in the issue of mediatorship. Daneel (1991:189) has discovered that, “There is no doubt that *Christ’s mediatorship* is sometimes misconstrued in the Shona churches”. Anderson (2000:180), in his research among the African Initiated Churches in Soshanguve, South Africa, states that one ZCC (Zion Christian Church) respondent said that even God was unable to do anything without the ancestors. Another said that, “a person could not pray to God without mentioning the ancestors; they were the mediators who would make the prayer successful” (Anderson: *ibid*). The putting of Jesus Christ in the same category as ancestors as mediators between God and humanity, compromises the absoluteness and uniqueness of Christ. It is for that reason that Thomas (1985:387-397) talks about the need of a Christ-centred syncretism in which the legitimacy to translate, interpret and incarnate the Christian message into different socio-spiritual and cultural contexts is not questioned, without minimising “Christ ... the one Saviour of all, the only one able to reveal God and lead to God” (Pope John Paul II - *Redemptoris Missio* 5; cf. *The Lausanne Covenant* 3).

4.6.4 THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE RESPONSE

Although the ministry of spiritual warfare and deliverance is relatively new on the African continent, it is one of the fastest growing ministries across the denominational spectrum. Its rapid growth is ascribable mainly to the influence of itinerant evangelists like Reinhard Bonnke and others. Another contributory factor to this growth is the fact that the historic or mainline churches, in order to halt the exodus

of their members to Pentecostal/charismatic and Africa Initiated Churches, had to introduce the ministry of deliverance in their services (see Lagerwerf 1987:37). The appearance and proliferation of the charismata in many historic churches has led some to coin the phrase: “The charismatisation or pentecostalisation of the African Church”, to describe this phenomenon (see Larbi 2001:80-90). Prayers for deliverance from demons and harmful spirits are offered at many church services even during the week (see Laurent 2001:333). The number of faith-healers and those who minister in deliverance is increasing in the churches of whatever background and doctrinal persuasion on the continent.

As much as spiritual warfare appears to be making heavy inroads in Africa, it is not without problems. So many practices, some of which are biblically questionable, are conducted in the name of deliverance and helping people. Seeing that the movement is relatively new, some of its proponents and those it serves tend to be gullible because of the lack of proper theological categories and guidelines. Because spiritual warfare is predominantly based on the charismata or the gifts of the Holy Spirit without the necessity of ordination or training, most of the movement’s practitioners tend to lack theological depth which unfortunately lead to the demonisation of everyone and everything. Undoubtedly, practitioners of spiritual warfare and deliverance need to be equipped in wise, discerning counselling to avoid embarrassing and hurting those who seek their help (see Murphy 1992:491).

4.6.5 INCULTURATION RESPONSE

One of the ways in which African Christians have endeavoured to protect and fortify themselves against negative magic and spirits of evil, has been the use of devotional objects (see Lagerwerf 1987:36). In the Roman Catholic Church, for example, devotional objects like holy water, the rosary, medals and prayer books often seem to ‘replace’ the traditional fetishes earlier rejected by the missionaries. Members of the African Initiated Churches may be found using apotropaic objects as a means of self-inculturating on their way to self-fulfilment (see Nussbaum 2003:98). The purpose, albeit not always so openly stated, is to transform traditional beliefs so that Christianity is presented as an attractive and viable African alternative (Anderson 2000:216). The problem of inculturation will always be the

danger of wanting to yield too much ground to culture without allowing it to be challenged by the message of salvation (Schreier 1985:150; cf. Shorter 1988:261f; Bujo & Muya 2003:7).

4.6.6 CONCLUSIONS

Judging by the various responses, it is clear that African Christians consider the spirit world not as illusionary or just products of imagination or something depicting socio-psychological problems in a person or group, but as a reality, that the Christian faith needs to address itself to deliberately and holistically. African Christians, having known traditional ways of encountering such problems regarding the spirit world, need not feel that Christianity is unable, or unwilling for that matter, to deal with issues of the spirit or invisible realities. The fact that the western version of Christianity could not afford its messengers, in the form of missionaries, to deal with spirit-world issues, does not necessarily mean that the Bible, particularly the New Testament, is silent on the subject. The reverse is true.

4.7 SUMMATION AND CONCLUSIONS

When early missionaries came to bring the gospel to Africans, it is clear that they might have reckoned that belief and experiences in the African spirit world was hopefully going to dissipate with time if Africans were given more education and religious instruction. Such thinking was to be expected from people (missionaries) who had been born and bred in a worldview that sought to explain life in rationalistic and scientific ways rather than spiritual ones. Although African scholars have done some sterling work in terms of the concept of God in Africa, not much research has gone into other spiritual entities and realities like divinities, spirits (good and bad), ancestors, witchcraft/sorcery and diviner-healers. Many spiritual entities and experiences and the effect they have on ordinary Africans, are still not accounted for. This is partly due to the fact that many African theologians were, or are still, mentored by western theological specialists either at home or abroad. Yet, the study of the African spirit world and its impact on humans and the material world, remains significant and imperative because of its relevance to the church's missiological function and calling in Africa. Furthermore, such a study will hopefully help Christian theology discover its roots of dealing with and engaging the world of

spirits - a ministry that was a norm in the life of the believers of New Testament times and post-apostolic period. Knowing about the spirit world and being able to engage it, is not something that should be peripheral to both Christian theology and mission; it should be central. This has become more urgent given the demographics that display a tilting of Christianity to the south where communities are predominantly spirit-sensitive. If this is the case, as statistics show it is, Christian theology can no longer afford to remain a hegemony and privilege of the Euro-American theological specialists who are still entrenched in doctrinal debates of past centuries. The greater part of Christian theology must demonstrate, in its content and presentation, the inclination toward the needs of people of the southern hemisphere of which the African spirit world, among others, should receive priority attention. There is definitely no doubt that more theological input and guidance is needed in this area.

CHAPTER 5

THE SPIRIT WORLD: HERMENEUTICAL ISSUES

5.1 THE SPIRIT WORLD: JEWISH/BIBLICAL AND AFRICAN

The affinities between the Christian faith and the primal traditions have for some time now been pointed out by scholars who are interested in the study of the spirit world (see Turner 1977; Bediako 1995:94; Ferdinando 1996:103). Woven through this thesis, is a thread of evidence which is indicative of this special relationship. Turner's (1977:32) argument is that, in the history of the spread of Christianity, its major extensions have been solely into societies with primal religious systems. According to Turner, among these societies are the Mediterranean world of the early Christian centuries, the tribal peoples of Northern and Western Europe and also the primal societies of Africa, the Pacific and parts of Asia.

African peoples, as in the Mediterranean communities in the first-century world, believe in the existence of the spirit world (see Loubser 2003:225). Mugambi (1989:56) relates that in Africa, the world was believed to be peopled or inhabited by beings both visible and invisible. Among visible beings and things were human beings, animals - both domestic and wild - and plants both valuable and dangerous or poisonous for human life. The invisible beings included deities, divinities and ancestors. There was, and still is, belief that there is an interplay between the invisible and visible worlds of the one universe. Thus, the commonalities in the spirit world between the first-century New Testament communities and those of Africa, no matter how remote they may appear to be, make possible a dialogue of some kind to occur. It is against this background that this study has been undertaken.

In Jewish literature of the post-exilic or intertestamental period, there is evidence that there was a proliferation in the belief in demons, spirits and powers of evil in the period leading to the New Testament (see Schäfer 1990). Even in the New Testament times, there are instances confirming the widespread practice of magic, for example, the two Jewish magicians - Simon Magus (Acts 8:9) and Bar-Jesus

or Elymas (Acts 13:6-12). Luke also writes about certain itinerant Jewish exorcists, who had added the name of Jesus to their repertoire of magical names (Acts 19:13-20). Contrary to Old Testament and official Jewish restrictions against the use of magic, many Jews throughout the Mediterranean world adopted and further developed these occult practices of their pagan neighbours.

The prevalence of the use of magic or amuletic materials among the Jews of the first century - something which is also evident among Africans - is symptomatic of pneumatic phobia. The contention would be that if there was no fear of harm resulting from the activities of malign spirits, there would be no reason to embark on elaborate apotropaic measures. In both first-century Jewish society and in the African continent, however, there appears to have been no doubt of the sovereignty of Yahweh (Jewish) or Supreme Being (African) over the world of spirits. Although Ferdinando (1996:122) may assert that the Supreme Being(s) in Africa is not sovereign, it is something that cannot be proved conclusively. Long before the arrival of missionaries, *uNkulunkulu*, *uThixo*, *Modimo*, *Mwari*, etc., was believed to be the ultimate in creation and over creation.

However, a noticeable difference between the African spirit world and that of the Jewish/biblical one is the role played by Satan. In the African spirit world, there is no idea that the spirits are controlled by a single over-arching being who is an opponent to the Supreme Being. In Jewish religious thought, the development of the idea of the devil, Satan, also known as the arch-enemy of God and in charge of the forces of evil, had grown to such a level that the Satan figure had been taken as reality in the New Testament times (see Rev 12:9). The development of the revelation of the Satan concept, and eventually the Satan figure, had become such a reality by the time of the New Testament, that Jesus never questioned or challenged it.

The belief that the forces of evil are marshalled by their leader, the devil, is no less illustrated by the Beelzebub controversy (Lk 11:14-22 par. Mt 12:22-37; Mk 3:14-22). In the episode, demons are portrayed as operating as part of the kingdom of Satan. The casting out of demons demonstrated a clash of kingdoms, namely that of God through Christ, and that of the devil. Jesus linked the demons' being cast out, to the defeat of Satan: "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning"

(Lk 10:18 NASB). Unlike what is generally understood in primal (African) societies concerning spirits, the New Testament sees the world of evil spirits as being highly organised. In the African spirit world, spirits appear disorganised and competitive.

In the African Traditional Religion, spirits, witches and sorcerers seem to be largely autonomous in their activities, whereas in the Bible, the operations even of supernatural beings hostile to God proceed only by his permission and within limitations and boundaries set by him, that is, God. This is shown clearly in the temptations of Job and Peter (see Job 1-2; Lk 22:31-32). In the New Testament, the sovereignty of God over Satan, the spirits of evil and their activities, is never called into question.

5.2 THE RELEVANCE OF LUKE-ACTS FOR THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

The two-volume work of Luke represents a transition of preaching the gospel to predominantly Jewish audiences to those of Gentile nations. In the book of Acts, Luke shows how a religious movement that started in Jerusalem - a city regarded by Jews as the centre of their faith and nation - ended up in Rome - the Gentile capital of the Roman Empire. The movement that started with Peter as a leading figure in the (Jewish) church in Jerusalem ended up with Paul - the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 15:12; 1 Tim 2:7) - boldly preaching the kingdom of God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in Rome (Acts 28:31). For Luke, the Christian faith is not a Jewish monopoly but for all nations (see Viljoen 2003:203). This is seen in the universality of Luke's message (see 3.4.3), which, among other things, is demonstrated by the fact that God "has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). As Gentiles, Africans can share equally in the Christian faith as anyone else. Through faith in Jesus Christ they form part of the *ekklesia* that Paul and Luke talk about in Acts (see 3.5.5).

The fact that Luke has a special interest in the poor (see 3.4.1), the ostracised and the women (see 3.4.2), makes his writings relevant to the African continent, which is ravaged by abject poverty, political upheavals and wars. The message of hope that Luke offers to his readers of Christ being "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" (Lk. 1:32), cannot be overemphasised in Africa. The angelic proclamation of "peace on earth" (Lk 2:14; Acts 10:36), has never been so urgent in a continent prone to wars and rumours thereof.

Since the majority of church members in Africa are women, Luke's interest in the role played by women in the early church is of significance. Luke shows that women were active participants in the early church. They shared in the gift of salvation (Acts 16:14-15) and together with men they anticipated the gift of the Spirit. Luke also depicts women not just as mere followers, but as active supporters of the ministry of Jesus and his disciples (Lk 8:2-3). Luke's special focus on women signals hope for marginalised African women in general, and church women in particular (see the accounts of Elizabeth, Mary, Anna; cf Abogunrin 2000:11).

In the two-volume work of Luke, it is clear that his readers struggled with spirits so that there was a constant need for protective, magical or apotropaic measures. In the same way, Africa languishes under the yoke of the fear of spirits. Luke tells his audience that spirits, under the leadership and rulership of Satan, have been defeated by Christ. Luke introduces the devil very early in his gospel (4:1-13) as God's arch-enemy and as someone determined to hinder the ministry and mission of Christ. But, Luke also leaves his audience in no doubt that Satan, together with all his kingdom of spirits, has been overcome and disarmed by Christ (Lk 11:22; see 3.5.7.2).

Against the backdrop of problems facing Africa, it is important to begin to appreciate Luke's perspective on soteriology which is comprehensive (see 3.5.3). Luke does not see salvation as concerning only the soul and the hereafter; he sees salvation as also related to a person's body, health, victory over demonic powers, provision of daily needs and the security and total well-being of the individual and society (Viljoen 2003:206). According to Viljoen, the Jesus that would be meaningful, especially in the African context, is the one Luke proclaims as the all-conquering and all-sufficient Saviour who has broken into the domain of Satan and his demons. Furthermore, as far as Viljoen is concerned, the conquest of Satan and the kingdom of spirits by Christ, as presented by Luke, should not only be proclaimed but also applied in the life of the Christian community.

The comprehensive understanding of salvation in the writings of Luke can be applied to the African context for the benefit of the believers. Powell (192:6) rightfully describes that, "salvation in Luke-Acts means participation in the reign of God" (see 3.5.4) - the reign of God which is both present (Lk 11:20; 17:21) and a future

reality (Acts 22:18, 29-30). The participation in the reign of God, according to Viljoen (2003:205), may involve either the introduction of positive features (peace, blessing, eternal life - see 3.5.3) or the removal of negative ones (disease, demons, sin). In presenting salvation as participation in the reign of God, Luke makes no distinction between physical, spiritual or social aspects of salvation (Lk 5:23). God is concerned with the salvation of all aspects of human life (see Viljoen 2003:205). Anything that militates against the fullness of life, whether it be the bondage of sin, disease, demonic oppression, death, or social ostracisation, is challenged in the broadened concept of salvation in Luke-Acts. This understanding of salvation is not only what Africa needs, it is also an invitation that demands a response (Lk 9:23-26; see Bosch 1991:413).

5.3 THE QUESTION OF THE ANCESTORS

Although the issue of ancestors, and what the Bible says about it, requires a comprehensive inquiry, it is vital that we comment on it here, because it rightfully belongs to the study of the spirit world. Ferdinando (1996:122-123) correctly points out that in the Bible, there is near total absence of reference to interventions by the dead in the affairs of the living. In both the Old and the New Testaments, there is no mention of the dead taking the initiative to make contact with their living family members, neither to communicate, nor to harm, nor to bless. However, there are several scriptural passages that condemn, implicitly or explicitly, attempts by the living to contact the dead or the “living-dead” (a term preferred by Mitchell and Mbiti). In Israel, there was to be a total ban on anyone who “consults the dead” (Dt 18:11). One of the sins of Israel condemned by Isaiah, is that people tried to consult the dead: “When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?” (Isa 8:19).

Though the Bible is emphatic on its ban on consulting the dead, it does leave open the possibility that the dead may communicate with the living. In the well-known story of the ‘witch’ of Endor (1 Sam 28:3-25 - see 2.5.4 pp 90-92), the medium was surprised that Samuel actually was brought up from the dead. This witch was apparently completely overwhelmed by what seems to have been an utterly novel experience for her. The episode, however, does not tell us whether the bringing up

of Samuel was a demonic manifestation or whether God permitted the communication of the dead with the living. What is clear, though, is that the communication did take place. In the New Testament, we are told about Moses and Elijah (long dead) conversing with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. These may be unique cases within the corpus of biblical revelation, but they nevertheless show the possibility of the dead communicating with the living.

The struggle of the African with the idea of the veneration or mediation of the ancestors is both historical and universal. Craffert (1999:80) points out that, while in the Hebrew Bible there is a dissociating of the tombs and the dead from the cult of Yahweh, there is literary and archaeological evidence that God's people wrestled with the question of ancestors. Craffert tells that among the Jews there was a trend that acknowledged the presence of function occupied by ancestors in community affairs. The ancestors were a gateway to the divine and were considered a continuous influence in human affairs. Visiting the tombs and even making prayers there, was part of the trend. The early church also adopted this line of tradition from their faith ancestors. Christians visited the tombs of the saints and martyrs of the church and these became focal points for early Christian worship (Craffert 1999:81).

The cult of the dead, to a greater or lesser degree, still remains a bone of contention in the African church. There is a view that states that ancestors are demonic manifestations meant to derail the faithful (see Nyirongo 1997; Turaki 1999; Kato 1975). Another view holds that ancestors are co-mediators with Christ (see Kabasélé 1991:125-126; 1998:111-112; Setiloane 1976). Yet still, there are those who believe that the doctrine of the Communion of Saints can be a useful framework for incorporating African ideas about ancestors into Christian theology (see Fasholé-Luke 1974).

Admittedly, these are important considerations and contributions towards the complex issue of ancestral veneration. Of all the various theological positions adopted by scholars, it is the demonising of the ancestors that becomes problematic in the conveyance of the gospel in Africa. In the African traditional religions, ancestors were never considered demonic or as part of evil spirits. It is unfortunate that the negativity with which missionaries viewed the ancestors has predisposed some

African Christians to treat such a sensitive issue in a rather haphazard way. The labeling of the ancestors as demonic has caused serious damage to the cause of the gospel in Africa. What could have been more theologically correct is that as “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14), so the evil spirits can masquerade as ancestors to derail God’s people from the worship of the true God. But equating ancestors with evil spirits is untenable if viewed within the framework of the African traditional religio-cultural perspective.

The concept of the intermediary in Africa that was played by the ancestors in the past compares well with the Christian teaching of Christ’s mission of connecting humanity with God. But to suggest that ancestors continue to play a mediating function outside Christ or with Christ, appears to compromise the very unique mission of Christ. Biblically speaking, the mission of salvation and mediation does not seem to fall within the competence of ancestors. Even though Luke makes the ancestors of Christ immediately present through an elaborate genealogy (Lk 3:23-38), there is equally no doubt that Jesus is presented as someone who is given the throne of his ancestor, David, to rule a kingdom that shall have no end (Lk 1:32-33). His greatness, absolute uniqueness and highest nature of his divine Sonship are unparalleled. In his papal encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* (5), Pope John Paul II reminds us that Christ is one universal mediator, the one Saviour of all and the only one able to reveal God and lead to God (cf. *Lausanne Covenant* 3; Acts 4:12).

5.4 WORLDVIEW

The omission or lack of interest in the African spirit world by the early missionaries who brought the gospel to Africa, has been ascribed, and rightly so, to problems relating to the worldview. Kraft (1989:87) has correctly observed that, whereas most people in the world are primarily concerned with the spirit and human world, westerners generally are almost exclusively concerned with how to conquer and manipulate the material world. Silvos (1994:103-104) attributes this mechanistic worldview to the onslaught of the Enlightenment with its resultant theological presuppositions (cf. Haikola 2003:764). The problem with the western worldview is that it virtually ignores the spirit world and, in the process, treats people, the universe and even God, as if they were machines. The danger of such a worldview is

that there is a desire to develop precise theological formulations and dependable rules of human behaviour, deriving from the belief that God and the people are like machines.

The influence of the Enlightenment and the resultant mechanistic worldview dealt biblical studies, especially those of the New Testament, a serious blow. As the vast majority of biblical scholars are outside the culture they are investigating, their outcomes tend to be rather *etic* than *emic*. The terms “emic” and “etic” can be explained as two different viewpoints from which one studies human behaviour: *etic* is a view from outside the system under study, and *emic* is a view from within the system under study (see Pike 1954; Pilch 1995:135). If biblical scholars and researchers do not use a comparative approach, they run the risk of interpreting ancient Mediterranean texts anachronistically and ethnocentrically. Pilch (1996:135) is quite correct in pointing out that western interpreters often make a mistake of trying to analyse ancient Middle Eastern persons with tools developed in the western culture. The unfortunate outcome is that the researcher transports this analysis to a culture foreign to his/hers and this makes his or her viewpoint an imposed *etic*.

This is exactly what has happened to the interpretation of the ancient Mediterranean texts by western scholars, theological or otherwise. Biblical texts relating about the supernatural, for example, spirit possession and exorcism, were analysed using western tools of evaluation. It is, therefore, no wonder that translators and exegetes have regularly imposed their western *emic* views as *etic* perspectives on native *emic* reports. Spirit possession and exorcism, instead of being interpreted within the socio-religious framework of the first-century Mediterranean persons as realities, they were explained in psychological terms.

It is rather obvious that in interpreting biblical texts, especially on spirit possession and exorcism, the highly supernaturalistic worldview of the New Testament that believes in the existence and activities of spirits, was superseded by a rational and scientific worldview of the West. In our investigation into the worldview of Luke-Acts, we have seen that the reality of the spirits and their activities is never questioned (see 3.5.7).

When the early missionaries came to Africa, they displayed a spirit-world denying attitude to their audience. In imposing this mechanistic worldview upon the spirit-sensitive communities of Africa, the missionaries were not alone but in cahoots with their colonial partners. The western worldview was not just spiritually communicated by missionaries; it was enforced politically and in some cases, militarily, as well. In many ecclesiastical situations, this resulted in African converts going to church on Sunday to serve the God of the missionaries, but during the week in the wake of existential crises, they (African Christians) would consult the shaman or other medicine- and spirit specialist. The perception was that the God of the missionaries could not handle hostile spirits or attacks of witchcraft and sorcery which torment people on a daily basis.

Much has been said about Bultmann's famous, if excruciatingly confusing, phrase, that one must demythologise myth. This led many New Testament scholars and researchers to question the historicity of some, if not all, supernatural occasions in the New Testament. Many biblical scholars still operate within the Bultmannian paradigm. What is often forgotten, though, is that demythologisation was Bultmann's way of contextualising a highly supernaturalistic worldview of the New Testament for a materialistic audience of the western world. But the uncritical transplanting of the 'demythologised' version of the gospel deprived African Christians of the holistic way in which Christ and the early Christians viewed and solved problems.

If Durkheim's (1995) classical definition of religion in which he emphasises that the function of religion is to constitute an order that makes reality understandable to the individual, or Einstein's (1934) suggestion that a human being has a need to organise the world in order to feel safe and secure, are to be believed as valid, then the mechanistic worldview of the western missionaries did not only miss the general function of religion to the spirit-sensitive communities of Africa, it also displayed lack of fidelity to biblical revelation, especially that of the New Testament which is very supernaturalistically oriented. Unfortunately it has taken western researchers (including biblical scholars) long to realise that science is one element in viewing the world and that it is no longer the sole element and perhaps not even the strongest element in building a worldview today because, as Haikola (2003:774-776) has observed, science, despite its successes and achievements in the modern world, is incomplete, relative and uncertain. Moreover, the imposition of the west-

ern (traditional Christian) interpretation of the New Testament, especially, has deprived African Christians and other Third World Christians (who happen to form a greater number of world Christian population in terms of demographics) an opportunity to equally participate in the shaping and ownership of the faith they so dearly cherish, as Gentile Christian communities did in the time of Luke.

5.5 THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE BIBLICAL SPIRIT WORLD

Whereas issues pertaining to the spirit world have eluded most New Testament scholars in the past, it is a welcome shift that contemporary historical Jesus scholars in North America have begun to show a great interest in the world of spirit (*kwelemimoya*) and manifestations thereof - exorcisms, healings, visions, etc., - that pervade the gospel narratives. In Great Britain, a similar orientation can be discerned from the work of Dunn (1975). The contribution of social sciences to New Testament scholarship in terms of the spirit world has been immensely helpful in that some supernatural phenomena in the New Testament, especially in the gospel narratives, that were explained in psychoanalytic or psychiatric terms in the past as mere multiple personality disorders, are being revisited and interpreted within the cultural understanding of the first-century Middle Eastern persons.

The purpose in doing this, according to Malina (2001:xi), is to present, from an area of cultural anthropology, some useful models that might aid in fathoming the social-system context of the behaviour of the people presented in the New Testament. Such an approach, in Malina's view, will certainly be of great value in making the New Testament intelligible (cf. Neufeld 1996; Neyrey 1998; DeMaris 2000). The purpose for using anthropological models in the New Testament study is to comprehend the documents in terms of the social systems in which they were originally proclaimed. The study of comparative studies, such as psychological anthropology and other anthropological disciplines is pertinent to biblical studies because most of the researchers investigating ancient Mediterranean texts like the New Testament, do so from outside the culture under study. This helps the researcher, to some extent of course, to avoid imposing his/her etic (e.g. western) interpretation on an otherwise emic (e.g. ancient Mediterranean) report.

The fullest use of anthropological models in historical research has been John Pilch's application of altered states of consciousness (see Pilch 1996). A wide range of conscious states that reasonably fall under the ASCs are, alterations in thinking, disturbed sense of time, loss of control, change in expression of emotions, change in bodily image, perceptual distortions, changes in meaning and significance assigned to experiences and perceptions, a sense of the ineffable, feelings of rejuvenation and hypersuggestibility (Ludwig 1968:77-83; DeMaris 2000:13). Bourguignon (1979) reports that a review of the data from a world sample of 488 societies showed that 87 percent of these have institutionalised forms of altered states. In the Circum-Mediterranean world, 80 per cent of the societies experience and use altered states of consciousness (ASCs). Even though both behaviours and beliefs show marked regional variation, in view of such a very high percentage of societies having altered states, it is quite clear that such behaviour is neither psychopathological nor a figment of scholarly imagination (see Zaretsky and Leone 1974:223). Societies lacking both the behaviours and the beliefs form a very small minority. In actual fact, a society may have trance and give it a different interpretation, or it may believe in spirit possession but label it as a cause of illness or some other alteration in capacity rather than in consciousness.

In understanding the spirit world, Bourguignon's report is useful because she looked at altered states globally. In doing so, she identified two major ways that human cultures understand altered states of consciousness (see Bourguignon 1973:13-23). The first way, trance corresponds to shamanism and involves the temporary absence of the soul or spirit from the body and travel to, and interaction with spirits, in an alternate realm (see Walsh 1993:742). The second, possession trance, involves temporary or permanent entry into a person or persons (Bourguignon 1979:261; cf. DeMaris 2000:14). In applying the model of shaman to Jesus, Pilch finds that the story of Jesus in the gospels matches the typical shamanic biography closely, a key feature of which is the entry into an altered state of consciousness to allow journey to, or contact with, another reality, namely, the spirit world (see Pilch 1995; 1996; 1998a).

The application of the model of altered states of consciousness to the gospel narratives may be relatively new and causing uneasiness among modern biblical schol-

arship about the use of such formal anthropological models, but such an approach will go a long way towards making New Testament studies intelligible to spirit-sensitive communities of Africa and elsewhere. Disciplines like anthropological psychology and models based on these social scientific research reports offer far more suitable tools for analysing the ancients (e.g. Mediterranean persons) in reliable, cross-cultural fashion (see Pilch 1996:138).

5.6 JESUS, THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE SPIRIT WORLD: LESSONS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

Jesus and the early church accepted the spirit world and its manifestations as real. There is no evidence that either Jesus or the early church was accommodating popular superstitions. Though the argument that the Jewish understanding of demonology was influenced to a rather large extent by the teachings of Zoroastrianism (Persia) during exile is a valid one, there is no evidence in the gospel narratives that Jesus challenged the Jewish understanding of the existence and activities of the devil and demons as not true. Instead, Jesus, in his public ministry engaged the devil (see Lk 4:1-12 par Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Fisher 2003:206). To Jesus, the phenomena associated with demons were as real as the sicknesses and physical infirmities which he cured or as the human, religious and political authorities who opposed him (see Yamauchi 1986:131f).

In the gospels, the demons are presented as spirits of superhuman strength that are impure and evil and in rebellion against God. In the Beelzebub controversy (Lk 11:14-26 par. Mt 12:22-32), it is clear that Jesus understood the demons as not working in an autonomous, independent and haphazard manner. But he understood them as acting under the direction of Satan and as part of his kingdom. Thus, Jesus viewed his enemy as a unified kingdom of evil which was hostile to him and his mission.

The gospels reveal the authority of Jesus over Satan and demons. The exorcisms were the victorious combat with the devil and his kingdom. The occasions of the casting out of demons were signalling the fact of the arrival and nearness of God's kingdom and a preparation for its coming in fullness. In the exorcisms performed by Christ, it becomes clear that God's immanence could not be doubted - as a

God who was concerned with the daily concerns of his people and creation. Though the exorcisms were not necessarily the final victory over evil, they signalled an effective anticipation of the eschatological events. The final overthrow and destruction of the devil and his spirits, is certain.

The remarkable thing is that Jesus never kept the authority he exercised over demons just for himself, but he also gave the same authority to his disciples (Lk 9:1). Furthermore, the disciples are not only given the authority of Christ over demons, but also the usage of the name of Jesus in the casting out of demons. Luke reports that the seventy disciples returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name” (Lk 10:17). In banishing the spirit of divination in the girl at Philippi, Paul said, “I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her” (Acts 16:18). Luke also tells us that when the sons of Sceva, who were itinerant Jewish exorcists, tried to use the name of Jesus in their magical formula to exorcise demons, they were overpowered and embarrassed by the demoniac.

In the sequel to his gospel, Luke continues to relate that in the ‘absence’ of Jesus Christ, his disciples did not stop with the ministry of exorcism. Luke tells in Acts 5:16 that, “The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits and they were healed”. Later, in Acts 8:7 when Philip, the evangelist, not the apostle, went to Samaria, he preached and performed miracles: “For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice.”

As much as we need to acknowledge that the ministry of exorcism continued in the early church as recorded in Acts, there are other important aspects that are associated with exorcism that we must note. Christian exorcism is a ministry that should be carried out in the disciples’ obedience to, and relationship with God, and prayer. This comes out clearly in Jesus’ reply to his ineffective disciples after they had failed to exorcise a demon: “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer” (Mk 9:29). The addition of fasting to this verse in some ancient manuscripts, is indicative that it (fasting) was used as an accompaniment to prayer and this could be a reflection of liturgical practice in the early church done on serious occasions (cf. Acts 13:3).

In the gospel according to Matthew the issue of obedience in relation to exorcism, becomes pronounced: “‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many, mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers’” (Mt 7:22-23). Jesus does not question their exercise of prophecy or performance of exorcisms and other mighty works. But it appears that the people who are denied entry into the kingdom of heaven having done these things, did what they did not with the right attitude, nor out of obedience to God and dependence on him (cf. Ferguson 1984:16). When the seventy disciples came back rejoicing in their victory over demons, Jesus called their attention to the fact that their joy had to be based on the assurance that their names were written in heaven (Lk 9:20). In the gospels, it is clear that Jesus was effective because he was always in perfect submission to the will of the Father (cf. Jn 6:38). This complete obedience to the will of the Father is illustrated more clearly in the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness by the devil (Lk 4:1-13).

Something that cannot be emphasised enough in the ministry of exorcism, is the crucial role of the Holy Spirit. In the Beelzebub controversy, Jesus attributes his ability to cast out devils and to work miracles, to the presence of the Holy Spirit in him (see Lk 11:20 par. Mt 12:28), and the apostles after him, were equally convinced thereof (see Acts 10:38). Reading the Acts of the Apostles, we see very clearly how important healings, miracles and exorcisms were, in the infant church (see Cantalamessa 2003:196; Boer 1961). In the occasions of power encounters that we survey in the book of Acts in this thesis, it becomes clear that the Holy Spirit played a pivotal role in combating the forces of evil and the agents of the kingdom of darkness. In Acts 8, the encounter with Simon the sorcerer coincided with the coming of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas confront Elymas the magician after “being sent out by the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:4). In Acts 16:6 the Holy Spirit forbade the missionaries to speak the word in Asia but instead, as we can deduce, led them through a dream to Macedonia (v. 9). While in Philippi, Paul and Silas cast out a spirit of divination from a slave girl which was obviously an indication of the presence of the Spirit in them. Paul, like Jesus, used a word in casting out the demon. In Acts 19, we are told that after the falling of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples in Ephesus and the embarrassment that befell the sons of Sceva, many of the believers came, confessed and divulged their magical practices.

When realising that their magical books or *Ephesian Letters* were not compatible with the requirements and the teachings of the gospel of Christ, they brought these books and burnt them in the sight of all. Apparently, after the young believers saw the extraordinary miracles God did by the hands of the Spirit-filled Paul, and also seeing diseases leaving sick bodies and the evil spirits coming out of them, it dawned on the believers that the split-level Christianity, or the dual faith they had hitherto adopted, fell short of God's standard. It is clear, therefore, that Luke rejects the use of divination (in the case of the Philippian slave-girl) and magic (in the cases of Simon Magus, Elymas the sorcerer and in Ephesus) in the life of the Christian community. Instead, he challenges them to use spiritual means, as opposed to magic (see 2.6.7.1 and 2.6.7.2; Eph 6:10-18; 2 Cor 10:3-6). Faith in the sufficiency of God's power is what is encouraged for Christian believers.

It is this last power encounter in Acts 19 that has a direct bearing on the church in Africa. When the disciples in Ephesus realised the power of the gospel they had believed in through the miracles of Paul, they repented of their magical practices and literally forsook their God-dishonouring deeds. There is enough inclination to assume that the magical practices they were involved in were good and of an apotropaic nature. Seeing that Ephesus was believed to be intensely populated with spiritual beings (see Eph 6), there is reason to believe that the Christian converts thought that their magical gadgets and *Ephesian Letters* could play as amuletic material over and above their salvation in Christ and the gift of the Holy spirit. When they saw the power of God in action, their fears of the invisible spirit world or attacks of demonic manifestations, dissipated. When the Ephesians realised what could be achieved in the name of the Lord Jesus, they repented and paid allegiance only to Christ, the Lord over the spirits. The result was a mighty renewal and outreach in the region. God's people throughout the centuries have had to come to the realisation that spiritual and biblical means of combating demons and attacks of witchcraft are more powerful than shaman-prescribed means.

5.7 DEMONISATION: A CRITIQUE

In this thesis, we have already seen, in the Jewish background studies to the New Testament, how the belief in demons proliferated. The Essenes called themselves the "sons of light" and indicated the majority as "sons of darkness", the "congregation of traitors", as people who "depart from the way, having transgressed the law

and violated the precept” (*CD* 1:13-20). The Essenes retell the whole history of Israel in terms of this cosmic war. Even in earliest times, they say, “the Prince of Light raised up Moses” (*CD* 5:18; cf. *I QM* 19:10-12) but the Evil One, here called Beliar, aroused opposition to Moses among his own people.

The demonisation of enemies was not just unique to them. In doing so, they shared traits with other Jewish groups, which in turn, resembled other communities in the first-century Mediterranean world. But this was acutely felt and believed among the Jewish people based on the belief that they had been peculiarly chosen by God to be his people. Anyone who was deemed not to follow dogmatic rules according to some particular group, was considered demonised.

Spiritual warfare between God and Satan, according to Pagels (1995:13), serves primarily to interpret human relationships - especially all-too-human conflict, in supernatural form. The figure of Satan becomes, among other things, a way of characterising one’s actual enemies as the embodiment of transcendent forces. Even for many readers of the gospels ever since the first century, the thematic opposition between God’s Spirit and Satan has vindicated Jesus’ followers and demonised their enemies. Surprisingly, even Jesus was demonised by members of the out-group (see *Jn* 7:20; 8:48). Jesus was also accused of casting out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons (see *Luke* 11:18-19). Even church leaders of the post-apostolic period continued with the theme of demonising dissidents within the Christian movement. They discerned in the dissidents the presence of Satan infiltrating among the most intimate enemies of all, that is, other Christians or as they called them, heretics.

As much as belief in the existence and activities of demons is valid biblical teaching, as this thesis shows, we would be economical with the truth if we were to say it is an arena devoid of problems. The first has already been mentioned, which is the demonisation of one’s enemies. It has caused irreparable rifts in congregations because some people would label an individual or a group as Satanic or demonic. But to be overly preoccupied with it is not only problematic in Christian congregations, it also affects the mission of the church in the area of the theology of religions. People outside the Christian faith, whether they be Moslems, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, etc., are seen as demonic, instead of being embraced in the love of Christ as

objects of God's saving concern. There was a time when the African culture was wholly condemned as barbaric and diabolical. This attitude continues to bedevil the church's interaction and dialogue with believers in the African Traditional Religion.

Another problematic area with belief in the existence of demons, is that people tend to run away from personal responsibility and accountability. In moral lapses, people tend to say, "The devil (or demon) made me do it." In this thesis, we show that belief in the devil and demons does not mean abdication from personal responsibility, because God has created human beings as free moral agents (see Bostock 2003:328-329).

5.8 PASTORAL COUNSELLING

One of the problems with the early missionaries was to ignore issues related to witchcraft, sorcery and evil spirits. At most, the feeling was to pay less attention to these phenomena. The outcome has been that, two centuries down the line, the church in Africa still struggles with these issues. Even to this day, some pastors express uneasiness in dealing with these spirit-world phenomena. But we need to commend the fact that there are growing numbers of ministers across the spectrum who agree that these African realities should be faced rather than ignored, because such an omission in the church's missiological function, perpetuates the status quo in which African Christians find themselves involved in split-level Christianity. Instead of consulting mediums or medicine-specialists outside the ecclesiastical circles, African Christians need to be aware of the repertoire of spiritual tools that are available to every believer in Christ. Instead of holding on to magical practices in order to protect and fortify themselves, the Ephesian believers, upon seeing and hearing of the spiritual tools, decided to put their trust wholly in God. This is the challenge of church leaders in Africa: That Jesus Christ is Lord over hostile spirits and that he has come to liberate his people from whatever oppresses them, including fear of the spirit world. The Lucan community had to see and hear this from Paul, their apostolic leader. The God of the church who is the protector, provider and

shepherd of his people, and who revealed himself in Jesus, is alive in his Holy Spirit to take care of the needs of his people on a day-to-day basis. Albl (2002) reminds us that the healing of the sick in the Letter of James formed part of the health care system for the congregation.

5.9 DISCIPLESHIP

Adeyemo (1997:71) perhaps touches a sensitive, yet right, cord in pointing out that the church in Africa needs more discipleship than what church leaders realise. He defines discipleship as persuading people to forsake their ignorance, or indifference, or scepticism, or pride, or corruption or wickedness or any other vices, and to embrace Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and to join the fellowship of his church. Discipleship is more than conversion; it is addition to the church through geometrical progression. Discipleship makes every believer responsible and reproductive.

Luke is at pains in showing us what happened after the Holy Spirit fell upon a group of disciples. On that day, several thousands received the word of God according to Luke. But Luke also tells us that those who received the word of God were baptised and they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship (see Acts 2:41-42). There was a need to disciple the converts into the sound doctrine of their new faith. For Luke, Christian discipleship is portrayed, not only as the acceptance of a master's teaching, but as the identification of oneself with the master's way of life. Similarly, the area of the spirit world in Africa calls for intense and extensive discipleship. Africa is said to be experiencing one of the fastest growth rates in the church, but we must concern ourselves with qualitative growth as well.

5.10 TOWARDS A SPIRIT-WORLD AFFIRMING THEOLOGY

5.10.1 THEOLOGY OF THE INVISIBLE

Since Christian theology is still dominated by the North/Western paradigm which is largely scientific, there is a need for shifting the focus of theology to the needs of people of the South/Third World, whose thinking is still dominated by primal spiri-

tuality. Until the invisible world is taken seriously by those who minister the word in Africa, the split-level situation will remain with us for a long time in Africa. African Christians will continue to worship in churches on Sundays but during the week when they face crises, they will consult the shaman, diviners and mediums. In the face of the lack of theological response to issues of the spirit world, people will continue to respond in their usual traditional ways, no matter how unChristian these methods are. It is against this backdrop that Hiebert (1983) has written his article on *The Flaw of the Excluded Middle*, in which he points out that the western worldview has a blind spot that makes it difficult for many western missionaries to understand, let alone answer, problems related to spirits, ancestors, divination and astrology. A theology of the invisible must take seriously a trinitarian understanding of God who is continually involved in his creation by his providence, presence and power. Such a theology must also take seriously the influence of Satan and demons. In order to do that, Christian theology must rediscover its rich legacy in dealing with the spirit world from Christians of the early church, who boldly engaged the spirit world to the benefit of those who were coming to the faith. Christian theology, in making such a provision, will dissuade many African Christians in their attempt to deal with unseen powers through ritual means, magic or divination.

5.10.2 A HOLISTIC MESSAGE

For a western missionary to be able to address the spiritual needs of Africa, it will be necessary for him or her to detach him/herself from presuppositions, such as dualism, which sees everything in terms of secular and spiritual, profane and sacred. It is important to realise that in Africa, reality, is viewed holistically. Oduyoye (1985:11) reminds us that in Africa, spiritual needs are as important for the body as bodily needs are for the soul. There is no dichotomy of reality. Primal spirituality requires that the Christian message answers to the everyday needs of the people and not only on Sundays when people go to church. When considering the ministry of Jesus Christ, it is remarkable that he was concerned with the needs of the ordinary person. At primal spirituality level, the concern is for healing, deliverance from the demonic, protection from the invisible powers of this world. This obviously involves the need for power encounter. In our survey of Luke-Acts in this thesis, it has become clear that Jesus and the apostles after him never shirked from their responsibility in dealing with spirit-world related issues in their declaration of the

whole counsel of God for the whole creation. This is the heritage that modern Christians, especially those coming from the African continent, need to rediscover. The Christ of the New Testament is what Africa needs. Instead of just presenting dogmatic formulations and debates of the European past, Africa requires that a holistic gospel that addresses all the spheres and exigencies of life be given to its people. This will be a holistic liberation indeed. This is the comprehensive salvation that the Jesus of Luke-Acts offers.

5.10.3 CONTEXTUALISATION

The mandate of Christ to the church of reaching all nations with the gospel (see Lk 24:47; Acts 1:8 and parallels) places a responsibility on the church's shoulders to contextualise its message (see Hesselgrave and Rommen 1989). The task of the church is to make the message of Jesus Christ relevant to our age and to people of various worldviews, cultures and psychologies. The gospel is relevant to all ages, cultures and peoples but its communication must be contextualised in order for it to be experienced as the living message of God. This is what has been lacking in Africa. When early missionaries came to Africa, they imposed a western worldview and a spirituality that lacked a relevance in addressing African spiritual needs. The early missionaries were not anthropological experts and thus lacked context analysis which can become a very helpful tool if one is to serve the community as an interpreter of socio-religious events (see Mazibuko 2003: 209; cf. Ndlazi 2003:103f). The need to contextualise the gospel message is not just an African requirement; it is something that has occurred throughout the history of the Christian church. The challenge in contextualisation, however, remains a proposal that the gospel message needs to be presented in a scripturally sound and culturally viable manner.

5.10.4 AFRICAN BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

The need to interpret the Bible from the perspective of the African experience, is gaining momentum among African scholars. Despite the many shortcomings of the early missionaries in their endeavour to bring the message of Jesus Christ to Africans, they succeeded at least in translating the Bible into African languages and teaching Africans to read it "with their own eyes" (Ukpong 1995). Whereas Afri-

cans were told by western-inclined missionaries that the miracles of Jesus and the early Church belonged to past history, in reading the Bible for themselves, Africans discovered a Jesus who healed the sick, made the lame walk and restored sight to the blind. In the Bible, the Africans discovered a Jesus who drove out demons from people and confronted the power of Satan. This is a spirituality that many African Christians are beginning to appropriate and actualise in their communities which the traditional church chose to ignore. Because this type of spirituality is “scratching where it itches” (Kraft 1979), it answers problems and concerns facing the African people on a daily basis, thus making the Christian faith attractive to many in sub-Saharan Africa today. Whereas in the past, biblical hermeneutics concerned itself with questions asked in the western world, it is now the task of African biblical hermeneutics to address itself to questions and concerns that Africans are asking on a daily basis. These questions, which come from a certain conceptual frame of reference, demand a new mode of reading the Bible that responds to that conceptual frame of reference (see West 2002; Dube 2002; Okure 2002:42). This is aptly put by Mugambi (2001:13) when he says that Africans need to reassert “the power of naming and interpreting our world”. Such an approach, though, is not just a return to a literal reading of the Bible, but it is a reading that would be critical in its own way, paying attention to the African socio-cultural concerns and problems (see Ukpong 1995:4; Kwenda 2002:151).

5.11 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Since the study of the spirit world in the Bible and the African context is such a wide subject, it is unavoidable that in such a limited investigation like this one, other aspects would be left unaddressed. It is therefore the researcher’s pleasure in mentioning a few of these:

- (a) Seeing that this study focuses on the impact of evil spirits on the material world, it is obviously important that the effect of good spirits in the New Testament be investigated, especially in reference to the African context.
- (b) Belief in the spirit world as it unfolds in funerary rites among African Christians.
- (c) Ancestors in the light of the New Testament writings.

(d) Exorcism of places.

(e) The role of spirits in sex.

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