

# “Apotropaic” Tactics in the Matthean Temptation

by  
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## Abstract

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls are a number of texts that provide insight into demonological beliefs and practices in Second Temple Judaism. Some passages are concerned principally with providing safety from demonic influence. This anti-demonic orientation is expressed in two fundamental ways: the first is *exorcistic* and intends to relieve a person of *current* demonic affliction; the second is *apotropaic* and seeks protection from *future* demonic harm. Assessments of exorcistic and apotropaic works have benefited scholars of both early Jewish and early Christian literature. However, the majority of discussions which intersect Qumran studies with demonological traditions in the Synoptic Gospels have typically focused on exorcism.

Still, the growing interest in preventative, apotropaic prayer and the illumination of this tradition by the Qumran material is resulting in recent endeavours to broaden the conversation about anti-demonic elements in the gospels. Building on the latest contributions, I analyse the account of the Temptation in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 4:1-11) with the aim of demonstrating the presence of apotropaic features in the pericope. Specifically, two components of the narrative are considered: quotations from (1) Deuteronomy and (2) Psalm 91. The nature and function of these biblical quotations in the gospel text are examined against the backdrop of anti-demonic traditions from Qumran. This comparison reveals a similarity between aspects of the Temptation and early Jewish apotropaisms. Not only does this suggest the likelihood of analogous apotropaic features in Qumran texts and a Matthean narrative, it puts key parts of the pericope into sharper focus.

## Keywords

Demonology, apotropaic, Matthean temptation, Dead Sea Scrolls

# 1. Introduction

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered at Qumran there are a number of texts that provide insight into demonological beliefs and practices in Second Temple Judaism. Some of these texts are concerned principally with defending oneself against demonic influence. This anti-demonic orientation is expressed in one of two fundamental ways: in the first way, which is *exorcistic*, a person is relieved of *current* affliction caused by a demon; in the second way, which is *apotropaic*, preventative measures are taken, via petition or incantation, to ensure safety from *future* demonic harm. Assessments of exorcistic and apotropaic works have benefited scholars of both early Jewish and early Christian literature. However the majority of discussions which intersect Qumran studies with demonology in the Synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, and Luke) have typically focused on exorcism.<sup>1</sup>

Given the growing interest in apotropaic prayer and the illumination of this tradition by the Qumran material, there have been some recent efforts to broaden the conversation about anti-demonic elements in the gospels. The scholar David Flusser initially noted the similarity between apotropaic pleas in the *Prayer of Levi* (4Q213a), *Plea for Deliverance* (11Q5 column xix), and the Matthean Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13).<sup>2</sup> Flusser's observation has subsequently been engaged more thoroughly.<sup>3</sup> An article by David Lincicum addresses the apotropaic use of scripture in Second Temple texts and amulets.<sup>4</sup> Lincicum initiates his study of scriptural apotropaisms in Jewish practice by comparing them to quotations from Deuteronomy in the Temptation pericope. This possible similarity provides an opportunity for questioning whether or not apotropaic traditions are present in yet another Matthean narrative.

Therefore, this paper analyses the account of the Temptation in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 4:1-11; cf. Appendix) with the aim of demonstrating the

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

2 David Flusser, "Qumran and Jewish 'Apotropaic' Prayers," *IEJ* 16 (1966): 194-205; repr. in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988).

3 See especially Benjamin Wold, "Apotropaic Prayer and the Matthean Lord's Prayer," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the EABS/SBL, Amsterdam, 2012).

4 David Lincicum, "Scripture and Apotropaism in the Second Temple Period," *BN* 138 (2008): 63-87.

presence of apotropaic features in the narrative. Due to an interest in the larger topic of Matthean demonology, the focus of this paper is on Matthew's account rather than the so-called "Q" narrative (Matt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13). Building on Lincicum's contribution to the issue of "scriptural apotropaism," two components of the Temptation are examined: (1) the function of Deuteronomy; and (2) the use of Psalm 91. In both of these sections particular emphasis is given to resemblances between the scriptural citations and anti-demonic devices in the Qumran scrolls. Evaluating the apotropaic elements of the text clarifies our understanding of the pericope and has repercussions for grasping the gospel's demonology as a whole. Thus, it is hoped that this endeavour will not only put key aspects of the Matthean Temptation into sharper focus, but also provide avenues for exploring further the demonology in the First Gospel. In order to attain these goals, the quotations of the law attributed to Jesus are considered first, followed by an assessment of the function of Psalm 91 in the narrative.

## 2. The Apotropaic Use of Deuteronomy

In Matt 4:1 "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."<sup>5</sup> The ensuing ten verses describe a discourse between Jesus, recently identified as God's son (3:17), and Satan, appropriately described as "the tempter" (ὁ πειράζων) (Matt 4:3).<sup>6</sup> In the narrative, Jesus is confronted with three separate temptations, each one challenging in some way the nature of his "sonship" and mission.<sup>7</sup> What is depicted at a basic level is a righteous figure who is confronted with demonic temptation. In this situation, the portrayed response of Jesus is to quote Scripture; specifically Deuteronomy. The citations come from Deut 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13 respectively. A common

<sup>5</sup> All biblical references are from the *Revised Standard Version* unless otherwise specified.

<sup>6</sup> It is quite clear that in the Temptation pericope (and in the context of Matthew's Gospel) that the antagonist "Satan" is a demonic being. The wilderness setting provides appropriate context for this interpretation since the desert was in ancient times thought to be a place of demonic presence (cf. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew I-VII: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 1 (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000)). The phrase "the tempter" (ὁ πειράζων) refers to the function or role of the devil; it is not his name. Davies and Allison remark that ὁ διάβολος (the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew שׂטן) "is the same as 'Satan' ([Matt] 4.10; 12.26; 16.23) and Beelzebul (10.25; 12.24, 27)" (Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 355). While Σατανᾶ likely implies the lexical meaning of שׂטן (i.e., "adversary") in Matthew, it is also understood as an epithet for the head or chief evil being (cf. 12:22-30).

<sup>7</sup> Satan's temptations do not dispute Jesus' status as Son of God, but rather challenge the nature of this sonship. This is reflected with the Greek εἰ which can be translated "since you are the son of God" (Ibid, 360-361). Thus, the way in which Jesus is to minister as God's son is tempted by enticement into self-serving power (4:3), forcing God's hand (4:6), and idolatry (4:9).

reason given for the use of these passages is that the tempting of Jesus in a wilderness setting carries with it a recapitulation of Israel's testing in the desert.<sup>8</sup> Quoting from Deuteronomy plays into this setting and depicts Jesus as a representative of the true Israel; he is faithful to the Torah whereas the sons of Israel were not.

However, covenantal fidelity and the desert wanderings are not the only motifs at work in these Scripture citations. It is possible that Jesus' quotations of Deuteronomy in response to Satan's temptations are being used for an apotropaic purpose. In order to discover whether this is so, it is useful to consider how Deuteronomy and other scriptural texts are used elsewhere to prevent demonic assault. There are several such contexts which may be of relevance for a discussion of the apotropaic elements found in Matt 4:1-11. The first context can be described as "scriptural apotropaism."

## 2.1 "Scriptural Apotropaism"

Lincicum surveys the use of Scripture in numerous examples of ancient apotropaic formulae and objects that are intended to "ward off" demonic evil. These range from early Jewish and Mesopotamian amulets to later Greek magical recipes and Aramaic incantation bowls. The two earliest amulets mentioned were discovered at the Ketef Hinnom site in Jerusalem, and date from between the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.<sup>9</sup> These small silver scrolls are etched with Hebrew inscriptions requesting God's protection, and the Priestly Blessing (Num 6:24-26) is discernible on at least one of them.<sup>10</sup> A number of Samaritan protection amulets quote passages from Deuteronomy, but these are dated much later.<sup>11</sup> The historical spectrum offered by Lincicum demonstrates that the apotropaic use of Scripture was a common practice

8 Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 354; and Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 137.

9 Cf. Lincicum, "Scripture and Apotropaism," 69.

10 The Priestly Blessing is quoted in Ketef Hinnom I (Ins. 14-18) and, possibly, in Ketef Hinnom II (In. 6). Each scroll requests God's protection from "evil" (עַר). In Ketef Hinnom I and (possibly) Ketef Hinnom II the word עַר appears with the definite article, leading some to interpret a request for protection from "not just anything evil, but rather *all* Evil" (Gabriel Barkay et al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A new Edition and Evaluation," *BASOR* 334 (May, 2004): 68). The phrase רַעְיָה עַר ("the rebuker of Evil") is found in Ketef Hinnom II (Ins. 4-5) suggesting possible exorcistic connotations. Although there is no explicit reference to demons in any of these amulets, an anti-demonic context and purpose of the amulets is cautiously accepted by some scholars. Cf. Gabriel Barkay, et al., "The Challenges of Ketef Hinnom," *NEA* 66:4 (2003): 162-171; Barkay, et al., "Amulets from Ketef Hinnom," 41-71; and Lincicum, "Scripture and Apotropaism," 69-71.

11 Lincicum notes that "none of these [Samaritan amulets] predate the 3<sup>rd</sup> century C.E." ("Scripture and Apotropaism," 67 n. 19).

before, during, and after the first century A.D.

While Lincicum provides a helpful inventory of amulets and incantations, Deuteronomy isn't linked explicitly to early anti-demonic praxis in a way that suggests a direct influence upon Matthew or his source. Still, a passage in the *Damascus Document* from Qumran may offer a "connecting point" between early Jewish apotropaic function and the use of Deuteronomy in the Temptation.

## 2.2 Observance of the Torah

In a manuscript of the *Damascus Document* (CD-A column xvi lines 4-5) it is translated: "And on the day on which one has imposed upon himself to return to the law of Moses, the angel Mastema will turn aside from following him, should he keep his words."<sup>12</sup> The figure "Mastema" represents the chief of evil beings and is, in this sense, equivalent to the Matthean title "Satan."<sup>13</sup> Thus, it is asserted that sustained adherence to the torah has the result of repelling Mastema. Menahem Kister interprets the passage within the framework of community.<sup>14</sup> According to Kister, returning to the law entails joining the *Yahad* (i.e., the community). Once this is done, Mastema will keep away. The idea that torah observance effectively fends off demonic evil is akin to the "genre of 'apotropaic prayers.'"<sup>15</sup> Further, if every individual outside the community is possessed (as some readings suggest), then the act of joining the *Yahad* is exorcistic.<sup>16</sup> Kister therefore understands membership of the Qumran community, characterised by torah fidelity, as having both apotropaic and exorcistic powers. If this interpretation is accepted, the passage in CD-A provides an example of an early Jewish anti-demonic function of Deuteronomy which remained elusive in Lincicum's article.

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12 Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Vol. 1; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 565.

13 In *Jubilees*, the being "Mastema" is depicted as the leader of the evil spirits (e.g. *Jub.* 10:8, 11:5). See also Philip S. Alexander, "The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Comprehensive Assessment* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 199), 341.

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

15 *Ibid.*, 170.

16 In Kister's words, "Those who do not belong to the sect are considered to be possessed by evil spirits, while the sect is immune from them." And further, "This means that joining the sect is, in fact, an act of expulsion of evil spirits (not merely in a spiritual metaphorical sense), i.e., of exorcism." (*Ibid.*, 172.) This argument is formed in large part by Kister's evaluation of "sectarian dualism" in texts such as *Damascus Document* and *1QWar Scroll*.

In a similar vein, “the law” is listed by Flusser as one of several common features in many apotropaic prayers. Esther Eshel builds on these features in her assessments of early Jewish apotropaic texts.<sup>17</sup> While neither scholar asserts Flusser’s elements as rigid criteria for classifying anti-demonic works, the Torah (or “laws of God”) does persist as a presence in a number of apotropaic expressions. When relating Kister’s ideas to the Temptation account, it is clear that joining a community is not in view here. However, the apotropaic effect of relying on the Torah described in the *Damascus Document* may be analogous to Jesus’ quotations of Deuteronomy in the face of demonic confrontation.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Jesus’ portrayed dependence on the law fits well within the pattern of apotropaic prayer outlined by Flusser and Eshel. This possible anti-demonic connotation of Deuteronomy in the gospel text warrants an evaluation the *other Scripture citation* present in the pericope: Psalm 91.

### 3. Satan’s Use of Psalm 91: An “Anti-Demonic” Feature?

In addition to Deuteronomy, the only other direct quotation in the narrative from the Hebrew Bible is from Psalm 91 (Matt 4:6). The association of this psalm to anti-demonic materials is quite striking. Among the 150 hymns that comprise the canonical Psalter, Psalm 91 readily stands out as an archetypal prayer for protection. It articulates the safety and deliverance promised to those who place their trust in God. Although the assortment of evils mentioned in the prayer is rather nonspecific, there are a variety of ancient traditions in which Psalm 91 was used to seek refuge from demonic harm. The earliest explicit connection between Psalm 91 and anti-demonic material is from Qumran. The manuscript *11QApocryphal Psalms* is comprised of several exorcism incantations together with a version of Psalm 91.<sup>19</sup> The pairing of the biblical passage with the exorcism hymns places the psalm firmly within

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17 Esther Eshel, “Apotropaic Prayers in the Second Temple Period,” in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Esther G. Chazon; Vol. 48 of *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, ed. F. García Martínez; Leiden, 2003) 69-88; and idem., “Genres of Magical Texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Die Dämonen* (eds. Hermann Lichtenberger, Armin Lange, and K. F. Diethard Römheld; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2003) 395-415. Cf. Flusser, “‘Apotropaic’ Prayers,” 203.

18 Cf. Wold, “Apotropaic Prayer and the Matthean Lord’s Prayer,” 8.

19 11Q11 is approximately dated to the mid first century AD (Brian Webster, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXXIX: Indices and an Introduction to the DJD Series*. (ed. Emanuel Tov; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 434). Psalm 91 is preserved in column vi (cf. Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. Van Der Woude, *DJD XXIII: Qumran Cave 11. II (11Q2-18, 11Q20-31)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998)).

the framework of anti-demonic ritual.<sup>20</sup> In later traditions, excerpts from Psalm 91 appear in Aramaic incantation bowls and amulets dating from Late Antiquity to the early middle Ages.<sup>21</sup> The Aramaic translation of the prayer in the Targum of Psalms contains more than a few direct references to demons.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Psalm 91 had a long tradition of being associated with the ability to “ward off” demons. The evidence suggests that this tradition would have been recognised during the time of the composition of the Synoptic Gospels. In light of the connotations of Psalm 91, it is unusual that, in the Temptation, the apotropaic prayer is invoked by Satan (Matt 4:6; Lk 4:10). This enigmatic use of the psalm has been met with various theories from biblical scholars.

### 3.1 “Inversion” Theories

Among these theories, some have observed that the portrayed exchange in the Temptation narrative carries with it an “inversion” of roles. For example, Andrei Orlov comments on veneration motif in early Jewish apocalyptic texts, and argues that the traditional roles in those motifs are reversed in the Matthean Temptation.<sup>23</sup> “Inversion” theories are also applied to the

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20 On Psalm 91 in 11Q11, see Henze, “Psalm 91,” 186-182; and Hermann Lichtenberger, “Ps 91 und die Exorzismen in 11QPsa $\alpha$ ,” in *Die Dämonen*, 416-421. Some scholars (e.g. Mika Pajunen) temper the strong anti-demonic nature of the prayer argued by others (e.g. Henze) while acknowledging the clear anti-demonic role of the prayer in 11Q11. (Cf. Mika S. Pajunen, “Qumranic Psalm 91: A Structural Analysis,” in *Scripture and Tradition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Rajja Sollamo* (eds. Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta; vol. 126 of *Supplements to the JSJ*, ed. John J. Collins; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 604-605.)

21 Cf. Alexandre H. Schiffman and Michael D. Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Geniza: Selected Texts from Taylor-Schechter Box K1*, (Semetic Texts and Studies 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992). In one instance it is noted that the psalm “was known in the early Jewish magical tradition from Talmudic times onward as an anti-demonic psalm” (Ibid, 39). On the adaptation of Psalm 91 in 11Q11 and rabbinic texts, see Eshel, “Apotropaic Prayers,” 71-74; and Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 359-365. While the apotropaic use of the psalm in later texts is emphasised and demonstrated, Eshel still refers to the biblical text of Psalm 91 as a “model” of apotropaic prayer, thus giving the impression that the psalm is classified as such. Cf. Eshel, “Apotropaic Prayers,” 74.

22 E.g., vss. 5-6 are translated: “You will not be afraid of the terror of the demons that go about in the night, nor of the arrow of the angel of death that de shoots in the daytime, nor of the death that goes about in the darkness, nor of the company of demons that destroy at noon.” David M. Stec, *The Targum of Psalms: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, vol. 16 in *The Aramaic Bible* (eds. Kevin Catcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 175.

23 He states: “It has been already demonstrated that in the temptation story Satan fulfills several functions traditionally ascribed to angelic figures, such as offices of the psychopomp and the *angelus interpres*. Yet, the elusive adversary is able to mimic not only the duties of angelic figures but also the deity himself. It is therefore possible that in the Matthean account Satan is portrayed as an idolatrous negative replica of the divine *Kavod*.” Andrei A. Orlov, “Veneration Motif in the Temptation Narrative of the Gospel of Matthew: Lessons from the Enochic Tradition” (paper presented at the Seventh Enochic Seminar “Enochic Influence on the Synoptic Gospels,” Camaldoli, Italy, July 25, 2013) 19.



invocation of Psalm 91 by Satan.<sup>24</sup> Matthias Henze, in his discussion on Luke's Temptation account, offers the following observation:

By quoting Psalm 91, the demon par excellence inverts the intention of the dictum, originally spoken to console those haunted by evil spirits, and now turns it into a tool for temptation. The point here is not so much that the devil quotes Scripture out of context, as is often remarked. To the contrary: the audacity of the satanic trial can be appreciated to its fullest only when the larger, antidemonic context of the quote is realized... When taken out of context, the devil's quote loses its edge, seems arbitrary and could be replaced by any number of passages from the Hebrew Bible. The force of the temptation lies precisely in the implied context of the quote, i.e., its antidemonic connotations which undoubtedly would have been known to Luke and his original audience.<sup>25</sup>

According to this view, Psalm 91 is employed *because* of its apotropaic overtones. The function of the psalm is inverted from one of apotropaic efficacy to one of demonic aggression. Although Henze's article does not appeal to other instances of this "inversion" tactic, similarities exist elsewhere. In order to place the inversion of the psalm within a larger anti-demonic context, it is helpful to examine a possible parallel from Qumran.

### 3.2 Anti-Demonic Tactics in *11QApocryphal Psalms*

Part of an exorcism incantation from *11QApocryphal Psalms* (henceforth, 11Q11) column v is reconstructed and translated as follows:

4 Of David. A[gainst] An incanta]tion in the name of YHW[H.  
Invoke at any time  
5 the heav[ens]. When ]he comes to you in the nig[ht,] you will [s]ay  
to him:  
6 'Who are you, [oh offspring of] man and of the seed of the holly  
one[s]? Your face is a face of  
7 [delu]sion and your horns are horns of ill[us]ion, you are darkness  
and not light<sup>26</sup>

24 Erkki Koskenniemi explains that in early Jewish tradition, holy men who were tempted by demons would use Psalm 91 to remind the demons of the created order and cause the demons to flee. However, these typical roles are inverted in the Temptation. Koskenniemi suggests: "It was [Jesus'] alleged special status [as God's son], which led the Devil to use the psalm and invert the usual roles in his attack." (Erkki Koskenniemi, "The Traditional Roles Inverted: Jesus and the Devil's Attack," *BZ* 52 (2008): 268.) I hesitate to accept Koskenniemi's theory since it hinges on the interpretation that Satan is testing *if* (not *since*) Jesus is the son of God (Ibid, 268). See also Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and Psalm 91 in Light of the Exorcism Scrolls," in P. W. Flint, J. Duhaime, and K. S. Baek (eds.), *Celebrating the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Canadian Contribution* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011) 541-55.

25 Henze, "Psalm 91," 185-186.

26 García Martínez and authors, *DJD XXIII*, 198-200.



These lines appear to be instructions for the utilisation of the exorcism formula. This includes the instruction to engage the demon verbally. Line 6 identifies the demon as “offspring of man” and “seed of the holy ones”; a description that suggests an Enochic aetiology of evil spirits which appears elsewhere in the Qumran literature.<sup>27</sup> If this is the case, the demon’s “horns” and “face” must be taken metaphorically since the Enochic beings were non-corporal. “Horns” (יִרְקָ) could represent “fear” or “power,” in the Ancient Near East, while “face” (יָנִי) could simply refer to the entity’s presence. In lines 6-7 these attributes are proclaimed to be “empty” (וּוִשׁ (from אֹוִשׁ)) and an “illusion.” Hence, lines 6-7 are more than descriptions of demonic characteristics. Rather, they are, as Philip Alexander denotes, a “strategy of psychological counter-attack.”<sup>28</sup> Namely, the practice of disparaging the demon’s features as futile is an element of the overall anti-demonic measure conveyed in the incantation.

The “psychological counter-attack” against a demon in 11Q11 can be compared with the “inversion” tool of Satan noted by Henze. In the Qumran text an effective technique is for the exorcist to mock the powerful attributes of the demon, presumably to render the being impotent. In the Temptation this technique is used against the righteous individual; the result being an authoritative anti demon prayer invoked by Satan. In this instance, the psalm would be expressed, not to “ward off” Jesus, but to display the power of Satan and to neutralise any attempt to ward *him* off. Whereas the exorcist in 11Q11 subverts the demon’s weapons of intimidation, Satan adopts this method by challenging the effectiveness of apotropaic prayer. In both instances, the tools of influence are mocked. This interpretation not only serves to demonstrate the “force of the temptation” (as Henze observes), but it accentuates the struggle for control in the narrative. A stronger argument for psychological warfare in the gospel pericope is made if Satan’s tactic is seen as a response to Jesus’ apotropaic efforts with Deuteronomy.

The use of Psalm 91 by Satan is not the only instance of a reverse anti-demonic method to be found in the gospels. In Matthew’s version of the Gadarene

<sup>27</sup> According to the tradition in the *Enochic Book of the Watchers* (1 Enoch 1-36), a number of angels transgressed and conceived children by human women. These descendants were the “giant,” half angelic, half human offspring. The violence wrought by them was punished by God with the biblical flood. Yet, since they possessed angelic lineage, they survived the deluge as spiritual entities. These “spirits of the giants” are, according to this tradition, the origins of demons. Cf. Alexander, “The Demonology of the DSS,” 337-341.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 346. Likewise, García Martínez and authors contend: “Both the face and the horns inspire fear. By proclaiming these to be delusory, the one who speaks these words negates their awesomeness” (*DJD XXIII*, 201).

Demoniacs (Matt 8:28-34) the possessed individuals, upon meeting Jesus, exclaim “what have you to do with us [τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί], O Son of God.” The expression τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί (literally “what to us and to you”) is a cryptic phrase which some think could have an apotropaic meaning.<sup>29</sup> The demoniacs follow up the question by calling out the identity of Jesus with the title “Son of God.” Use of a formulaic expression along with invoking one’s identity arguably constitutes an attempt by the demoniacs to keep Jesus at bay.<sup>30</sup> This language in Matthew 8 does not comment directly on the purpose behind Satan’s use of Psalm 91, but it offers precedent from within the Synoptic Gospels for viewing other “inversion tactics” employed by demons.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the above analysis reveals that apotropaic features are present in the Temptation pericope. One of these features is the depiction of Jesus’ reliance on Deuteronomy. The anti-demonic nature of the Deuteronomy quotations is highlighted when compared to a passage in the *Damascus Document*. Matthew’s purpose in ascribing quotations from Psalm 91 to Satan is illuminated by taking into account analogous practices in 11Q11 and elsewhere in the gospels. This interpretation is feasible only when Psalm 91 is viewed as an apotropaic prayer.

These findings have implications for interpreting the Temptation narrative. Matthew sets a stage in which the conflict between Jesus and Satan is “fought out” using apotropaic tactics. This shifts our understanding of the passage. In addition to other possible functions of Deuteronomy, the references demonstrate the anti-demonic nature of the law. Interpreting the pericope in this manner also provides a tenable explanation for something that is often puzzling to biblical scholars; Satan’s use of an apotropaic psalm.

The presence of apotropaic elements in the Temptation has repercussions for the larger issue of demonology in Matthew. For instance, it gives clearer shape to the notion of a relationship between Qumran literature and synoptic gospel material. Further, it offers an avenue for investigating apotropaic traditions

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<sup>29</sup> This view is briefly mentioned by Twelftree. Interpreting the expression in light of both OT and NT-era uses, Twelftree holds that the demoniac’s words “were most likely understood as defense mechanisms against Jesus the exorcist.” Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 64.

<sup>30</sup> In Mark 5:7, the exorcistic language is much more explicit; τί ἔμοι καὶ σοί is followed with the name and title “Jesus, Son of the Most High God” and paired with a command prefaced by the exorcistic “I adjure you by God” (ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν). See also Luke 8:28.

that may occur elsewhere in Matthew. Even a cursory glance at the Matthean Lord's Prayer (6:9-13) reveals its similarity to early Jewish petitions, some of which are apotropaic (e.g. *Plea for Deliverance*). If Matthew retained the apotropaic characteristics from his source regarding the Temptation, might he have also made use of an "apotropaic sense" in his version of the Lord's Prayer? Indeed, a thorough study of apotropaic traditions in the Gospel of Matthew has yet to be offered. At the very least, it is hoped that this paper serves as a useful step forward in the accomplishment of this task.

## Appendix:<sup>31</sup>

### The Temptation (Matt 4:1-11)

- 1 The Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
- 2 And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry.
- 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."
- 4 But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"
- 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple,
- 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"
- 7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"
- 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them;
- 9 and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."
- 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"
- 11 The devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.

### Psalm 91 (vss. 1-6, 11-13)

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty,
- 2 will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."
- 3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;
- 4 he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
- 5 You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

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<sup>31</sup> Translations from the biblical text are from the *Revised Standard Version*.

6 nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

11 For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways.

12 On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the adder, and the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

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