



12-1-2013

# Dark Mirrors: Azazel and Satanael in Early Jewish Demonology

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## Recommended Citation

Orlov, Andrei A. and Larsen, David J. (2013) "Dark Mirrors: Azazel and Satanael in Early Jewish Demonology," *BYU Studies Quarterly*: Vol. 52 : Iss. 4 , Article 10.

Available at: <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol52/iss4/10>

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Andrei A. Orlov. *Dark Mirrors: Azazel and Satanael in Early Jewish Demonology.*

New York: SUNY Press, 2011.

*Reviewed by David J. Larsen*

Andrei A. Orlov, professor of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity at Marquette University, is a highly prolific author and world-renowned scholar who specializes in Christian origins, Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism, and Old Testament pseudepigrapha, including texts such as *2 Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. Among Orlov's many writings are the books *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (TSAJ, 107; Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism* (SJSJ, 114; Leiden: Brill, 2007), *Divine Manifestations in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha* (OJC, 2; Piscataway: Gorgias, 2009), and *Concealed Writings: Jewish Mysticism in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha* (Flaviana; Moscow: Gesharim, 2011).

The present book under review, *Dark Mirrors*, is an engaging examination of the two most infamous characters of Second Temple Jewish demonology, the fallen angels Satan and Azazel. Although the two are frequently conflated, Orlov traces the development of each figure and their origins back to the stories of Adam and Eve in Eden and the rebellious angels who descend to earth at the time of Enoch (in the writings of *1 Enoch*; see also Gen. 6). One of the major and most intriguing themes that Orlov focuses on in this writing is the paradoxical relationship, depicted by the authors of the ancient texts, that Satan and Azazel have with both deity and mankind. Orlov points out that in various texts, the antagonist is presented as having a “symmetrical correspondence” with the protagonist. In other words, the leader of the fallen angels is depicted as imitating the celestial order, positioning himself as a negative mirror image of the divine glory.

*Dark Mirrors* consists of, following an extensive introduction to the background of these topics, six distinct essays, with three analyzing the role of Azazel as the principal antagonist in the Jewish

pseudepigraphal text the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and another three examining the role of Satan in 2 *Enoch*, in the temptation narrative in the Gospel of Matthew, and in the extrabiblical texts 3 *Baruch* and the *Book of Giants*.

Readers should not skip over the introduction, as it contains essential information regarding the trends in Jewish and Christian literature that provide background for the complex and paradoxical manner in which Jews and Christians came to view these figures. Orlov explains that ancient authors often presented a highly symmetrical view of space and time. The events marking the end of the world were seen as parallel to those of the world's creation; the end times would feature a restoration of the earth as it was in its primeval state. Similarly, they viewed things on earth as imitating or replicating things that existed in the celestial realm. Likewise, the beings of the underworld were understood to also mirror the order of heaven.

One of the best examples of this concept comes in Orlov's first essay, entitled "'The Likeness of Heaven': *Kavod* of Azazel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*." In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a Jewish text written in the early centuries of the Christian era, the author seems to depict the fallen angel Azazel as having his own *kavod* ("glory"), a distinction usually reserved only for deity. The idea that Azazel enjoys his own glory seems to stem, in this text, from the notion that God has granted him authority to rule over the wicked of the world. Throughout the pseudepigraphal text, Orlov notes, the adversary is depicted in terms very similar to those used to describe God. One of the most intriguing details of this exposition is the account of Abraham standing by the throne of God in heaven and being shown a vision of the inhabitants of the Garden of Eden. What he sees is Adam and Eve under the tree of knowledge, "entwined with each other" (*Ap. Ab.* 23:9) with Azazel between them. Orlov argues that this imagery should be compared to depictions in other literature in which God's throne in Eden is set under the tree of life. God sits upon or between the cherubim, which are described as being "intertwined" in some rabbinic sources. These rabbinic traditions can be interpreted to suggest that the cherubic pair placed in the Holy of Holies were male and female and that they represented the *hieros gamos*, or heavenly marriage. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, Orlov asserts, what may be depicted is the fallen angel's attempt to replicate the image of God on his cherubic throne by positioning himself between the human pair as he corrupts them with the forbidden fruit.

The second and third essays cover traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* that highlight, among other themes, the important role that heavenly vestments play in the narrative. Orlov notes that in the second part of the apocalypse, Abraham meets an angelic being called Yahoel who is wearing apparel that is distinctly high priestly in nature. Orlov argues that the significance of this attire is to suggest that Yahoel is not only to serve as Abraham's angelic guide on his heavenly journey, but that he, as a priestly figure, will also initiate the patriarch into the celestial priesthood. The angelic priest teaches Abraham what to do in order to serve in the heavenly temple. When Azazel appears, Yahoel instructs Abraham on how to cast him out. Orlov argues that this sequence should be seen as a reenactment of the Day of Atonement rituals in which the sins of Israel are transferred to the scapegoat, represented in the narrative by Azazel, which is then led out into the wilderness to perish. In this text, the sins of Abraham are transferred to the fallen angel, Azazel. This transference of guilt and expulsion of the evil figure allows Abraham to be considered clean and worthy to enter and serve in the heavenly realm.

Orlov's third essay focuses on the transferal of garments that occurs when Azazel is cast out of Abraham's presence. Yahoel declares to the fallen angel: "For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him (Abraham), and the corruption which was on him has gone over to you" (*Ap. Ab.* 13:7–14). Orlov suggests that this transferal of clothing signifies not merely a new addition to Abraham's wardrobe, but his transition into the form of a heavenly being—a citizen of the celestial city. Orlov also sees a parallel with the Adamic traditions that describe how Adam and Eve received garments of light and glory when they entered the Garden of Eden but lost them when they were expelled—and how they expected to regain them after death. The traditions preserved in texts such as *The Life of Adam and Eve* in its various versions indicate that Adam had a role in casting the adversary out of heaven and that Adam then inherited the exalted position and glory that Satan had previously enjoyed, including, apparently, the fallen angel's celestial robes. To reiterate, after Satan is cast out of heaven, his authority and priestly clothing are passed on to Adam—and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* depicts the same type of transferal for Abraham.

Another point of interest for *BYU Studies* readers comes in the fifth essay, which concerns the temptation narrative found in the Gospel of Matthew. In this section, Orlov illustrates how the story of Satan's tempting of Jesus bears a number of similarities to the accounts of

heavenly journeys in the visionary texts of biblical and extrabiblical literature. Although there are a number of parallels with well-known biblical visions such as that of Moses on Mount Sinai and that of Elijah, the parallels with writings such as 2 Enoch seem to be even more prevalent. However, the way in which the temptation narrative depicts Satan's role can be seen as an attempt to present the adversary as the negative mirror image of the celestial figures featured in those texts. The steps that the visionary is taken through on his heavenly journey are maleficiently imitated by Satan as he takes Jesus on a tour of his own blasphemous design. Just as Enoch is taken up to heaven by angelic guides, Satan serves a similar function as he transports Jesus to the top of the temple and then to a very high mountain. Just as in many of the visionary texts, the righteous seer encounters and worships God on the high mountain. Orlov points out that Satan takes Jesus up into the high mountain in order to entice Jesus to venerate him instead. As part of this attempt, the adversary shows Christ the kingdoms of the world and their glory to imitate, Orlov suggests, the grand visions that are shown to those who have the privilege of standing before the throne of God (compare Ether 3:25; Moses 1:1-8, 27-29; 7:21-24). Another intriguing idea that Orlov proposes is tied to the tradition in the celestial ascent literature that when the visionary approaches and bows down before the Lord, he is transformed from his mortal state into a heavenly being and often becomes unified with or identified with the Lord. In this final temptation of Jesus by Satan, Orlov argues, it appears that Satan desires Jesus to worship him and thus become identified with the evil one instead of with the Father in heaven. Orlov states, "One can encounter here an example of negative transformational mysticism: by forcing Jesus to bow down, the tempter wants the seer to become identified with Satan's form, in exact opposition to the visionaries of Jewish apocalyptic writings who through their prostration before the divine Face become identified with the divine *Kavod* (glory)" (112).

Andrei Orlov's insights on the Rebellious One in this book find parallels in LDS scripture and thought, including the notion that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Ne. 9:9; Alma 30:53; D&C 128:20; 129:8) and that he often imitates the heavenly order and powers. Perhaps the greatest affinity to the story of Satan tempting Jesus in LDS-specific scripture can be found in the Pearl of Great Price, in Moses 1:12-22. This account depicts Satan's attempt to entice Moses to worship him, including an even more direct effort to imitate deity. Moses 1:12 relates that just subsequent to Moses having experienced a powerful

theophany of the God of Glory, Satan appears to him: “Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me.” Having just seen the magnificence of the glory of God and having had his own divine sonship confirmed, Moses can differentiate between God’s majesty and Satan’s inability to measure up. Moses says, “Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?” (1:13). Satan’s humiliation and envy of God’s glory and Moses’s divine potential climax in an infernal tantrum as he shouts and desperately claims that he is the Son of God, worthy of worship. He commands Moses, saying, “I am the Only Begotten, worship me” (1:19). After a few more moments of intense ranting and wailing on the part of the adversary, Moses is strengthened by God and is able to cast Satan out. He is then filled with the Spirit and is once again caught up in the vision of God’s glory. He is given his prophetic commission, is shown the grand vision of the earth and all its inhabitants, and is taught the secrets of creation. This story of Moses is similar in many ways to the various traditions that Orlov discusses in this book, including those contained in the temptation story in Matthew, the heavenly journey of Enoch in 2 *Enoch*, and also Abraham’s confrontation with Azazel and related experiences in the celestial realm.<sup>1</sup>

Andrei Orlov’s book, *Dark Mirrors*, will be of interest to students of the scriptures and especially those interested in religious history, whether or not they have prior experience with the early Jewish and early Christian texts he utilizes. The many parallels with LDS understandings of the nature of Satan should be apparent and exciting for most. Orlov is one of the foremost scholars on this genre of extrabiblical texts and much can be gleaned from his adventurous and insightful approach.

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David J. Larsen received his PhD from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and he currently serves as a BYU Studies research fellow. He received an MA from Marquette University, where his academic advisor was Andrei A. Orlov, and a BA in Near Eastern studies from BYU. His scholarly interests include temple studies, apocalyptic writings, and pseudepigrapha.

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1. For more on the affinities between this segment of the Book of Moses and ascension texts such as the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses* (West Valley City, Utah: Eborn Publishing, 2010), 23–50.