

Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21 An Overlooked Aspect of the Chronicler's Theology(*)

Tremendous scholarly attention has been given to the census narrative in 1 Chronicles 21, a reworked version of 2 Samuel 24, not only due to the changes that are made in the account in Chronicles but also due to the fact that elsewhere the Chronicler⁽¹⁾ (hereafter Ch) edits all of David's faults from his *Vorlage* while retaining this instance of failure⁽²⁾. Leaving aside the issue of how this account may, or may not, mar the otherwise ideal portrait of David in Chronicles, two notable changes are worth re-exploring: the expanded role of the angel and the appearance of שָׂטָן in place of Yahweh as the one who 'incited' David to take a census. What to make of these intriguing changes has led to varying interpretations.

The fact that in 1 Chr 21,1 שָׂטָן occurs without the definite article has been interpreted in one of two ways. In the past, the majority of commentators concluded that שָׂטָן had now become a proper name instead of a title of an otherwise unspecified "adversary"⁽³⁾. Some

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(¹) By the Chronicler, I mean the author(s) of the Book of Chronicles.

(²) For various scholarly theories as to why this is, see G.N. KNOPPERS, "Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles", *Bib* 76 (1995) 449-470; J.W. WRIGHT, "The Innocence of David in 1 Chronicles 21", *JSOT* 60 (1993) 87-89; M. NOTH, *The Chronicler's History* (JSOTSup 50; Sheffield 1987) 34, 55-56; W. RUDOLPH, *Chronikbücher* (HAT 21; Tübingen 1955) 141-149; P.R. ACKROYD, *Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah* (TBC; London 1973) 73-77.

(³) C. Breytenbach and P.L. Day write "The majority of scholars... understand *śāṭān* to be the proper name Satan", ("Satan", *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* [eds. K. VAN DE TOORN – B. BECKING – P.W. VAN DER HORST] [Leiden 1995] 1375-1376). So H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (Grand Rapids 1982) 143; R. BRAUN, *1 Chronicles* (Waco 1986) 216; G. VON RAD, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes zur Geheimen Offenbarung* (BWANT 54; Stuttgart 1939) 8-9; R. SHARF, *Satan in the Old Testament* (Evanston 1967) 155; W. EICHRODT, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia 1967) II, 206-207.

suggested this evolution was influenced by Persian dualism and that שׂטן was now seen as the archenemy of God — the Devil⁽⁴⁾. Therefore, it was thought that Ch had theological problems with Yahweh being the one who incited David to sin because Ch did not believe that Yahweh could be such a direct cause of evil⁽⁵⁾. However, this interpretation is problematic as it assumes Ch had a dualistic outlook, when nowhere else in his work does he betray this concern with the problem of evil⁽⁶⁾.

Conscious of this problem, Japhet argued against the consensus that שׂטן should not be taken as a proper name at all⁽⁷⁾. She pointed out that the regular process in biblical Hebrew by which a word becomes

(4) The influence of Persian religion on the development of Israelite angel/demonology is a debatable issue. Most scholars agree that the influence existed and that this influence is the background against which we should understand the development of angel/demonology (so D.S. RUSSELL, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* [Philadelphia 1964] 258; EICHRODT, *Theology*, II, 207-208; G.I. RILEY, “Devil”, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 464; and J. BOWMAN, “Angel”, *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* [Nashville 1962] I, 133). However, many have cautioned against over-emphasizing Persian influence in the development of the doctrine of divine intermediaries; see G. VON RAD, “ἄγγελος”, *TDNT* I, 75; E.M. YAMAUCHI, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids 1990) 466. It is actually plausible that such developments developed internally within Jewish religion with the idea of evil forces opposing God tracing back to Canaanite myths with “chaos” monsters such as “Leviathan” and other primordial struggles (P. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* [Philadelphia 1975] 60). Cf. Barr who presents a plausible model of possible influence but suggests the influence could be merely a stimulus from a pattern of Iranian religion without full cognizance of the meaning in the original sense (“The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity”, *JAAR* 53 [1985] 201-235).

(5) For example, see RUDOLPH, *Chronikbücher*, 142; or R.J. COGGINS, *The First and Second Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge 1976) 107.

(6) An obvious example is found in 2 Chronicles 18 where Yahweh clearly sanctions lies and instigates malevolent behavior. In this passage, King Jehoshaphat is entering into a pact with King Ahab to fight with him against Ramoth Gilead, but Jehoshaphat asks to hear the word of Yahweh concerning the fate of their imminent battle (vv. 1-4). Ahab gathered the prophets to prophesy for Jehoshaphat but Yahweh sent a “lying spirit” into their mouths (v. 22). The purpose of the lying spirit is clear—to persuade Ahab to go to battle where he will be killed. Here Yahweh is directly involved in deceit and malevolence toward a human being. If indeed Ch had a theological problem with God’s involvement with such “evil” actions, why would Ch alter his *Vorlage* in 1 Chr 21,1 and not in this difficult passage?

(7) S. JAPHET, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and its Place in Biblical Thought* (Frankfurt am Main 1989) 145-149.

a proper name is when the article is first added to a word. Only later, when the original meaning was surpassed by the new use of the word, was the article dropped. Therefore, she sees 1 Chr 21,1 as belonging to the first stage — before the addition of the article — and thus indicating only the common noun meaning. However, this argument is inconclusive since the instances in Job and Zechariah where שָׂטָן appears with the definite article could easily represent the second stage where the article is added to indicate it is a proper noun⁽⁸⁾. Historical grammar will not decide the issue.

Other scholars have argued that Chronicles is too early to contain שָׂטָן as a proper name because such usage is not common until the 2nd century B.C.E. and, even at that point, Satan was not the exclusive or most popular name for the arch fiend⁽⁹⁾. However, these arguments are not decisive. Firstly, the fact that there is a chronological gap between Chronicles and later extant texts which use Satan as a name is only problematic if the character they refer to is indeed the same⁽¹⁰⁾. As we will see below, שָׂטָן need not be viewed as a fully developed ‘Devil’ in Chronicles. Therefore, some passage in time should be posited in order to allow for further development between Ch’s conception of Satan and (for instance) the conception of Satan in the book of Jubilees. Secondly, ideas about the Devil developed in many different ways in

⁽⁸⁾ This concurs with E. Langton who argued that in Zechariah ‘Satan’ became the title of a distinct personality, *Essentials of Demonology. A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine; Its Origin and Development* (London 1949) 53. Gesenius’ *Hebrew Grammar*, which Japhet cites as the source for her etymological argument, explains that שָׂטָן is one of the instances where “original appellatives have completely assumed the character of real proper names and are therefore used without the article” (K. GESENIUS, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* [Oxford 1988] 125-125, 402). JAPHET rejects Gesenius’ conclusion as “yet another case in which exegetical considerations influence objective linguistic analysis” (*Ideology*, 147, n. 427).

⁽⁹⁾ So argues P.L. DAY, *An Adversary in Heaven. śātān in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta 1988) 128. An example of another popular name for the Devil is seen in the book of Jubilees where “Mastema” — not Satan — is the favorite name for the chief demon (although this “Mastema” is not a different character than Satan but is actually also called Satan as well (see R.H. CHARLES, *The Book of Jubilees: or the Little Genesis* [London 1902] 81). Similarly, at Qumran, a favorite name for a similar character is Belial although the name Satan is also found frequently (Cf. 11QPs^a Plea 19,15; 4QDibHam^a 1-2, IV, 12; 4QBer^{ab}. Also 1QH fr.4, line 6 may have שָׂטָן as a name).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Assuming a date of mid to late 4th century for Chronicles (WILLIAMSON, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 16) and an early 2nd century date for the book of Jubilees. Of course, arguments based on precise dating of such texts are patently weak.

post-exilic texts⁽¹¹⁾. The fact that there was no *one* name that was used in intertestamental literature does not militate against seeing the anarthrous יהוה as a proper name. If there was one exclusive name — and Satan was not it — then that may have thrown some doubt on identifying יהוה as a name in 1 Chronicles 21. As it is, even in the NT, which considers Satan as a name and has a fully developed demonology, Satan (Σατανᾶς) is not used exclusively; in fact, Διάβολος is more common than Σατανᾶς⁽¹²⁾. None of this evidence militates against interpreting יהוה as a proper name in 1 Chr 21,1.

Some commentators have explained the anarthrous יהוה as a merely human adversary⁽¹³⁾. This interpretation suggests understanding 1 Chronicles as a military context in which the human adversary is either an anonymous foe or one of David's officials⁽¹⁴⁾. However, a military context is difficult to accept since no enemy is ever named and the supposed foreign threat is never resolved in any way, even though other military threats are invariably brought to a conclusion elsewhere in Ch's corpus⁽¹⁵⁾.

This essay questions whether the identification of יהוה in 1 Chronicles 21 has been misunderstood on both sides of the debate. Approaching both the expanded role of the angel and the appearance of יהוה in place of Yahweh as being the result of Ch's belief in divine intermediaries avoids many of the pitfalls of other interpretations. It allays the problem of suggesting that Ch saw God and evil as altogether separate, since Satan in 1 Chr 21,1 need not be viewed as the Devil but merely a divine intermediary doing Yahweh's work. Also, it alleviates the need to posit a human enemy who is never named or a military conflict that is never resolved. As in 2 Samuel, the

⁽¹¹⁾ Riley points this out this diversity ("Devil", 465).

⁽¹²⁾ The names Διάβολος, Βεελζεβούλ and Βελιάρ are also used of the chief of the demons (Βεελζεβούλ is found in Matt 10,25; 12,27, Mark 3,22 and Luke 11,15; 2 Cor 6,15 mentions Βελιάρ). In the NT Σατανᾶς is used 34 times while Διάβολος is used 36 times. Breytenbach and Day argue that the use of Σατανᾶς in the NT is simply "incidental" and just a "Semitism" ("Satan", 1379). However, the use of Σατανᾶς is hardly what one would call "incidental"; it seems clear to this writer that the usage in the NT demonstrates that Satan was seen as a proper name and that it is only a Semitism as far as the name Ἰησοῦς or any other number of Hebrew names are.

⁽¹³⁾ JAPHET, *Ideology*, 147-149; WRIGHT, "Innocence", 93.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Wright suggests it is an enemy ("Innocence", 93) while Japhet supposes a courtier or official (*Ideology*, 148).

⁽¹⁵⁾ As pointed out by N. BAILEY, "David's Innocence: A Response to J. Wright", *JSOT* 64 (1994) 86.

problem in 1 Chronicles 21 originated not with a human enemy but with a celestial one. This aspect of Ch's theology has been overlooked by recent scholarship and, while not being the mainstay of his purpose, is reflected in his work.

1. *The Chronicler's Angel*

Scholars have often thought of Chronicles as an evolutionary stage in the belief of angels⁽¹⁶⁾. In order to evaluate Ch's alleged "angelology" we will examine how he reworks the census narrative taken from his *Vorlage*, 2 Samuel 24. Immediately, we notice that in Ch's narrative the angel is mentioned more than twice as often as in the Samuel account and is given an expanded role⁽¹⁷⁾. However, before we examine the additional appearances we can learn much from the way in which the parallel occurrences are reworked.

In 2 Samuel 24 the first mention of the angel reads "the angel stretched forth his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it" (v. 16), while the parallel in 1 Chronicles 21 reads "And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it" (v. 15). The change is subtle, but profound. Ch alters his *Vorlage* in order to clarify that the angel is distinct from God. A good parallel to this concern can be seen in 2 Chr 32,21 and its parallel, 2 Kgs 19,35.

In this passage, too, Ch has altered his *Vorlage* slightly. Instead of writing "And that night the angel of Yahweh went forth..." (2 Kings), Ch rewrites it as "And Yahweh sent an angel..." (2 Chronicles). If we look closely at the 2 Kings text the reason Ch was concerned to alter his *Vorlage* becomes evident. In the verse preceding 2 Kgs 19,35, we read of Yahweh saying, "For *I* will defend this city to save it" (v. 34) [emphasis mine]. Then, in the next verse we read: "the angel of Yahweh went forth". It appears that in the Kings account the angel of Yahweh is none other than Yahweh himself. This is an example of a theophany. As is well known, in the OT it is often difficult to differentiate between the angel of Yahweh and Yahweh himself⁽¹⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁶⁾ For example, HÄNEL-ROTHSTEIN, *Chronik*, xiv; cf. xiv-xv; and VON RAD, *Geschichtsbild*, 9.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Chronicles mentions the angel nine times whereas 2 Samuel mentions it only four times. 1 Chr 21,12.15(3x).16.18.20.27.30. 2 Sam 24,16 (3x).17.

⁽¹⁸⁾ G. VON RAD, "ἄγγελος", 77. Breytenbach and Day come to a similar conclusion regarding the angel in Numbers 22 who met Balaam. This incidence is interesting because this angel is actually called a שָׂטָן. Breytenbach and Day conclude that "the real Satan in Numbers 22 is Yahweh himself!" ("Satan", 1372).

With this theophanic understanding of the 2 Kings passage, it is obvious that Ch's reworking of these verses reflects his view of angels⁽¹⁹⁾. Rather than attributing the destruction to a theophany, Ch makes it clear that this angel is not Yahweh himself, but one of his divine intermediaries doing his will⁽²⁰⁾. This same concern for differentiating Yahweh from his angelic intermediaries seems to be shared by the later Targum translator of Chronicles. The Targum of 1 Chr 21,18 reads "an angel sent from before the Lord" in place of "the angel of Yahweh" (MT) which could be confused with the theophanies of earlier narratives⁽²¹⁾. This understanding of Ch's reinterpretation of the angel in this narrative suggests that Ch had a more developed concept of angels than the Deuteronomist⁽²²⁾.

Another important difference in Ch's portrayal of the angel in the census story is found in verse 16. While his *Vorlage* simply states that "[David] saw the angel who was striking down the people" (2 Sam 24,17), Ch writes that "[David] saw the angel of Yahweh standing between earth and heaven" (1 Chr 21,16)⁽²³⁾. This appears to be the

⁽¹⁹⁾ In both of these passages Japhet has argued that Ch altered this verse because his *Vorlage* made the angel too 'autonomous' and Ch was concerned to show that the angel is not acting independently but is God's messenger (*Ideology*, 140). This suggestion is intriguing and in some ways fits in with my understanding of Ch's motivations. If the angel in Samuel or Kings was indeed a theophany, the angel had more than a measure of autonomy — he was God himself.

⁽²⁰⁾ It must be noted that in the case of 2 Sam 24 God speaks to the angel and orders him to stop his destruction which begs the question why God would speak to himself. However, it is not unprecedented in the OT for the hypostatic manifestation to appear to be distinct from God one minute and in fact *be* God the next. For example, in Gen 16 the angel of Yahweh appears to Hagar. In v. 10 the angel appears to be Yahweh as he says to her "I will multiply your descendants...", but in v. 11 the angel speaks of Yahweh in the third person: "You shall call his name Ishmael, because Yahweh has heard your affliction". Then v. 13 says "she called on the name of Yahweh *who spoke to her*" [emphasis mine]. Cf. Genesis 21 & Exodus 3.

⁽²¹⁾ *The Aramaic Bible: The Targum of Chronicles* (eds. K. CATHCART – M. MAHER – M. MCNAMARA) (Collegeville 1994) XIX, 116.

⁽²²⁾ A. ROFÉ seems to think along similar lines. He writes, "it is possible that the words 'the Lord sent an angel' in 2 Chr 32:21, as against 'an angel of the Lord went out', found in 2 Kings 19:35 imply a reinterpretation: the 'angel' could have meant God's providence, operating unseen in the human world" ("4QSam^a in the light of Historico-literary Criticism: The Case of 2 Sam 24 and 1 Chr 21", *Biblische und Judaistische Studien* 29 [1990] 115).

⁽²³⁾ This phrase "between earth and heaven" basically denotes being in 'mid-air'. It is used in Ezekiel 8,3 when "the spirit" lifted Ezekiel up "between earth and heaven" in a vision, and in Zech 5,9 where two women with wings "lifted up

earliest reference of an angel being in the air in the Bible. It seems the angel is described either as hovering or — in a manner similar to later angelology — flying. Not only is this different than the angel portrayed in his *Vorlage*, it is distinct from earlier angel narratives. In previous OT books, angels are usually described as human in form, and until 1 Chronicles 21 they are never described as defying gravity. In fact, such an angelic portrayal is otherwise only found in the book of Daniel which undeniably contains the most developed angelology found in the OT⁽²⁴⁾.

Another distinctive feature of Ch's angel is his role as mediator. In 2 Sam 24,18 we read simply that "Gad came to David that day and said to him, 'Go and erect an altar to Yahweh'" but in 1 Chr 21,18 we learn that "the angel of Yahweh commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and rear an altar to Yahweh". This is contrary to 2 Sam 24,19 which tells us that "David went up in accord with Gad's word just as Yahweh had commanded" [emphasis mine] contra 1 Chr 21,19 which says "So David went up at Gad's word, which he had spoken *in the name of Yahweh*" [emphasis mine]. The former explicitly states that Yahweh himself commanded Gad. Rather than having Yahweh himself speak to Gad, Ch has the angel become the medium through which God's word is revealed to Gad. This is a characteristic of later angelology which portrays angels acting as mediators between God and humans⁽²⁵⁾.

the ephah between the earth and the heavens". A nearly identical phrase is found in 2 Sam 18,9 where Absalom is left hanging "between heaven and earth" (it simply reverses "earth and heaven" when his hair was caught in a tree. In the Targum this verse has been expanded slightly to clearly indicate the meaning. It reads "David... saw the angel of the Lord standing, *suspended in mid-air*, between earth and heaven" (*The Targum of Chronicles* [eds. CATHCART *et al.*], 117). Although, of course, the Targum is much later and is an interpretation this expansion may simply be attempting to bring across the meaning of the Hebrew clearly as there may have been some ambiguity with describing the angel "standing" while at the same time being between "earth and heaven". For a different connotation for the phrase "heaven and earth" see S.A. WIGGINS "Between Heaven and Earth: Absalom's Dilemma", *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 23/1 (1997) 73-81. Wiggins argues that the phrase "earth and heaven" connotes an element of "divine initiative" but that in Absalom's case connotes "reversed divine initiative" analogous to Athtar in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle (74).

⁽²⁴⁾ As Williamson points out (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 147); cf. Dan 8,16; 10,4-21; 12,6-13.

⁽²⁵⁾ Williamson suggests that Ch may have been influenced by a "general refinement" during the postexilic period regarding the mediation of Yahweh's word (*Ibid.*, 148). G. von Rad also notes a post-exilic tendency to portray revelations as involving mediators (*Geschichtsbild*, 9).

These angelological changes have sometimes been explained by suggesting that they are the result of Ch's reliance on a Hebrew text-type like that of 4QSam^a which includes the description of the angel hovering in mid-air⁽²⁶⁾. However, the direction of dependence is difficult to determine and the real possibility that Chronicles influenced 4QSam^a should be considered⁽²⁷⁾. In fact, these advanced angelological elements (particularly the angel's sword) seem more likely to be original to Chronicles than Samuel because they are used by Ch as an apologetic to justify why David offered sacrifice on Ornan's threshing floor without consulting Yahweh at Gibeon⁽²⁸⁾. The same elements do not appear to have such a purposeful function in the Samuel text but are only mentioned offhandedly. Also, as noted above, the particular rewording of 2 Sam 24,16 in 1 Chr 21,15 seems to betray the same concerns as Ch's rewording of 2 Kgs 19,35 in 2 Chr 32,21. Additionally, it must be noted that the 4QSam^a parallel to 1 Chr 21,18, although it is extant, does not include the angel commanding Gad⁽²⁹⁾. Therefore, this suggests that Ch at least, continued the angelological reworking by the addition of the role of mediator to the angel, if indeed Chronicles was not the source for the 4QSam^a angelological additions against MT⁽³⁰⁾. The inclusion of the flight of the angel may actually be the result of the scribe partially conflating the two texts⁽³¹⁾. With no consensus on how to interpret the textual

⁽²⁶⁾ E.g., S. MCKENZIE, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History* (Atlanta 1985) 56. Cf. W.E. LEMKE, "The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler's History"; E. ULRICH, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (HSM 19; Missoula 1978) 151, 157.

⁽²⁷⁾ Cf. JAPHET, *I & II Chronicles* (OTL; Louisville 1993) 382; P. DION, "The Angel with the Drawn Sword; An Exercise in Restoring the Balance of Text Criticism and Attention to Context", *ZAW* 97 (1985) 116.

⁽²⁸⁾ DION, "Angel with the Drawn Sword", 116.

⁽²⁹⁾ Though McKenzie dismisses this variant reading of Chronicles as "expansionistic" on behalf of Ch (*The Chronicler's Use*, 57).

⁽³⁰⁾ The way the textual evidence is used varies widely and should serve as a caution to the interpreter. For example, Dion concedes that 1 Chr 21,16 may derive from a different text type of Samuel but argues that Ch emphasized the angelological elements to deliberately revise the census narrative ("Angel with the Drawn Sword", 117). On the other hand Japhet argues that Ch responded to the angelological elements in his sources by "softening and reducing them" (*Ideology*, 143).

⁽³¹⁾ An example of such conflation can be seen in another Qumran text, 1QIsa. In this text the scribe seems to have jumped from Isaiah 34,4 to Micah 1,4 only to revert back to the Isaiah text (for a highly legible photograph of the manuscript see J.C. TREVER, *Scrolls from Qumrân Cave 1* [Jerusalem 1974] 35).

evidence, it is clear that in the end we must deal with the text of Chronicles itself and reckon with its implications in regards to Ch's theology⁽³²⁾.

2. Satan in Place of Yahweh

Ch's belief in divine intermediaries can also be seen in the appearance of שטן in 1 Chr 21,1. In 2 Sam 24,1 we read that "Yahweh's wrath again flared up against Israel, and he incited David against them". However, 1 Chronicles 21 reads שטן as the inciter of David, in place of Yahweh — "Satan stood up against Israel, and he incited David to number Israel" (1 Chr 21,1). As noted above, שטן here is anarthrous, which suggests that the word is a proper name in this text. This is opposed to the use of שטן in Zechariah 3 and Job 1–2, where in both occasions, the definite article is employed, which would indicate that שטן is a title or connotes the function of the character — the Adversary or adversary. Therefore, in Chronicles, שטן without the article, represents the transformation of שטן from "official title" to a proper name.

There are verbal connections which link שטן with the appearances of השטן elsewhere in the OT. In 1 Chr 21,1 שטן is said to עמד על "stand up against" Israel. This is a legal phrase that recalls Zechariah 3,1 where, in a heavenly court, השטן stands beside (עמד על) Joshua the priest and opposes him⁽³³⁾. Also, שטן is said to סוד "incite" David in 1 Chr 21,1. This verb is also used of השטן in Job 2,3 where Yahweh says that the adversary has incited him against Job for no reason. These

It would seem that the scribe may have been so familiar with the Micah text that he inadvertently relapsed to its wording when he ran into similar word triggers in Isaiah 34 (the three texts and their connections can be seen below).

Isaiah 34, 3b-4 (MT)	ונמסו הרים מדמם ונמקו כל
1QIsa	ונמסו ההרים מדמם העם קים
Micah 1,4 (MT)	ונמסו ההרים תחתיו והעם קים

⁽³²⁾ Rofé suggests that all the angelological elements found in 1 Chronicles 21 predate Ch and that Ch could not have written 1 Chronicles 21, not based on the textual evidence as much as on his belief that Ch had a negative view of the belief in angels, like the Deuteronomist and Priestly schools ("4Q Sam", 115) This argument is obviously circular and fails to account for subtle angelological reworkings in other parts of Ch's work.

⁽³³⁾ G. VON RAD, "ἄγγελος", 74. E.A. Martens also recognizes that עמד is used as court language ("עמד", *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* [ed. WILLEM A. VAN GEMERAN] [Grand Rapids 1997] III, 432.

verbal parallels seem to be consciously used by Ch to connect his שטן with that of Job and Zechariah.

There is also a parallel between the roles of Satan and God in the census accounts and their roles in the book of Job. In Job 1,11 God plays the role of the afflicter, but in 1,12 and 2,6-7 the satan plays that role⁽³⁴⁾. Similarly, in 2 Sam 24,1 God incites David, while in 1 Chr 21,1 Satan takes on that role. It may be that Ch had the book of Job in mind when he replaced Yahweh with Satan⁽³⁵⁾. Consequently, if Ch equated his שטן with the character in Job 1-2, Ch would not have considered his שטן to be the archenemy of God but rather God's servant⁽³⁶⁾. We need not read in to 1 Chr 21,1 a conception of Satan comparable to later (almost dualistic) conceptions⁽³⁷⁾. Interestingly, the Targum of Chronicles purposefully indicates that שטן here did not indicate an autonomous devil. In the Targum, 1 Chr 21,1 reads "The Lord raised up Satan against Israel"⁽³⁸⁾. While this appears to be a conflation between the Samuel and Chronicles texts, it is obviously clarifying that Satan is not an independent being but is controlled by Yahweh⁽³⁹⁾. Once again the concerns of the Targum translator seem to be analogous to those of Ch.

Although Ch did not see God as altogether separate from evil he, being a product of his postexilic age, saw a more developed role for divine intermediaries. As mentioned above, this could have been the result of Ch's exposure to the book of Job where שטן was part of the heavenly entourage and was used by Yahweh to test human beings. Thus, Ch believed that in his *Vorlage* when God incited David to number the people, this was done through a mediator — שטן. In this way, Ch was not intending to contradict his *Vorlage* but to better explain it⁽⁴⁰⁾. This reinterpretation by Ch is consistent with subsequent development of angelology in later intertestamental literature. These later books which retold OT narratives, (e.g., Jubilees) tended to bring

⁽³⁴⁾ As pointed out by S. PAGE, *Powers of Evil. A Biblical Study of Satan & Demons* (Grand Rapids 1995) 35.

⁽³⁵⁾ WILLIAMSON, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 143.

⁽³⁶⁾ Of course "enemy" and "servant" are not mutually exclusive. An enemy may be an unwitting servant (e.g., Cyrus). In fact, in the NT Satan remains a servant of God. This can be seen in Paul's "thorn in the flesh" which is attributed to God, but is also called "a messenger of Satan" in 2 Cor 12,7.

⁽³⁷⁾ WILLIAMSON, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 144; T.H. GASTER, "Satan", *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville 1962) IV, 225.

⁽³⁸⁾ *Targum of Chronicles* (ed. CATHCART *et al.*), 114.

⁽³⁹⁾ J. Stanley McIvor understands the Targum translator's motivation as such, *ibid.*

⁽⁴⁰⁾ As Williamson argues (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 144).

in angels where there were none in the original OT text. Often the writer would introduce intermediaries to perform an act which God himself performs in the original story⁽⁴¹⁾. In a similar manner, Ch replaces the original narrative's account of God directly inciting David with a heavenly intermediary — שָׁמַיִם.

3. Other Instances of Divine Intermediaries in Chronicles

Ch's belief in divine intermediaries can be seen in other angelic appearances in the book of Chronicles. Already we have noted the instance in 2 Chronicles 32 which provided evidence of Ch's concern to differentiate between Yahweh's direct involvement and mediation (see above). Another angelic occurrence is found in 2 Chronicles 20 when "Yahweh set an ambush against the Ammonites" (v. 22). This is the only time in the OT where Yahweh is said to set an ambush; in all other instances where an 'ambush' is laid it is done so by humans. This text is unique in that respect and seems to suggest these were more than human 'ambushers'. In other battles, where there is no angelic intervention, we do not read of Yahweh 'sending in the army' or 'directing' human troops in any way. Therefore, this passage is also evidence of Ch's concern with divine intermediaries. This seems to be another incident of Ch indicating the work of angels or the like⁽⁴²⁾.

While this is the extent of angelic appearances in Chronicles, we should not necessarily expect Ch to introduce angelic intermediaries in more instances than he did. Although having had a more advanced view of angelic intermediary involvement than the Deuteronomist, by and large Ch only mentioned the angels when they were found in his *Vorlage*⁽⁴³⁾. Yet it is clear that when his sources mentioned angelic

⁽⁴¹⁾ C. NEWSOM, "Angels: In the Old Testament", *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York 1992) I, 252.

⁽⁴²⁾ While this is acknowledged by most commentators, e.g., WILLIAMSON, *I and 2 Chronicles*, 300; W.A.L. ELSLIE, *The Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge 1916) 254; E.L. CURTIS – A.A. MADSEN, *The Books of Chronicles* (Edinburgh 1910, 1976) 409; RUDOLPH *Chronikbücher*, 261. Japhet argued against such an understanding because other 'ambushers' mentioned in the OT are human (*Ideology*, 131). In fact, there is only one other time in the OT where מֵאֲרֻבִּים "ambushers" are mentioned, which hardly holds as proof that in this instance they must be human (the exact wording מֵאֲרֻבִּים "ambushers" (masculine plural *Piel* participle) occurs only twice in the OT, here and in Judges 9,25).

⁽⁴³⁾ Japhet is close to the truth when she wrote that Ch "accepts their [angels'] existence when found in his sources but makes no additions of his own" (*I & II Chronicles*, 381).

activity he often reworked it purposefully in line with his theology. As is widely understood, Ch's manner of writing usually did not involve Ch creating his tools "*ex nihilo*" but his using what he found in his *Vorlage* and enlarging it⁽⁴⁴⁾.

In the rest of the battles recorded in Chronicles where we read of Yahweh's involvement there are no indications as to whether this was accomplished through intermediaries or not. For example, in 2 Chronicles 13, when Abijah and the Judeans defeat Jeroboam and the Israelites in battle, v. 15 declares that, "God defeated Jeroboam and all Israel"⁽⁴⁵⁾. There is no description of Yahweh being directly involved or of "the angel of Yahweh" being involved. Instead we read, "The Israelites fled before Judah, and God gave them into their hands. Abijah and his army defeated them with great slaughter" (vv. 16-17). Just how Yahweh contributed to the battle is not specified. Yet it leaves the issue open as to whether Ch conceived of angelic interference or not. Even the book of Daniel, which contains a clear angelology contains such ambiguous descriptions of God's involvement. In Dan 1,2 we read "the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand" and then in v. 9, "Now God had *caused* the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel" [emphasis mine]. As with the author of Daniel, Ch did not feel it necessary to describe every action God took as involving mediation, albeit he may have believed such mediation took place.

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As we have seen, Ch's belief in increased roles for intermediaries is evident in his angelological reworking of 2 Samuel 24. Unlike in Ch's *Vorlage*, the angel is clearly distinguished from Yahweh himself. Also, by having the angel communicate Yahweh's word to Gad, Ch has given the angel the role of revelator. This belief in intermediaries is also manifest in Ch's introduction of $\gamma\omega\omega$ in place of Yahweh as the inciter of David. While Persian Dualism *may* have influenced this development of the increased role of intermediaries, there is no

⁽⁴⁴⁾ DION, "Angel with the Drawn Sword", 117.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Ibid., 126. Such a claim of Yahweh's responsibility, even when there appears to be no direct involvement, is common. Cf. 1 Chr 10,14 where we read of Saul that "Yahweh put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David Jesse's son". Yet we already read in v. 5 that Saul killed himself by falling on his sword. So in what respect did Yahweh kill him? This type of Yahwistic involvement in history does not disprove his use of divine intermediaries.

evidence that Ch felt the need to remove all aspects of evil from originating in God.

Of course, despite the distinction between the OT concept of Satan and that of later intertestamental literature (and the NT), שטן in Chronicles is still a malevolent figure. This is similar to Job where שטן maligns Job's character to God in an effort to compel him to curse his maker. G.I. Riley writes about Satan in Job,

This is not the action of a merely heavenly prosecutor in the divine council, appointed by God to accuse the defendant of sin...; no prosecutor destroys the property of the defendant, then kills his children and destroys his health, in order to bring about hatred for the Judge. God and the Devil in Job are competing for Job's loyalty, which the Adversary calls into question⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Already in the OT שטן is presented as a being who is far from a friend of the righteous. Even already in Job, there is an element in the character of שטן that is contrary to God⁽⁴⁷⁾. In Zechariah this malignant nature of שטן is also seen in the fact that he is rebuked by the angel of Yahweh⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Although not representing a complete doctrine of Satan, as developed in later Jewish writings, Ch's reworking of 2 Samuel 24 was an important stage in its development. It is, in fact, the final stage in the development of שטן in the OT. Drawing on the traditions of Job and Zechariah Ch takes the concept one step further. In Chronicles שטן not only brings charges against Yahweh's people but incites his anointed king to bring "guilt upon Israel"⁽⁴⁹⁾. Despite this development, the term is still a long way from denoting the archenemy of God. Instead, his appearance in Chronicles is evidence of Ch's post-exilic theology which saw increased roles for divine intermediaries. While not being the mainstay of his purpose, this belief in divine mediation is evident in his work and has been overlooked by recent commentators.

Wycliffe College
5 Hoskin Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1H7

Paul EVANS

⁽⁴⁶⁾ RILEY, "Devil", 469.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Recognized by LANGTON, *Essentials of Demonology*, 54.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ NEWSOM, "Angels", 251.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ 1 Chr 21, 3 (יהיה לאשמה לישראל).

SUMMARY

This paper challenges current scholarly opinion in regard to the Chronicler's belief in divine intermediaries. In 1 Chronicles 21, unlike in the Chronicler's *Vorlage*, the angel is clearly distinguished from Yahweh himself, communicates Yahweh's word to Gad, and flies. The Chronicler's replacement of Yahweh with אֱלֹהִים also reflects this belief. Persian Dualism *may* have been influential but there is no evidence that the Chronicler felt the need to remove all aspects of evil from originating in God. Although not representing a complete doctrine of Satan, as developed in later Jewish writings, 1 Chronicles 21 is an important stage its development.