No Sympathy for the Devil: The Significance of Demons in John Chrysostom's Soteriology

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NO SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEMONS IN JOHN CHRYSOSTOM’S SOTERIOLOGY

by

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ABSTRACT
NO SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEMONS IN JOHN CHRYSOSTOM’S SOTERIOLOGY

Samantha L. Miller, B.A., M.Div.
Marquette University, 2016

This dissertation is a study of John Chrysostom’s demonology as it relates to his theological anthropology and soteriology. Demons run rampant in Chrysostom's thought, though few scholars have taken note of this. Studies of Chrysostom often focus on his exegetical practices, his asceticism, or his social vision and morality. Indeed, many scholars dismiss Chrysostom as unsophisticated and therefore of little value in the landscape of fourth-century theology. In analyzing Chrysostom’s demonology, we see that Chrysostom’s thought is complex and worth further consideration.

One cannot treat demons in Chrysostom’s work without treating other theological topics as well. When Chrysostom discusses demons he does so for the sake of bringing his congregation to salvation. Drawing on Stoic categories for discussing “true” versus “apparent” harm, Chrysostom uses rhetoric about demons to highlight humanity’s freedom and self-determination. Each person has a προαιρεσις, which is free and is the locus of moral responsibility, a faculty demons cannot compel. The προαιρεσις is what enables a person to be virtuous. Chrysostom then argues that because each person is able to be virtuous, God expects each person to be virtuous, and this virtue is a necessary aspect of salvation. Though God reconciles humanity to God’s self in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and though Christ continues to help a person be virtuous, the responsibility for virtue, and thus salvation, lies with the human being.

In short, Chrysostom's demonology and account of self-determination exert a mutual influence on one another, self-determination is necessary for virtue, and virtue is integral to salvation. Therefore, in order to have a fully developed account of Chrysostom's theological anthropology and soteriology, one must also understand Chrysostom’s demonology. Chrysostom's soteriology is better understood when the role of demonology in his theology is taken into account because Chrysostom's engagements with demonology are an entrance to his soteriology and highlight the depth to which Chrysostom believes humans are responsible for their own salvation.
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Samantha L. Miller, B.A., M.Div.

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So that after we have striven lawfully

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EXCURSUS: CHRYSOSTOM A PELAGIAN?

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General:
ACW Ancient Christian Writers Series
ANF Ante-Nicene Fathers Series
FC Fathers of the Church Series
NPNF Nicene Post-Nicene Fathers Series
PG Patrologia graecae
PO Patrologia orientalis
SC Sources chrétiennes

Chrysostom’s works:
Ad Theod. Ad Theodorum lapsum
Ad eos qui scand. Ad eos qui scandalizati sunt (often called On Providence)
Adv. opp. vit. mon. Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae
Adv. Iud. Adversus Iudaeos or. 1-8
Cat. Or. Catecheses ad illuminandos
Comm. in Iob Commentarius in Iob
Comp. reg. et mon. Comparatio regis et monachi
De Bab. c. Iul. et gent. De Babylas contra Iulianum et gentiles
De eleem. De eleemosyna
De incompr. hom. De incomprehensibili dei natura hom. 1-5
De laud. Paul. hom. De laudibus sancti Pauli homiliae 1-7
De paen. hom. De poenitentia homiliae 1-9
De proph. obsc. De prophetiarum obscuritate 1-3
De res. dom. De resurrectione domini nostri Jesu Christi homilia
De sac. De sacerdotio
De stat. De statuis homiliae 1-21
Dom., non est in hom. In illud: Domine, non est in homine
Ep. ad Olymp. Epistulae 1-17 ad Olympiadem
Exp. in ps. Expositiones in psalmos
In 1 Cor. hom. In epistulam I ad Corinthios hom. 1-44
In 2 Cor. hom. In epistulam II ad Corinthios hom. 1-30
In Gal. comm. In epistulam ad Galatas commentarium
In Eph. hom. In epistulam ad Ephesios hom. 1-24
In Col. hom. In epistulam ad Colossenses hom. 1-12
In 1 Thess. hom. In epistulam I ad Thessalonicenses hom. 1-11
In 2 Thess. hom. In epistulam II ad Thessalonicenses hom. 1-5
In 1 Tim. hom. In epistulam I ad Timotheum hom. 1-18
In Tit. hom. In epistulam ad Titum hom. 1-6
In Heb. hom. In epistulam ad Hebraeos homiliae 1-34
In Gen. hom. Homiliae in Genesim 1-67
In Matt. hom. In Matthaeum hom. 1-90
In Ioh. hom. In Iohannem hom. 1-88
In Rom. hom. In epistulam ad Romanos hom. 1-32
Inan. glor. et ed. lib.
Quod nem. laed.

De inani gloria et de educandis liberis
Quod nemo laeditur nisi a seipso
INTRODUCTION

At the 2013 North American Patristics Society annual conference, the description of a special session of papers on Chrysostom and virtue formation began, “Predominantly a moralist, John Chrysostom. . . .” That Chrysostom's preaching is overwhelmingly practical and often focuses on morality is undeniable. Unfortunately, Chrysostom's efforts to make his congregation into faithful Christians have long been used among scholars as a reason for dismissing Chrysostom. If he is “just” a moralist, then he is unsophisticated and has nothing to add to discussions of fourth-century theology (then, or now). Typical is Chrysostomus Baur, one of Chrysostom's twentieth-century biographers, who offers a standard reading for Chrysostom scholars. Baur considers Chrysostom of “no great significance as a theologian” because, among other things, “his special spiritual make-up did not incline him to philosophical speculation, but rather to asceticism, ethics and homiletics.”

David Rylaarsdam, in his John Chrysostom on Divine

1 Robert Carter is representative. In a 1973 essay about what studies of Chrysostom's theology ought to be done, Carter writes, “Chrysostom's fundamental interests were pastoral and moral rather than speculative and systematic. Therefore it has been fashionable for speculative theologians to dismiss Chrysostom as a conventional moralist whose contribution to the history of theology was minimal. Today theology is much more pastorally oriented. It is concerned with Christian life and action. So it may be that theologians will find Chrysostom more relevant to their concerns than they have in the past” (Robert E. Carter, “The Future of Chrysostom Studies: Theology and Nachleben,” in Symposion: Studies on St. John Chrysostom, ed. Panayotis C. Christou, Analecta Vlatadon 18 (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Inst for Patristic Studies, 1973), 129–30). Carter argues further that because the pastoral situations confronted by Chrysostom are not the same as contemporary ones, the significance of these theological studies need to be of purely historical interest. Even as he seeks to reclaim the significance of Chrysostom's theology, he qualifies it by saying that only because pastoral theology is more relevant now can Chrysostom get a fair hearing. I might add that this dismissal of preachers as having nothing to offer theologically is broader than Chrysostom. It happens often to John Wesley, and even today the bias is to dismiss pastors and preachers as less sophisticated than academic theologians.

2 Chrysostomus Baur, John Chrysostom and His Time, trans. M. Gonzaga, 2 vols. (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1959), 1: 355. Baur does say that it is worth reading Chrysostom's theology because as a preacher he reflects the generic theology of his time: “The historians of dogma cannot pass Chrysostom unheedingly by. His writings are too numerous and too directly developed from life not to mirror the faith of his time with rays shining forth in all directions” (Ibid., 1:356). Admittedly one can begin drawing distinctions about the definition of theology, but the chief point is that scholars who claim he was “only a moralist” think him void of any sort of systematic understanding of theology, which they often
Pedagogy: The Coherence of His Theology and Preaching (2014), provides a helpful summary of the historical dismissal of Chrysostom:

Chrysostom's reviews in the twentieth century have been more negative [than the reviews of theologians like Aquinas and Calvin]. Not infrequently, he has been brushed off as merely a popular speaker, largely devoid of theology and exegetically impaired. Chrysostom faces prejudice from some modern judges who claim that he was an orator, “not a thinker or a philosopher;” that he was “anti-intellectual;” that he “popularized rather than contributed” to theology; that he was a moralizer rather than a theologian.

Against this portrayal, I join with scholars like Rylaarsdam and Wendy Mayer and argue that Chrysostom is a sophisticated thinker and that examination of his thought enriches our picture of fourth-century theology.

My avenue into the discussion is through Chrysostom's demonology. By exploring Chrysostom's demonology, I will show how various aspects of his thought are interconnected, forming a system, or a base narrative, from which Chrysostom preaches.

Demonology is not often the place scholars look in order to talk about theological use as a synonym for “unsophisticated.” This becomes an excuse to bracket Chrysostom out of any discussion of “serious” patristic theology as though he has nothing worthwhile to contribute.

anthropology or, for that matter, soteriology, but in Chrysostom the exploration is unavoidable.⁸

There was in the ancient world a general fear of the physical harm that demons caused: illness, poverty, pregnancy complications, and even death. In response to this, people of late antiquity employed amulets, magic bowls, and magical papyri to protect themselves and their families from the threat demons posed. It was not, however, a debilitating fear but a way of life. Fourth-century Christians as much as Jews, intellectuals as much as the uneducated, rich as much as poor, participated in such magic as a part of life. It was what one did.

As part of this fourth-century context, Chrysostom’s world was also populated by demons. They run rampant in Chrysostom's thought, and one cannot treat demons without treating other theological topics. Chrysostom insists that demons are not as dangerous as people assume and that there is no need of magic to repel them; humans are stonger than the devil. In his explanation of how demons are powerless, Chrysostom turns to anthropology most often. We will also see that this turn to anthropology leads to soteriology as well. Chrysostom's demonology and account of self-determination exert a mutual influence on one another. Self-determination is itself necessary for virtue, and virtue is integral to salvation. Therefore, in order to have a fully developed account of Chrysostom's theological anthropology and soteriology, one must speak of demons. Chrysostom's soteriology is better understood when the role of demonology in his

theology is taken into account because Chrysostom's engagements with demonology are an entrance to his soteriology and highlight the depth to which Chrysostom believes humans are responsible for their own salvation.

**Current Scholarship**

The most recent, substantial biography of Chrysostom is J. N. D. Kelly’s *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom, Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (1995). Interested neither in hagiography nor in dismissal, Kelly’s biography offers a through, balanced, and well-researched account of Chrysostom’s life. Kelly does not describe Chrysostom’s theology, but instead provides the details—such as we have them—of Chrysostom’s experiences, writings, and historical context. In this way Kelly offers scholars the necessary historical background of any investigation into Chrysostom’s thought.

Regarding Chrysostom’s demonology, there is an absence of scholarship. There is a single article that treats Chrysostom's demonology in itself, Marlène Kanaan's “Le diable et les démons chez saint Jean Chrysostome,” which has a surprisingly detailed dependence, not fully acknowledged in her notes, on the account Edward Nowak includes in his *Le chrétien devant la souffrance: Étude sur la pensée de Jean Chrysostome.*  

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9 Kanaan cites Nowak once, toward the end of the article, but there are too many other passages of her article that are of similar substance to Nowak's section on demonology which are not cited as paraphrases of Nowak. Even her structure is borrowed. For one example, Kanaan writes, “En suivant la description que le patriarche de Constantinople fait ç’a et là de l'esprit mauvais, le trait le plus distinctif de sa nature signalé à attention du lecteur est incontestablement la méchanceté. Non seulement cet esprit est méchant, mais il est cruel, redoutable, plein de malice, «rempli de malveillance» et d'iniquité,” where Nowak writes, “La description de l'esprit mauvais donne la méchanceté comme son trait le plus caractéristique. Il est méchant et cruel, maudit, redoutable, plein de malice, «plus méchant que tous les hommes», «rempli de malveillance»” (Marlène Kanaan, “Le diable et les démons chez saint Jean Chrysostome,” *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 113 (2012): 297.; and Edward Nowak, *Le chrétien devant la souffrance: Étude sur la pensée de Jean Chrysostome* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1973), 46–47).
Nowak's account of Chrysostom's demonology is brief and couched in a larger discussion of the nature and origin of evil for Chrysostom. Nowak argues that in Chrysostom’s theodicy human will, rather than the devil, is the origin of evil.\textsuperscript{10} Because Nowak’s focus is analysis of Chrysostom’s theodicy, he makes only cursory mention of Chrysostom’s frequent references to demons in relation to human suffering. Nowak does, however, note Chrysostom’s insistence on the role of human responsibility in suffering. Adina Peleanu's introduction to the \textit{Sources chrétiennes} volume of \textit{On the Powers of the Devil (De diab. tent.)} emphasizes the provenance, genre, dating, and so forth of the work rather than its demonological content. In fact, Peleanu remarks that Chrysostom's demonology is consistent with that of other fourth-century fathers and does not offer anything new, even as she writes about Chrysostom's emphases on negligence and προαιρεσις and notes that \textit{De diab. tent.} is just as much about the sovereignty of human choice as it is about demons.\textsuperscript{11} These emphases, as I will show, indicate that Chrysostom creates a synthesis which is unique among fourth-century authors.

Other scholars who mention Chrysostom's demonology do so primarily with a socio-historical method and fall into one of two categories. Either the work is about Chrysostom's demonology in his baptismal liturgy, as in Thomas M. Finn's \textit{The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom} and Dayna S. Kalleres's “Exorcising the Devil to Silence Christ's Enemies: Ritualized Speech Practices in Late Antique Christianity,” or the work is about Chrysostom's understanding of demon

\textsuperscript{10} Nowak, \textit{Le chrétien devant la souffrance}, 44–51.
possession and mental illness, as Claire E. Salem's “Sanity, Insanity, and Man's Being as Understood by St. John Chrysostom.” Even then, many works, particularly in regard to demonology and baptism, treat Chrysostom's demonology only tangentially or in passing, where Chrysostom is one father among many in a study. The work on demon possession and mental illness is much more recent than much of the work on baptismal liturgies and coincides with a general rise of awareness concerning mental illness in recent decades.

The study of late antique demonology broadly is not a new exploration in scholarship, though the past decade has seen an increase of scholarship on Christian demonology in particular. J. B. Russell is a significant social historian in the field of late antique demonology and religion, and his four-volume chronological study of the devil is a thorough account of cultures' development in understanding of the devil. In particular, his second volume, Satan: The Early Christian Tradition, explores demonology from the Apostolic Fathers to Augustine. Russell argues in the first two volumes that in all cultures where the devil and/or demons have developed as a concept, that concept has developed as a byproduct of theodicy. The other primary factor, according to Russell, is

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15 Russell begins his first book (in the series) with “the question of evil” (Russell, The Devil, 17–35). The devil, he argues, is one answer to this question in many cultures. For Russell, a “theodicy” is an
the exchange of ideas between cultures. For instance, the increase in complexity of Judaism's demonology is due to Jews’ introduction to Zoroastrianism and other Persian influences during the Diaspora, and Origen's familiarity with Hellenism led to the importation of Greek ideas into Christian demonologies. Recently there has been more interest in demonologies of the fourth century, though this scholarship focuses on ascetics, the representative work in this area being David Brakke's *Demons and the Making of the Monk*. Brakke argues for the mutual dependency of demonology and the development of the ideal monk, pointing out the central role demons play in monastic literature and hinting at the practice in ascetic literature of casting anthropology in terms of demonology. Monks are defined as those who struggle against demons. Scholars are,

answer to the question, “Where does evil come from?” as in his statement, “No longer easy in their minds about ascribing rape and destruction to the will of their God, the Hebrews sought new theodicies” (Ibid., 181). Though the term was not coined until the Enlightenment, these themes appear in the sources Russell treats as well as in the fourth-century Christian sources I treat. For this reason I use the term, even as I recognize that it is, strictly speaking, anachronistic.


however, beginning to take an interest in other figures, especially the Cappadocians, even as there is still comparably very little on non-ascetic Christian demonologies.\(^{18}\)

There has been more scholarship on Chrysostom's anthropology and soteriology than on his demonology, but still there is little. Currently it is Chrysostom's anthropology that is seeing a flurry of work, led by Wendy Mayer. Her recent work investigates Chrysostom's understanding of sin and salvation in terms of the health of soul. Mayer notes Chrysostom's use of medical categories and language of treating the soul much resembles what is found in Galen and his predecessors. Her “The Persistence in Late Antiquity of Medico-Philosophical Psychic Therapy” examines Chrysostom's *On Providence (Ad eos qui scand.*) as a treatise about the treatment of the soul in continuity with *No One Can Harm the Man Who Does Not Harm Himself (Quod nem. laed.*) and the last letter to Olympias to argue that Chrysostom had a holistic approach to health that echoed Galen's.\(^{19}\) Mayer's reappraisal of Chrysostom as more than a moralist from this particular anthropological angle is outlined most succinctly in her “Shaping the Sick Soul: Reshaping the Identity of John Chrysostom.”\(^{20}\) Raymond Laird's *Mindset, Moral Choice and Sin in the Anthropology of John Chrysostom* is another recent significant study of Chrysostom's anthropology.\(^{21}\) Laird argues that γνώμη is central to Chrysostom's anthropology as the term to indicate the core of a human being, the part morally


\(^{19}\) Mayer, “The Persistence in Late Antiquity of Medico-philosophical Psychic Therapy.”


responsible. Another scholar who figures prominently in the reappraisal of Chrysostom is Chris de Wet, whose work focuses on Chrysostom's understanding of slavery and the body and uses primarily cultural-anthropological and rhetorical methods. Both Mayer and de Wet attempt to show Chrysostom as a sophisticated thinker, and they do so from a cultural-historical, rather than theological, angle.

Chrysostom's soteriology is perhaps the area of his thought, after his exegesis, that has received the most scholarly attention, though little has come out recently, and much of that has been focused on Chrysostom's *In Rom. hom*. In 1933, Louis Meyer published *Saint Jean Chrysostome, maître de perfection chrétienne*, a monograph arguing that Christian perfection, in Chrysostom's account, is a cooperative venture between God and the human. Though made possible by the grace of Christ, human freedom requires that a person make an effort toward her own perfection; she cannot be compelled. Meyer implies that salvation is tied up with perfection. A Christian, one who has received salvation, strives for perfection, to live in the state of one who is saved. That perfection is the angelic life, the restored paradise. More recently, Demetrios Trakatellis is doing the most substantial work on Chrysostom's soteriology, focusing his writing on Chrysostom's portrayal of the transformation of the human being. Trakatellis is examining Chrysostom's anthropology but doing so with soteriological categories. “Man Fallen and

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22 A more thorough discussion of Laird's book comes in chapter five.
25 Other, more recent work on the cooperative nature of Chrysostom's soteriology includes Susan Donegan, “St John Chrysostom: An Argument for a Greater Appreciation of His Theology of Salvation,” *Diakonia* 23 (1990): 21–42; James Ayers, “John Chrysostom’s Doctrine of Conversion” (Ph.D., Boston College, 2001), but Trakatellis is the most thorough and so serves as a representative of this scholarship.
“Restored” is an exploration of Chrysostom's love for human beings and argues that Chrysostom views human nature as not inherently evil but as redeemed in Christ. Trakatellis's longer treatise, “Being Transformed: Chrysostom's Exegesis of the Epistle to the Romans” is an exploration of the redemptive themes in Chrysostom's *In Rom. hom.* Key to much of Trakatellis's analysis is Chrysostom's emphasis on προαιρεσις, just as it is key for Christopher A. Hall's understanding of Chrysostom's *In Rom. hom.* and *Ad eos qui scand.* Because Chrysostom's soteriology is “cooperative,” as scholars have well noted with wide consensus, it is bound up with his anthropology, as is demonstrated by Trakatellis's and Hall's emphasis on προαιρεσις in their discussions of Chrysostom’s soteriology.

Salvation for Chrysostom is about restoration to the paradisiacal, angelic state. Therefore, in order to understand salvation, one must also understand Chrysostom's anthropology, which includes its beginning in Eden as well as what in a person is restored. Beyond this—where scholars do not often go—choice and action are integral aspects of salvation in Chrysostom's account, so it is necessary to understand how choice and action work in a human being. Lawrence R. Barnard's 1974 dissertation investigates the way Chrysostom preached his Christology and soteriology, and in Barnard's analysis,

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28 Scholars refer to Chrysostom's soteriology as “synergistic”—a word I reject and replace with “cooperative” in a discussion in chapter six—because Chrysostom believes that there is a cooperation between the human and God in matters of salvation. God saves, but God gives humans a part to play. Humans must act for their salvation, but they cannot save themselves. That Chrysostom understands there to be a cooperation is the scholarly consensus; how precisely the cooperation works and how big a role humans play are ideas up for debate.
Chrysostom's soteriology drives his Christology. According to Barnard, Chrysostom's soteriology is about moral regeneration, and therefore Chrysostom's Christology describes a savior who in his very nature can provide that moral regeneration. Barnard's final argument is that Chrysostom ought to be a model for Evangelical preachers in the contemporary world since Chrysostom shows well how to preach Christ in his two natures and how these two natures bring about salvation. Melville E. Lawrenz's work is also on Chrysostom's Christology, arguing that Chrysostom's Christology is not as strictly “Antiochene” as one might first think. At the end of his work, Lawrenz crosses into soteriology since, as he says, “soteriology and Christology are interconnected.” Unlike Barnard, however, Lawrenz focuses on how Chrysostom's Christology informs his soteriology. Because Chrysostom's Christology emphasizes the one union of the two natures (and is thus less strictly “Antiochene”), Lawrenz finds elements of both traditional “Antiochene” and “Alexandrian” soteriologies: Christ as exemplar and Christ's elevating human nature through incarnation.

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29 Lawrence R. Barnard, “Christology and Soteriology in the Preaching of John Chrysostom” (Th.D., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1974).
30 Ibid., abstract 3.
32 Ibid., 177–88. Old terminology recognized “Antiochene” Christology as “Word-man,” wherein Christ’s human nature is emphasized and the Logos, though dwelling in Christ, did not replace the human soul, and “Alexandrian” Christology as “Word-flesh,” wherein Jesus has only one nature, and the Logos replaces the human soul. However, the Alexandrian-Antiochene divide is now largely considered inaccurate, particularly with regard to exegetical methods, but it was the common assumption of patristic scholarship during Lawrenz's writing. Now, however, one can see Lawrenz's work as helping to break down the divide, as he demonstrates that Chrysostom does not as neatly fit into the Antiochene camp as scholars once assumed. Chrysostom is one figure often used from the “Antiochene” side to break down the exegetical divide. Chrysostom, though certainly grounded and attentive to the literal sense, as is the claim about the Antiochene school, is not in any way bound to the literal sense. His exegesis is especially more fluid than that of his contemporaries Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrus. For these reasons scholars use Chrysostom as a prime example of a father whose exegesis cannot be neatly categorized under the old system. For such exegetical analyses, see Bradley Nassif, “Antiochene Θεωρία in John Chrysostom’s Exegesis,” in Ancient & Postmodern Christianity: Paleo-Orthodoxy in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 49–67; idem., “The ‘Spiritual Exegesis’ of Scripture: The School of Antioch Revisited,” Anglican Theological Review 75
Yet in all of this scholarship on various aspects of Chrysostom's thought, scholars are not looking at the interplay between Chrysostom's demonology, anthropology, and soteriology. There is an awareness that a full accounting of Chrysostom's soteriology requires an account of his anthropology, or at least an account of the self-determination and freedom God gives to humans, just as there is an awareness, though less explicit, that understanding the significance and implications of Chrysostom's anthropology requires an account of his soteriology. Nowak, Kanaan, and Peleanu, in their brief works on Chrysostom's demonology, suggest that his demonology makes a statement about his anthropology. No one, however, has written explicitly about the interplay between demonology, anthropology, and soteriology in Chrysostom's thought, or the ways Chrysostom's account of salvation contains and requires all these other aspects of his thought.

What this recent wave of Chrysostom scholarship amounts to is an appreciation of Chrysostom as more sophisticated than the descriptor “moralist” has historically portrayed the father. There are those scholars who engage the morality of Chrysostom's sermons, but these treatments are primarily of socio-historical methodology, interested in the particular activities or lifestyles Chrysostom advocated, and a significant portion of them are concerned with his frequent praise of almsgiving.33 Johannes Quasten, on the

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33 For instance, Elizabeth Clark has examined Chrysostom's writings about virginity, “spiritual marriage,” and other sexual practices, as in her “Theory and Practice in Late Ancient Asceticism: Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 5 (1989): 25–46; and “Sexual Politics in the Writings of John Chrysostom,” *Anglican Theological Review* 59 (1977): 3–20. The genre of Chrysostom's homilies, the demographic makeup of his congregation, and Chrysostom's techniques as a preacher, including especially his moral exhortation, are the subject of Jaclyn L. Maxwell's Chrysostom's penchant for preaching against wealth and in praise of almsgiving is often seen as “progressive” and is used as an example in more social-justice oriented works in addition to academic works. For a selection of both, see Georges Florovsky, “St John Chrysostom: The Prophet of Charity,” *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 3
other hand, writes in his *Patrology*, “[Chrysostom] had no speculative bent nor any interest in the abstract. However, this lack of inclination for systematic presentation does not exclude a deep understanding of difficult theological questions. . . . His writings mirror the traditional faith with great fidelity and their doctrinal content must not be underestimated.”  

Quasten's call for “a comprehensive monograph on [Chrysostom's] theological thought” has not yet been satisfied exactly, but scholars like Mayer and others listed here are answering with their works on various aspects of Chrysostom's thought. They are attempting to show that Chrysostom is a sophisticated thinker worth listening to, just as Quasten argued. This is where the present work fits in, as another effort toward the reappraisal of Chrysostom. Bringing together Chrysostom's demonology, anthropology, and soteriology will show them to be mutually illuminating, and treating them together will reveal a deep logic Chrysostom is not usually given credit for. A careful analysis will reveal a sophisticated underlying theology in which all aspects work in service of Chrysostom's soteriology and for the congregation's salvation.

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Overview of Sources

Throughout this work I draw on homilies, treatises, and letters from the breadth of Chrysostom's corpus. I will, for this reason, here provide a more detailed overview only of those sources that feature most prominently in my analysis: *De diabolo tentatore*, *Quod nemo laeditur nisi a seipso*, *Homiliae in Genesim*, and *Catecheses ad illuminandos*. Three of these four works come from the early part of Chrysostom's career, and one from his exile at the end of his life. I supplement these texts with many other of Chrysostom's works spanning the entirety of his career in order to show that his early theology does not change significantly. Regarding the whole of Chrysostom's corpus, I follow Wendy Mayer's conclusions about the provenance of Chrysostom's homilies as presented in her *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom: Provenance, Reshaping the Foundations*. Mayer examines the criteria by which Chrysostom's homilies had been assigned to either Antioch or Constantinople and in many cases finds those criteria insufficient and outdated. She offers a more thorough and modern set of criteria and provides the suggested provenance of many of Chrysostom's exegetical homilies. Mayer does not, however, offer much in the way of relative dating within each provenance. For this reason, I follow J. N. D. Kelly's chronology in order to relate Chrysostom’s works to one another chronologically. Kelly's work is thoroughly researched and offers the traditional chronology except where he finds reason to suggest something different. There are few

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38 This traditional chronology is based on the criteria Mayer critiques, and so I defer to Mayer in cases of conflict. However, where Mayer offers no suggestion, I use Kelly for the purpose of saying something rather than nothing. Traditional consensus is often traditional for a good reason.
debates over the authenticity of Chrysostom's works; there is scholarly consensus regarding the authorship of texts, including not only those four I examine closely here but all the works I cite.

In all cases where one exists, I use the critical edition of a text, and I am indebted to the work of Wendy Mayer, who has compiled a thorough—one may dare say exhaustive—list of Chrysostom's works, the critical edition(s) of each work should one exist, and known translations of each work. Where there is no critical edition I use Migne's *Patrologia graeca*. For English translations I often use the *Fathers of the Church* or *Ancient Christian Writers* series, or a version of the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* translation altered for ease of reading. Where there exists a more recent translation, I have used it, and where the published English translation is inadequate, I supply my own, noting where I have done so.

**Genre**

A word must also be said about the genre of Chrysostom's works. The bulk of Chrysostom's corpus consists of homilies, which provides certain challenges and generic idiosyncrasies of which one must be aware. Homilies are by definition occasional and so may not always be consistent with one another because of different emphases on different occasions, even as there will be consistency over the course of a career. On the one hand, this means that consistencies are significant. Where Chrysostom says the same thing in many places, it cannot be attributed only to the occasional nature of the homily. On the

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other hand, differences in ideas presented are cause for question. Is a remark only for the purposes of this one homily, or is it representative of his thought more generally?\(^\text{40}\) It is also true that Chrysostom was careful with his language. ἀκρίβεια is one of his primary exegetical principles, and he himself says that he aims to be precise in his own language as a reflection of Scripture, which is precise because God wanted to be clear in what God conveyed to humanity. About Scripture's ἀκρίβεια Chrysostom preaches, “Notice the ἀκρίβεια of Scripture, how you can't find even a chance syllable contained there to no purpose,“\(^\text{41}\) and about the need for precision on the part of the commentator, he preaches, “They do foolishly, who neglect to examine with ἀκρίβεια all things written.”\(^\text{42}\) This precision of language suggests that one should not dismiss a passage because it is from a sermon, and likely an extemporaneous one at that. Chrysostom, the “Golden Mouth,” received his nickname for a good reason.

The other challenge provided by the homily genre is that most of Chrysostom's thought is scattered. His theology undergirds all of his homilies and reveals itself over time, not all in one place.\(^\text{43}\) So when describing Chrysostom's theology—either as a complete thought or only on a single aspect—one must attend to the breadth of his corpus. In doing so, one must also attend to relative chronology to see whether his thought is changing. Therefore, I have synthesized Chrysostom's theology by drawing

\(^{40}\) Robert Carter phrases the challenge well: “Chrysostom's style is rhetorical. Exaggerations must be seen as such. If in one homily he tells us that vainglory is the root of all evils and in another that love of money is the root of all evils, we are not obliged to conclude that he changed his mind, or that there was a development in his thought, or that all evils have two roots. He was simply employing a rhetorical convention to say that he disapproves of vainglory and love of money” (Carter, “The Future of Chrysostom Studies,” 130).

\(^{41}\) *In Gen. hom.* 23.2 (PG 53.198, FC 90).

\(^{42}\) *In 1 Cor. hom.* 34.9 (PG 61.294, NPNF 207).

\(^{43}\) Laird offers a defense of using the sermon genre for discerning Chrysostom's theology in his *Mindset, Moral Choice and Sin*, 7, including the idea that in Chrysostom's time preaching was a theological exercise.
from several different works. For the most part, Chrysostom’s thought does not change over time. His tone will vary by audience—his letters to the young widow or to Olympias are more personal and softer in tone than his polemical homilies against the Judaizing Christians—but Chrysostom’s theology is consistent from Antioch to Constantinople to exile.

One final thing to note about Chrysostom’s sermons is that, though there is a scholarly consensus regarding authorship of Chrysostom’s sermons, it is thought that a scribe recorded what Chrysostom preached, and Chrysostom was able to “clean up” the homilies post-delivery for publication and circulation. This “polishing” is particularly true of series of homilies. What we consider “series” now are homilies Chrysostom preached over the course of successive services and under a similar theme. The most obvious are the exegetical homilies, wherein Chrysostom preached through a book of Scripture: the homilies on Genesis, Matthew, Romans, and so on. Other examples are the series Against the Judaizing Christians (Adv. Iud.) and On the Incomprehensible Nature of God (De incompr. hom.); Chrysostom preached these homilies as one continuous argument over several consecutive services. Sometimes the sermons in a given series might not have been preached in exactly consecutive services, as when Chrysostom says he had to take a break from his homilies against the Anoemeans (De incompr. hom.) in order to respond to some Judaizing Christians44, but in these cases the prolonged argument is intended to be one and so the sermons are kept together in a series.

44 Adv. Iud. 1.1: “Today I had intended to complete my discussion of the topic on which I spoke to you a few days ago; I wished to present you with even clearer proof that God's nature is more than our minds can grasp. . . . But what am I to do? Another very serious illness calls for any cure my words can bring, an illness which has become implanted in the body of the Church. We must first root this ailment out and then take thought for matters outside” (PG 48.843-44, FC 1-3). Chrysostom gives such a lengthy explanation of the homiletic series he interrupted that there is no doubt he refers to De incompr. hom.
The collection of Chrysostom’s works into the series we have now is both ancient and modern. Biblical homilies or others that were clearly preached as a series were maintained as a series at least from the earliest extant codices. Others, such as De diab. tent., have been grouped together by modern editors, most notably Montfaucon. Here scholars attempted to reconstruct apparent series, either chronologically, as those homilies intended by Chrysostom to be a series, as in the case of De diab. tent. below, or by grouping together homilies of similar theme, as in Montfaucon’s grouping of the homilies on repentance (De eleem.).

In addition to homilies, Chrysostom also wrote letters, treatises and commentaries. Job and Galatians are two books among his surviving works on which Chrysostom wrote “commentaries” rather than homilies. Scholars regard the difference in genre to be that commentaries were written and disseminated without having been preached. These can, then, represent Chrysostom’s more polished thought, though because the sermons as we have them were also polished post-delivery, the difference is slight. Finally, treatises such as Chrysostom’s Ad eos qui scand. or Quod nem. laed. are

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45 Mayer explains that much of the current ordering of Chrysostom’s homilies is based upon the premise that “the order in which homilies are arranged in the manuscript tradition faithfully reproduces the order in which the homilies within a particular series were originally preached” (Mayer, The Homilies of St John Chrysostom, 22), indicating that the grouping of Chrysostom’s homilies is nothing new.

46 Mayer provides an extensive survey of the history of the editions and collections of Chrysostom’s works in her The Homilies of St John Chrysostom, 35–273. Henry Savile was the first person to create a comprehensive edition of Chrysostom’s complete works (1612), but Bernard de Montfaucon’s edition (1718-38) is the most well-known organization, since Migne used this one for his Patrologia Graeca (1857-86). Mayer notes that “the shape which Montfaucon gave to the corpus in his edition has been decisive in determining how the homilies have since been viewed” (The Homilies of St John Chrysostom, 47). It should be noted that Mayer’s project in the book is to critique the criteria by which Chrysostom’s sermons have, in the past, been assigned their provenance and to suggest better criteria for more accurate scholarship now.

47 The Galatians commentary has indications of once having been preached, but the form that has come to us is a “single, unbroken exposition” (Kelly, Golden Mouth, 91). Kelly is less precise with his definition of homily or commentary, referring to all of Chrysostom’s exegetical series “sermon-commentaries” (pp. 89-94), though he notes the difference in form between Chrysostom’s Galatians commentary and all other series on books. It seems that Kelly means “commentary” to be a helpful demarcation rather than a technical term for a genre.
works written to be disseminated and not preached but, unlike commentaries, were
topical rather than exegetical.48

Now we come to an overview of the works chiefly under consideration in this
study.

**De diabolo tentaore**

The NPNF, following Migne (who follows Montfaucon), groups together three
homilies as the series *De diab. tent.* Adina Peleanu's 2013 *Sources chrétiennes* volume
includes only the latter two of these homilies, Peleanu arguing that the first homily
belongs not to the series *De diab. tent.* but to *On the Obscurity of the Prophets (De
proph. obsc.)*, as the third of that series. According to Peleanu, Montfaucon correctly
unites the second and third homilies which he labels *De diab. tent.*, noting that the third is
an extension of the second both logically and chronologically, but he incorrectly places
the first homily since it holds with the other two neither thematically nor chronologically.
Despite its title, *That Demons Do Not Govern the World (Daem. non gub.)*, which
Peleanu claims is the reason Montfaucon placed it with the two homilies of *De diab.
tent.*, this homily begins as an exposition of Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel narrative.
This same exposition occurs in the second homily of *De proph. obsc.*, and the
development of ideas in both *Daem. non gub.* and *De proph. obsc.* is the same.49

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48 See Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 268–71; Anne Marie Malingrey, ed., *Lettre d’exil à Olympias et à
tous les fidèles (Quod Nemo Laeditur)*, Sources chrétiennes, no 103 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964), 9–12,
for more elaborate descriptions of this genre.

on the reorganization of *De diab. tent.* appeared (Adina Peleanu, “Deux séries Chrysostomienes: Sur
l’impuissance du diable et sur l’obscurite des prophéties,” *Revue d’études augustiniennes et patristiques* 57
(2011): 89–108), notes in her chronology that “as indicated by a comparison of the opening to *De diab.*
It is true that in the beginning of De diab. tent. 1\textsuperscript{50}, Chrysostom says, “We renew our discourse concerning the Devil, which we started two days ago, which we also addressed to the initiated, this morning when we discoursed to them about renunciation, and covenant.”\textsuperscript{51} This note implies that the homily is at least the second in a series and is likely why Montfaucon placed De proph. obsc. 3 where he did. According to Peleanu, there is not enough other evidence to warrant Montfaucon's placement, and this note simply means that we have lost the homily to which Chrysostom refers. The other thing this statement implies, however, is a chronological connection between De diab. tent. and Chrysostom's catechetical homilies. Given the number of catechetical series Chrysostom would have preached in his position, it is impossible to know which series, if any, of those extant, Chrysostom refers to. The reference does, however, suggest that De diab. tent. was preached during Lent. Peleanu places De diab. tent. in either 386 or 388, following the suggestion of earlier scholars.\textsuperscript{52} I follow Peleanu's organization of the two homiletic series. Scholars have not assigned a separate date to De proph. obsc. 3 because it has long been considered part of De diab. tent. Even Peleanu, in her SC introduction, does not offer a date for De proph. obsc. 3 once she has jettisoned it from De diab. tent. Her focus is on the latter series alone. Robert Hill, in his translation of De proph. obsc. 1-2, suggests that Chrysostom preached De diab. tent. “shortly after” De proph. obsc. 1-2,

\textsuperscript{tent. hom. 1 [Montfaucon's numbering] and the contents of De prophetiarum obscuritate hom. 2, the first was delivered a few days after the Sunday on which the latter was preached. From the third of the homilies it is also clear that hom. 3 was delivered two days after hom. 2. The interval between hom. 1 and 2, however, is by no means certain, as is the question of whether hom. 1 actually preceded hom. 2” (Mayer, Homilies of St John Chrysostom, 77).  
\textsuperscript{50} From here on I will use Peleanu's numbering, where De diab. tent. 1-2 are the second and third homilies listed by Montfaucon, and De proph. obsc. 3 is Daem. non gub., the first listed by Montfaucon.  
\textsuperscript{51} De diab. tent. 1.1 (SC 122, NPNF 187).  
\textsuperscript{52} Peleanu, Homélies sur l'impuissance du diable, 13. Mayer does not offer an extensive analysis of this series but includes it in a chart of the history of dating Chrysostom's homilies. She notes that only two of the nine major scholars consulted suggest a date for De diab. tent. Tillemont says Lent 388, and Stilting says Lent 386 (Mayer, Homilies of St John Chrysostom, 261). Mayer does conclude, based on a reference in De diab. tent. 1 to Bishop Flavian, that the series was preached in Antioch.
though he is not more precise than this.\textsuperscript{53} Given the interconnections, assuming a similar date between 386 and 388 for \textit{De proph. obsc. 3} is reasonable.

\textit{Quod nemo laeditur nisi a seipso}

Chrysostom penned \textit{Quod nem. laed.} from his second exile in 406-407. According to Malingrey's introduction to the SC volume, Chrysostom wrote this treatise to his congregation and enclosed it along with \textit{Ad eos qui scand.} in his final letter to Olympias. Both treatises were to be given to his congregation.\textsuperscript{54} There is no debate regarding either dating or authorship of \textit{Quod nem. laed.} As a treatise, it is a different genre than the homilies under consideration. The thoughts are less open to dismissal as extemporaneous than are homilies since Chrysostom took the time and expense to write these thoughts to his congregation. They are, however, just as “occasional” or contextual as homilies, having arisen from a particular situation. Knowing that Chrysostom wrote this letter about true suffering also during a time of his own remarkable suffering provides significant context. They are not platitudes or abstractions but part of his concrete experience. When he tells the faithful that suffering disease or poverty is only apparent suffering and that they ought to be more wary of “true” injury—that inflicted on the soul, by the soul, that is, sin—Chrysostom is himself suffering in a bodily way. It is likely that this letter is an accurate representation of Chrysostom's thought and hope. That it coheres with ideas he preached in his early career indicates that these are not merely hopes borne

\begin{footnotes}
\item[54] Malingrey, \textit{Lettre d’exil à Olympias et à tous les fidèles (Quod Nemo Laeditur)}, 7–8. Scholars refer to them as treatises because they were not preached but rather written, much like essays Chrysostom intended for the instruction of his congregation.
\end{footnotes}
out of his own suffering as salves for his mind and soul but that these ideas comprise his longstanding theodicy.

**Homiliae in Genesim**

Because a statement in *In Gen. hom.* 33 speaks of a break for Easter and sermons on Judas, resurrection, and Acts, it is likely that Chrysostom preached the first thirty-two homilies before and during Lent, then the last thirty-five after Pentecost.\(^{55}\) Kelly suggests a date of 389 but notes that the date is still open to some debate.\(^{56}\) Even so, the Genesis homilies are considered to be the earliest of Chrysostom's "sermon commentaries" or exegetical homilies. There is scholarly consensus that the homilies are authentic to Chrysostom.

**Catecheses ad illuminandos**

The final series of homilies which figure prominently in this study are Chrysostom's catechetical orations. There are extant three different series of catechetical homilies, designated Montfaucon (Mont.) 1-2, Papadopoulos-Kerameus (P-K) 1-4, and Stavronikita (Stav.) 1-8. Stav. 3 and P-K 4 are the same homily, as are Mont. 1 and P-K 1. Though Montfaucon placed his two homilies together, and though they are a first and

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\(^{55}\) Robert C. Hill points out this statement, first noted by Montfaucon, in his introduction to his translation of the *In Gen. hom.* for the FC series (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis* 1-17, trans. Robert C. Hill, FC 74 (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 5–6). Mayer accepts the conclusion from this statement and also agrees that the provenance is likely Antioch (Mayer, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom*, 470).

\(^{56}\) Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 89–90.
second catechesis, they are not from the same series.\footnote{I am following the history of the series provided by Harkins in his introduction to his translation of all twelve homilies for the ACW series (Paul W Harkins, trans., \textit{Baptismal Instructions}, ACW 31(Westminster, Md: Newman Press, 1963), 9–18).} In fact, the P-K is that series to which Mont. 1 properly belongs. There is no debate about the authorship of these four sermons; they are all considered to be genuine works of Chrysostom. Similarly, a third-person mention in P-K 3 of the bishop indicates their having been preached at Antioch rather than Constantinople. Antoine Wenger argues for a date of 388 for the P-K series, and Auguste Piédagnel accepts this conclusion as \textit{très vraisemblable} in his introduction to his SC volume of the P-K series.\footnote{Auguste Piédagnel and Louis Doutreleau, eds., \textit{Trois catéchèses baptismales}, SC 366 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1990), 39. Kelly follows Piédagnel and Wenger on the dating of P-K but follows F. van de Paverd in dating Stav. at 391 (Kelly, \textit{Golden Mouth}, 88–89). Mayer allows that both series were preached in Antioch (Mayer, \textit{The Homilies of St John Chrysostom}, 473).} Wenger discovered the Stav. series in 1955 in a manuscript at the monastery of Stavronikita on Mount Athos, then published it in the SC. Whereas the Mont. and P-K series include only pre-baptismal and Easter homilies, the Stav. series includes five post-baptismal homilies delivered to the neophytes during Easter week.\footnote{Harkins, \textit{Baptismal Instructions}, 12.} Wenger argues that the series is authentic to Chrysostom and was preached in Antioch, but his range of dates for composition is 389-398. He suggests 390 based on a similarity of language with the \textit{In Gen. hom.}, but Mayer prefers to leave open the larger range of dates until more evidence arises.\footnote{Antoine Wenger, ed., \textit{Huit catéchèses baptismales}, SC 50 (Paris: Du Cerf, 1957), 63–65; and Mayer, \textit{Homilies of St John Chrysostom}, 232–33.} Given the consistency of thought both between the two series and also between the \textit{Cat. or.} and the rest of Chrysostom's corpus, the inexact dating is not a significant problem. It is enough to say that they likely came after the \textit{In Gen. hom.} and may have come at a time relatively close to \textit{De diab. tent.} or sometime after, and before anything preached in Constantinople or written from exile, including \textit{Quod nem. laed}. 
There is one other significant aspect to consider regarding the *Cat. or.*

Catechetical homilies were preached to those about to be baptized, that is, to those about to be initiated into the church. This context is worth keeping in mind as different from those of other homilies, such as *In Gen. hom.* or *De diab. tent.*, where the uninitiated would also have been present. Audience affects interpretation. For instance, Chrysostom's insistence that life is a battle with the devil but that Christ is an ally is preached in the *Cat. or.*, indicating that it is specifically the *Christian* life that is a battle with the devil. Unless the point is made elsewhere, one cannot assume a non-Christian's life is the same kind of battle or that Christ is on his side.

Such are Chrysostom's works that figure most prominently in the present study.

**Outline of the Study**

My first task is descriptive. The first two chapters set the scene of late antique demonology in order to place Chrysostom within a context and trajectories of thought. Chrysostom's particular understanding of demonology is a forceful rejection of the ideas of the laity in his congregation, so it is important to describe the demonological milieu in order both to understand the target of his rejection and to understand how unique Chrysostom was or was not. This first chapter is a broad treatment of demonology in the ancient world up to Origen and the various sources and traditions—pagan, Jewish, and Christian—that provide context for Chrysostom's own treatment of the demons' (non-) influence on human sin. My broad outline provides only specific and concentrated treatments of those sources and traditions which are likely to have had an influence on
Chrysostom. Chapter two discusses the pagan, Jewish, and Christian demonologies from Origen to Chrysostom with a distinct focus on the fourth century. Chapter four is a similarly descriptive chapter on the place of προαίρεσις in Stoic theological anthropology and the possible philosophical sources of Chrysostom's anthropology.

My second task is analytical. I intend to show the logic that connects a given theme to others—demonology to theological anthropology and virtue, virtue and moral psychology to soteriology, and demonology to soteriology. Chapter three is an exploration of Chrysostom's demonology in two parts. The first part is a description of Chrysostom's demonology proper: How does Chrysostom understand the origin, nature, and activities of demons, and how does his understanding compare to that of his predecessors? The second part looks at the rhetorical function demonology serves for Chrysostom. He does not discuss demons for the sake of speculating about demons' origins or what they are composed of the way Origen does; Chrysostom discusses demons for the sake of encouraging his congregants to virtue. Chrysostom's demonological discourse is overwhelmingly practical. Demons are real, and demons can also be useful; Chrysostom employs demonic rhetoric often when he exhorts the congregation to a given act, virtue generally, or a way of life.

Chapter five explores Chrysostom's theological anthropology, with a particular emphasis on his account of human virtue, and this chapter demonstrates that Chrysostom uses demonology to highlight anthropology. Demons are limited, created beings, unable to harm a human unless given permission by God or freely followed by the human himself. In Chrysostom's discussions of the devil and his demons, Chrysostom's account
of the demons' powerlessness in the face of the Christian's προαίρεσις becomes clear.61

Humans have the ability to choose good and to resist the devil and thus to “defeat” him. The devil cannot harm a human being; a human being can only harm himself by choosing to follow the devil, that is, by choosing to do evil, to sin. Chrysostom draws on what appear to be Stoic categories for discussing “harm” to humans, distinguishing between true and apparent harm. The only true harm, he says, is harm to the soul, that is, sin; everything else—poverty, unemployment, natural disaster, disease—is only apparent harm.62

Sin is avoidable in Chrysostom's understanding because every person has a προαίρεσις. The term has a history in both Aristotle and Epictetus's ethics, and Chrysostom uses it to refer to the faculty of a person's soul that God created within the person's own control, which cannot be compelled by either God or the devil. Therefore, the προαίρεσις is the locus of moral responsibility. God created everyone with freedom and self-determination, lodged in each person's προαίρεσις, and for this reason a demon cannot, however much he tempts or deceives, compel a person to sin. By the same token, one must exercise one's προαίρεσις for an act to be virtuous. This is further significant because there are people in Chrysostom's congregation who claim the devil has caused their sins. Chrysostom attempts to correct his people's errant understandings by explaining the limitations of the demons' power.

61 Though many translators will approximate προαίρεσις with “free will,” I leave it untranslated for two reasons. First, it is of such importance to Chrysostom's thought that it is better to explain how Chrysostom uses it (see below and chapter 5) than to approximate it with a baggage-laden phrase like “free will.” Second, “free will” encourages the importation of ideas Chrysostom did not necessarily have. Both προαίρεσις and αὐτεξούσιος in Chrysostom's works refer to a lack of compulsion, and for this reason “self-determination” is a better choice than “free will.” Where I do not leave it untranslated, τὸ αὐτεξούσιον will be rendered “self-determination,” and I will not use the phrase “free will.”

62 This is not to say that these things are not suffering, for they are, and Chrysostom addresses them as such. Yet they are not the cause of true injury, which is sin alone, since sin prohibits salvation and is entirely avoidable.
Responding to misplaced blame for sin is not Chrysostom's only objective, however. Chrysostom is also offering a theodicy. In responding to the suffering in the world and among his congregants, Chrysostom argues that neither God nor the devil are responsible; humans are responsible for suffering. In the line of Methodius, the Cappadocians, and others, Chrysostom answers questions of theodicy by having recourse to anthropology. If evil is not God's fault—and Christians hold that it cannot be—then whose fault is it? Chrysostom answers first with his distinction between true and apparent harm and second with his claim that all true harm is the responsibility of the human. What makes Chrysostom different from his predecessors is his injection of demons into the conversation. Demons, like God, are not responsible for true injury (sin), however much they seem to be.

In chapter six, we see that Chrysostom tells his congregation to use all of this information about demons, virtue, and responsibility and to attain salvation. He portrays the Christian life as one of struggle with the devil for virtue and salvation. When a person is tempted, she is supposed to remember that she has προαιρεσις, to spit in the devil's face, and to stand tall and virtuous. The reason this is so important to Chrysostom is that for him, virtue is an integral part of salvation. Salvation is a cooperative venture between God and the human being wherein God's work is sufficient, all-encompassing, and primary, but salvation also requires something of the human. God's work is the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the human contribution is a virtuous life. This virtue is made possible by God's work, but a person must still make a choice for his salvation and struggle to maintain it in the face of the attacks of the devil, who is the enemy of our salvation. By tempting Christians to sin, the devil and his demons are trying
to thwart salvation, but salvation is a matter of a person's προαίρεσις. Though God woos and the devil tempts, God does not compel, and the devil cannot compel; a person must make an active choice. Christ and the devil each try to lead people to their respective homes, heaven and hell, and it is up to the Christian to choose whom to follow home each day.

It is for the complexity of this thought that Chrysostom deserves another look.
CHAPTER 1: ANCIENT DEMONOLOGY TO ORIGEN

Δαίμονες is an ambiguous term in the ancient world. Some pagans used it as a synonym for θεός, some used it to refer to the souls of the dead, and some used it to indicate something like a person’s conscience. Some ancient writers claimed all δαίμονες were good, and others that δαίμονες were capable of being either good or evil. Diaspora Jews made statements that δαίμονες were evil spirits, ontologically similar to angels but in a state of rebellion against God. Christians began with the intertestamental understandings of δαίμονες and used the term to refer only to evil spirits. The term was not ambiguous in Christian usage as it was for pagans, though ancient Christians’ demonologies were not uniform either. Christian authors had different narratives about the origin of demons, different ideas about the nature of demons, and different emphases with regard to demonic activities.

As a fourth-century preacher in Antioch, and then Constantinople, John Chrysostom encountered pagan, Jewish, and Christian groups and their beliefs.¹ Such traditions constituted the ideological milieu in which Chrysostom’s congregation lived and in which Chrysostom spoke. Therefore, in order best to understand Chrysostom’s demonology, it is necessary to survey Chrysostom’s demonological context. This is particularly true because Chrysostom’s most elaborate articulation of his demonology is a

forceful rejection of the ideas of the laity in his congregation. Such an examination will aid our understanding of both the target of Chrysostom’s rejection and how unique Chrysostom’s argument was. We will look first at Jewish demonologies, then at Christian demonologies up until Origen, then pagan demonologies, and finally, we will conclude this chapter with an investigation of Origen’s demonology.

**Jewish Roots of Christian Demonologies**

The Old Testament (OT) has little to say about demons. Deuteronomy 32:17 reads, “They sacrificed to demons,” and Psalm 106:37, “They sacrificed to demons their own sons and daughters.” In both cases the word *shedim* is translated as *δαίμονιον* in the LXX. There are a handful of other uses of *δαίμονιον* in the LXX (*δαίμον* appears only once), primarily in the context of sacrifice and not always a direct translation of a Hebrew. The primary understanding of demons in the OT, then, is as those to whom sacrifices are made when they are not made to God. Thus, demons are spiritual beings active in the world and not for good.

The secondary literature on Jewish demonology, however, glances over these instances of *δαίμονιον* in favor of an emphasis on the three appearances of Satan in Job 1-2, Zechariah 3, and 1 Chronicles 21. Christian authors, including Chrysostom, will understand Satan to be the leader of all demons. Each time, Satan is an adversary to humans, but not the leader of a band of demons. The prevailing thought among biblical scholars, led especially by Peggy Day and Elaine Pagels, is that the Satan mentioned in

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2 The bulk of these references are in Tobit (14 references in chapters 3, 6, 8). Other uses include 2 Maccabees 5:9; Psalm 90:6, 95:5; Odes of Solomon 2:17; Isaiah 13:21, 34:14, 65:3, 11; Baruch 4:7, 35.
the OT is merely a judicial adversary or member of God's heavenly council.³ This Satan is not a fallen angel but an appointed tempter. Satan is a created being, subordinate to God, required to ask permission before he can afflict Job with various kinds of devastation. Satan also incites David to take a census in 1 Chronicles 21. That Satan hopes Job will fail, and that he has no qualms with inflicting devastation on Job, implies some element contrary to God's will and sets Satan up as an enemy of human beings. Whether this is the “duty” of a particular member of the heavenly council or a statement about a specific being’s character, the association of “Satan” with “enemy of humanity” will become important for later demonologies. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew satan with ὁ διάβολος. Chrysostom’s version of Job 1:7, therefore, read καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τῷ διαβόλῳ.⁴ Though initially ὁ διάβολος was a translation also meaning adversary, by the time Chrysostom preached about Job (one of Chrysostom’s primary

³ For a sample, see Miguel A. De La Torre and Albert Hernández, The Quest for the Historical Satan (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011); Peggy L. Day, An Adversary in Heaven: Šāān in the Hebrew Bible (Atlanta: Scholars Pr, 1988); Elaine H Pagels, “The Social History of Satan, the ‘Intimate Enemy’: A Preliminary Sketch,” Harvard Theological Review 84 (1991): 105–28; and Henry Ansgar Kelly, Satan: A Biography (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). This strand of biblical scholarship often emphasizes the OT Satan’s role as “merely” a judicial adversary, noting that in intertestamental literature, and later the NT, the figure develops into a menacing, distinct personality. So Pagels: “The term Satan was still a title that designated a specific function. . . . Job, for example, pictures Satan as an angelic member of God's council to whom God assigns the task of afflicting Job in order to test the limits of his loyalty—a kind of divine prosecuting attorney. . . . The followers of Jesus suddenly turned this rather unpleasant angel into a far grander—and far more malevolent—figure: in certain New Testament writings Satan became God's enemy, his antagonist, even his rival. Yet scholars more familiar . . . with Jewish literature have shown that this was no sudden development originating among Christians; rather, from the middle of the second century BCE, angelologies and demonologies began to proliferate in the literature of various Jewish groups” (106-107).

⁴ Chrysostom would most likely have been using the Lucianic recension of the LXX, which scholars, led by Bruce M. Metzger, consider to be the Antiochene Scripture. For an overview of the evidence, see Bruce M. Metzger, Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism, New Testament Tools and Studies, v. 4 (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1963); and idem., “Patristic Evidence and the Textual Criticism of the New Testament,” New Testament Studies 18 (1972): 379–400. Hagit Amirav, Rhetoric and Tradition: John Chrysostom on Noah and the Flood, (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 63-76 also gives an excellent summary of the scholarship on Chrysostom's Bible and the techniques and difficulties used to establish Chrysostom's text. Since we do not possess the manuscript Chrysostom had, I use a modern critical edition of the LXX, noting the Lucianic variants in the critical apparatus (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931-], 20 vols.). In any case, satan would have been translated ὁ διάβολος, and from here on I will say only that Chrysostom used the LXX.
texts for speaking about demonology), the Satan of Job had become—functionally and conceptually—the same figure as Satan and the devil of the NT and of Christian demonology.

Ancient Jewish demonology saw its greatest development in the Diaspora. One of the more prominent accounts of the demons’ origins in Jewish literature is in 1 Enoch 1-36, the Book of Watchers, especially chapters 6-11, which develops upon Genesis 6:2. The narrative recounts that Semjaza, the chief angel, saw the daughters of men on earth and lusted after them. Semjaza convinced a large number of other angels to go down with him and to have intercourse with the women. The rogue angels joined Semjaza and went to earth to sin with women. The sin was not about the lust and intercourse alone, however. Semjaza, Azazel, and Ezeqeel, the three archangels who transgressed, also revealed knowledge of things like astrology and metallurgy to the humans. The author of 1 Enoch writes that the fallen angels “revealed to them [humans] all kinds of sins. And the women have borne giants, and the whole earth has thereby been filled with blood and unrighteousness” (1 Enoch 9:9b-10). These events were a further corruption. Michael was charged with hunting down the fallen angels, binding them, and throwing them into a pit where they will be until the final judgment, when they will go into eternal fire. It is unclear in 1 Enoch whether the progeny resulting from the union of the watchers with the

5 Scholarly consensus holds that as Jews spread throughout lands and among peoples with different walks of life, Jewish theology became exposed to Persian theologies and traditions, especially Zoroastrianism with its developed demonology, and this exposure led to Persian influence on Jewish demonology. However, scholars also state that there is no conclusive evidence either for or against this hypothesis, and it is just as likely that Jewish thought developed this way on its own and within its own tradition. See Russell, The Devil, 217–220; Langton, Essentials of Demonology: A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development, 63–80; and De La Torre and Hernández, The Quest for the Historical Satan, 63–68.

women are demons or whether the fallen angels themselves are demons.\textsuperscript{7} What is clear is that demons resulted from this episode.

Jubilees, another important text for foundational Jewish demonology, cites the watchers myth as the origin of demons and trusts that the reader has already read the 1 Enoch account:

\begin{quote}
[Enoch] was therefore with the angels of God six jubilees of years. And they showed him everything which is on earth and in the heavens. . . . And he wrote everything, and bore witness to the Watchers, the ones who sinned with the daughters of men because they began to mingle themselves with the daughters of men so that they might be polluted. And Enoch bore witness against all of them. (Jub 4:21-22)
\end{quote}

One thing the author of Jubilees notes here is the description of the Watchers’ union with women as “defiled.”\textsuperscript{8} This suggests that the act of union itself was sinful, not merely the desire, as later tradition will argue. Jubilees assumes knowledge of Enoch’s narrative but highlights the sexual sin in particular and neither lust nor the revelations of astrology and metallurgy.

Another addition to the narrative by the author of Jubilees is that Mastema, the chief demon in this account, asks for some of the fallen angels to be left on earth so Mastema might exercise his will on the sons of men: “And the chief of the spirits, Mastema, came and he said, ‘O Lord, Creator, leave some of them before me, and let them obey my voice’” (Jub 10:8). God acquiesces, and the author of Jubilees writes, “And we acted in accord with all of his words. All of the evil ones, who were cruel, we bound in the place of judgment, but a tenth of them we let remain so that they might be

\textsuperscript{7} Dale Martin points out that 1 Enoch never says that the fallen angels are themselves demons as part of his full argument that the narrative that claims demons are fallen angels is a later (second-century) Christian interpretation not found in Jewish tradition. See Dale B. Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?,” \textit{Journal of Biblical Literature} 129 (2010): 657–77.

\textsuperscript{8} This is also noted in 1 Enoch 9:6 and 10:15.
subject to Satan upon the earth” (Jub 10:11). The author of Jubilees does not offer a reason for God’s assent, which allows for various theories among both later rabbis and the early Christians as to why God allows demons to roam the earth.

This incident also suggests one other thing. Mastema, the “chief of the spirits,” often titled “prince,” is the one who asks for a tenth of the evil spirits to be left on earth; when God fulfills this request, the author writes that they were subject to Satan with no indication that this is a different being. Mastema here appears to be another name for Satan. In 1 Enoch the chief of demons is Semjaza, in Jubilees it is Mastema, in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, it is Belial. These are various names for the chief of demons, for the enemy of humanity. Christians would combine the function of Satan in the OT with various narratives of the chief demon or fallen angel in intertestamental literature as well as with the New Testament (NT) understanding of Satan and the devil, the two terms used interchangeably. This NT understanding, we will see, is that the devil is a being (again the chief opponent) wholly devoted to humanity’s destruction, whom Jesus says he saw fall like lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18). The result is the devil of Christian demonology: the leader of a band of fallen angels, the great enemy of God, of God’s will, and of humanity.

I focus on the watchers myth because of its prominence in Christian demonological narratives and because of Chrysostom’s decisive rejection of it, but there

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9 So entwined with the concept of the devil has the “chief demon” become that most scholars do not explain but only state that Semjaza, Mastema, Beliar, and sometimes Azazel or Asmodeus are merely earlier names for what becomes the devil and Satan of the NT and early Christianity. Kelly’s comment on the matter is succinct, representative, and parenthetical: “Mastema (another form of the word satan).” (Kelly, 9). For similar accounts, see Ronald H Isaacs, Ascending Jacob’s Ladder: Jewish Views of Angels, Demons, and Evil Spirits (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1998), 77; Langton, Essentials of Demonology: A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development, 119–29; De La Torre and Hernández, The Quest for the Historical Satan, 72–73; Schreiber, “The Great Opponent,” 442–45. The basis for such accounts is the role of each being. Each is the chief opponent of humanity and of God’s will, as well as the leader of a group of evil spirits.
are other explanations of the demons’ origins in intertestamental literature as well. For instance, 2 Enoch speaks of an angelic rebellion and makes no mention of the watchers or Genesis 6; instead, one of the angels envied God and desired to be equal to God: “One from the order of the archangels deviated, together with the division that was under his authority. He thought up the impossible idea, that he might place his throne higher than the clouds which are above the earth, and that he might become equal to my power. And I hurled him out from the height, together with his angels. And he was flying around in the air, ceaselessly, above the Bottomless” (2 Enoch 29:4-5). In 2 Enoch 18, however, the watchers myth appears again.

One other narrative that gains prominence in early Christian demonologies comes from the Greek Life of Adam and Eve 12-17. Life claims the devil’s jealousy of Adam and Adam’s place in creation, and the devil’s attempt to make the angels worship him instead, as the reason for the resulting punishment of his fall. In this section of the Life, the devil (ὁ διάβολος) tells the story:

And when Michael kept forcing me to worship, I said to him, 'Why do you compel me? I will not worship one inferior and subsequent to me. I am prior to him in creation; before he was made, I was already made. He ought to worship me.' When they heard this, other angels who were under me refused to worship him. . . . And the Lord God was angry with me and sent me with my angels out from our glory; and because of you [Adam], we were expelled into this world from our dwellings and have been cast onto the earth.  

The devil’s refusal to worship Adam caused his fall. Similar in theme to this story is a verse from the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon: “Through the devil’s envy death entered the world, and those who belong to his company experience it” (2:24). This verse will be important to Chrysostom, who will use it to refute the watchers myth. For now it is

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11 Greek Life of Adam and Eve (GLAE) 14:3-16:2, quotation from Ibid., 2:262.
sufficient to note that narratives of the origins of the devil and his demons were not homogenous in Second-Temple literature, and both the watchers myth and the idea of the devil’s envy appear with prominence in early Christian literature.

In Jewish demonologies, it is again the intertestamental literature that provides most of the accounts of demons’ activities. The apocryphal Tobit recalls that the demon Asmodeus is responsible for killing all of Sarah’s suitors, and Raphael finally tells Tobias how to defeat the demon (though Raphael is the one who gets to conquer and punish Asmodeus). Jubilees is a parallel account to Genesis and Exodus, with some differences instructive of demonology. Mastema is the one who wants God to have Abraham sacrifice Isaac (17:16). Mastema tries to kill Moses on his way back to Egypt, then is subsequently God’s opponent, rather than Pharaoh in the cosmic battle of the ten plagues (chapter 48). Mastema is the agent for the final plague, the death of the firstborn (“all of the powers of Mastema were sent to kill all of the firstborn in the land of Egypt” (49:2)). And Mastema is the one who hardens the Egyptians’ hearts (48:17). Here it is as though the authors are trying to protect God from any taint of evil. Mastema becomes a way to explain the evil in the world without attributing evil to God directly.

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12 Framing demonology as a byproduct of theodicy is not uncommon among modern scholars (see Russell’s series on the devil; Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*; Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology, and Witchcraft*; Langton, de la Torre and Hernandez, and Vos). Especially when writing about the evolution of the Satan of the OT into the Satan of the NT—by way of the various “chief of demons” in pseudepigraphic literature—most scholars claim the evolution is an attempt to protect God. Langton is representative: “The conception of Satan . . . is chiefly to be accounted for as the product of Hebrew thought, working upon the two main facts—the holiness of God, and the presence of sin and evil in man and the world. In view of the former fact, which is so strongly emphasized in the prophetic teaching, the latter had somehow to be accounted for” (Langton, *Essentials of Demonology*, 59). Schreiber offers a different narrative: “Prominent have been political representations of evil which threaten Israel or Zion, clearly being the result of historical experiences. So prophecy has minted an anti-figure to JHWH. . . . It was a step further to create a mythological idea of a heavenly opponent of God who is part of the members of the heavenly council meeting, which is responsible for God’s plan in creation and history” (Schreiber, “The Great Opponent,” 438). In the case of Jubilees, it seems the protection of God is precisely what the author attempts.
It is worth noting that, though Jubilees appears to be a kind of demonological theodicy, not all Jewish demonologies perform this function. Tobit, for instance, is concerned with the harm demons can cause a human being, but Asmodeus does not take over any of God’s actions. Nowhere does Tobit suggest that God is responsible for any of the evil that occurs, but Sarah and Tobias pray for deliverance and healing. Asmodeus simply exists and does evil. Moreover, Job, an example of a Jewish author wrestling with questions of theodicy, introduces the character of Satan yet still says Satan is subject to God. God permits all of Job’s suffering. Jewish demonologies and theodicies are not interchangeable, though in some cases, notably Jubilee, there is interaction between the two.

It is clear that in these accounts—Jubilees, Tobit, and Enoch—demons are able to cause harm to human beings. According to Jubilees, “The prince, Mastema, acted forcefully to do all of this. And he sent other spirits to those who were set under his hand to practice all error and sin and all transgression, to destroy, to cause to perish and to pour out blood upon the earth” (11:5). Mastema is able to act directly upon humans, such as when he hardens the Egyptians’ hearts to cause them to pursue the Israelites across the Red Sea, but he also acts indirectly, as when he sends ravens to eat all the seed on the ground in order to cause famine, or when he helped the Egyptian sorcerers attempt to deliver Moses to Pharaoh (11:10, 48:10). Still, in instances of indirect causation, the demons are considered responsible. Mastema caused the famine, not the ravens. In Tobit, the demon Asmodeus kills seven of Sarah’s suitors before they could become her

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13 I will be using the term “theodicy” throughout this study to refer to discussions of the source of evil and whether that source is God. The term is a modern one, coined by Gottfried Leibniz in the 17th century, and refers to questions of God’s justice. That is, theodicy is, in a technical sense, an investigation into how a just God could allow evil and suffering in the world. I recognize that it is anachronistic to use the term, but it is also helpful for describing these discussions.
husband, and though Sarah’s maids blame her, it is clear that the demon is the murderer (3:8). Demons, then, are the cause of evils in the world and against human beings.

Jubilees is full of battle imagery, angels against demons, with the demons attempting to thwart God’s plan. Mastema appears at significant junctures and tries to frustrate God’s work (Jub 11:10, 17:16, 48:10). Tobit, too, has Raphael chasing down Asmodeus after he has killed Sarah’s suitors and tried to kill Tobias (Tobit 8:3), and 1 Enoch narrates the archangels’ pursuit, capture, and punishment of the fallen angels who have sinned with women and led men into knowledge they were not supposed to have (1 Enoch 10:11-17). In each of these books, the demons do not succeed. At each of the significant junctures in Jubilees—Mastema’s trying to kill Moses before he can reach Egypt and “set [his] people free” or inciting God to bring about Isaac’s sacrifice (Jubilees 17:16)—Mastema does not succeed. God’s plan, the account of events as it is in Genesis and Exodus, continues unhindered. Raphael catches and binds Asmodeus (Tobit 8:3), and Michael and the other archangels capture, bind, and throw into fire the rogue angels in 1 Enoch (1 Enoch 10:11-17). Moreover, in Jubilees, Noah learns about the demons’ diseases and seductions and records everything he learned as instructions for his sons (Jub 10:13-14), which implies that humans are capable of resisting the demons. This is in direct contrast to pagan demonologies according to which, we will see, the most a human being is able to do is offer sacrifices in the attempt to placate δαίμονες and minimize incurred harm. This ability of humans to resist demons and the futility of the demons’ attempts will be accepted by Christians building on this Jewish tradition.14

14 The discussion to this point has revolved around external demons, but there is in Judaism a tradition of each person having two spirits—one good and one evil—that try to convince the person to do good or evil. This tradition is primarily in the Qumran documents call the two spirits the 2sr. One scroll reads, “He allotted unto man two Spirits that he should walk in them until the time of His Visitation; they
New Testament

The NT speaks at length about Satan, the devil, and demons but is largely silent about their origin, with only Jesus’ comment, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning” (Luke 10:18). Jesus also says that the devil is a liar and the father of lies, a murderer “from the beginning” (John 8:44), but is not specific about when that beginning was. Ephesians 2 talks about the devil as the ruler of the air and Ephesians 6:10-12 speaks of humans fighting against cosmic powers, rulers, authorities, spiritual forces of evil, and the wiles of the devil, but includes no discussion of where the powers or the devil comes from.

One other significant passage regards the demons’ end rather than their beginning. Matthew 25:31-46 is the parable of the sheep and the goats, when Jesus tells those who have not done God’s will by caring for the least of humanity, “Depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (v. 41). This is an important verse for Chrysostom, one to which he returns often, especially when discussing a person’s choice to follow Christ or the devil, a theme I will treat later. The NT also says little about the nature of demons beyond the “spirits of evil in heavenly places”—in contrast to flesh and blood—against which humans fight (Eph 6:12). The synoptic gospels record a multitude of other demons' activities, but the NT has few details about these.
of accounts of demonic possession, from which we can infer that whatever the demons’ composition, they are able to inhabit human bodies. Demons are also of such a constitution that multiple demons, up to a legion, are able to inhabit a single human body (Mk 5:9). The NT accounts imply that demons are spiritual beings, ontologically superior to human beings because they lack flesh and blood, but demons are also wholly evil and so are morally inferior to human beings.

The activities of demons and the devil recorded in the NT follow the trajectory of the intertestamental literature. In the NT the devil and his demons attempt at every step to thwart the plans of God for the salvation of the world, such as in the parable of the sower, where the devil snatches away some of the sown seed (Matt 13:19//Mark 4:15//Luke 8:12) and the Lord’s prayer, where Jesus instructs his disciples to pray for deliverance from the evil one (Matt 6:13). The NT is a story of the kingdom of Satan waging war against the kingdom of God. This battlescape between angels and demons, where humans are somehow caught in the crossfire, is similar in both the intertestamental literature and in the NT. Ephesians is perhaps the most obvious location of this battle imagery, Paul15 telling the reader that humans fight “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12) and that the reader must “Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph 6:11). The gospels contain so many exorcisms that, were the gospels the only record, one might think the primary

15 I write here that Paul was the author of Ephesians, aware of the scholarship which debates this notion. Since Chrysostom was following the church’s tradition of attributing the gospels to their eponymous evangelists and the epistles either to Paul or to John, I will, for the sake of simplicity, refer to the authors of books as Chrysostom did.
demonic activity is possession and that Jesus’ primary activity was exorcising demons.\textsuperscript{16} Demons also cause illness and disease in the NT, though these are usually connected to possession.

Even when possessed, the person’s symptoms are physical rather than spiritual; that is, the person harms themselves or suffers fits or other illness, but the gospels do not describe a demoniac as sinning or even as causing harm to others. Paul’s charge in Ephesians to put on the armor of God in order to resist the devil’s wiles can be interpreted as a charge to be wary of temptation, but the epistles are also quiet on the matter of the demons’ tempting human beings to sin. Acts has brief mentions of possession, magic, and sorcery (Acts 8:9-24; 16:16-19), but these two accounts add nothing to what has already been explored.\textsuperscript{17}

With the exception of Jesus’ own temptation, the demons do not tempt people to sin in the gospels. In the case of Judas (John 13:27), the devil is said to have entered Judas, which suggests possession rather than temptation. Even so, scholars endorse a range of interpretations of this narrative. In Acts, Peter asks Ananias and Sapphria, “Why has Satan filled filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” (5:3), which is a case of diabolical temptation. Paul does mention the temptation work of the devil in 1 Thess 5:3, where Paul writes that he fears the Thessalonians have been tempted and his labor in


\textsuperscript{17} Revelation is another matter entirely. In Revelation, the great dragon or serpent which Michael and his angels defeat is called the devil or Satan, and because of the parallel use in this verse, we understand Satan and the devil to be the same being, at least in Revelation, if not in the whole NT. In Revelation 12, Michael throws the dragon down to earth, where the devil pursued the woman who was to bear Jesus, and, failing in that quest, began making war on “the rest of her children,” those who follow Jesus and keep his commandments (Rev 12:7-17). A few chapters later, in Revelation 20, an angel binds Satan and throws him into a pit during Christ’s thousand-year reign, so that the devil cannot deceive the nations anymore. Then, after the thousand years, Satan rises up to fight once more, and is again defeated, this time cast into the lake of fire where he will suffer torment “day and night forever and ever” (Rev 20:1-10). Battle imagery is vivid in Revelation, which contains the clearest account of the devil’s, and his demons’, end in the NT. Chrysostom does not cite Revelation often.
vain. We see here that temptation is a minor motif of demonic activity, present but not emphasized the way later authors will emphasize it.

**Apostolic Fathers, Apologists, Irenaeus, and Tertullian**

What is extant from the apostolic fathers contains very little about demons. The apostolic fathers say nothing explicit about either the origin or nature of demons, and they say so little about demons that it is difficult to infer their understanding of their origin and nature. However, it is probable that these earliest church fathers were familiar with at least some of the pseudepigraphical literature and may have espoused the watchers myth or the envy of human beings as an origin narrative. Since we see these myths in later fathers like Justin and Irenaeus, it is likely that the intervening fathers had some knowledge of the primary intertestamental narratives.

Clement of Rome writes to the Corinthian Christians that they had committed their sins of disunity “through any of the tricks of the adversary.”\(^{18}\) In this way, Clement understands that the devil was a distinct personality who prompts human beings to sin. Ignatius of Antioch claims that the devil’s purpose is to thwart God’s work of salvation and that the devil, “the ruler of this age,” puts himself against each Christian individually, attempting to lead them into sin.\(^{19}\) Ignatius also notes the existence of both good and evil angels, the latter of whom follow the devil, and this suggests knowledge of some

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\(^{18}\) 1 Clement 51.1. Translation is from Michael W. Holmes, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Updated ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 87.

\(^{19}\) For a sample of instances, see Ignatius of Antioch, *Ep. Ephesians* 17.1, 19.1; *Ep. Magnesians* 1.2; *Ep. Romans* 7.1.
narrative wherein demons are fallen angels. Barnabas claims that the devil can enter the mind or soul in order to suggest sin so that a person’s soul becomes a battleground, writing, “Let us be on guard in the last days . . . lest the black one find an opportunity to sneak in.” This is a significant statement: as early as Barnabas Christians emphasized vigilance against the devil’s attacks.

The apologists’ demonologies follow the trajectory of the apostolic fathers’ and make it more specific. Whereas the apostolic fathers alluded to some myth of fallen angels, Justin Martyr becomes the first to provide an unambiguous Christian reference to the watchers myth as he retells the story in his 2 Apology 5. Justin argues that the rogue angels transgressed the cosmic order God created, adding nothing about the fallen angels’ motive other than lust:

He appointed his angels, whom He placed over mankind, to look after men and all things under heaven. But the angels violated their charge, fell into sin with women and begot children who are called demons. Moreover, they subsequently subjected the human race to themselves; . . . and among men they engendered murders, wars, adulteries, all sorts of dissipation and every species of sin.

The apologists also agree with their predecessors that the demons’ primary aim was to thwart God’s work in the world, that is, to thwart the salvation of humans. To this end, demons are deceitful, enticing Christians to sin. Justin even gives the fallen angels a significant role in the origin of human sin. In the above passage from 2 Apology 5, the

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21 Epistle of Barnabas 4.9 (Holmes, 283). See also 2.10 and 16.7: “Before we believed in God, our heart’s dwelling-place was corrupt and weak . . . because it was full of idolatry and was the home of demons, for we did whatever was contrary to God” (Holmes, 319).
22 I focus on Justin as a representative of the Apologists for space and because we have the most demonological discourse from him. Athenagoras is very similar to Justin, also espousing the Watchers myth and identifying the pagan gods as demons. For comparison, see Athenagoras, Embassy for the Christians 25: “The souls of the giants are those spirits that wander about the world” (ACW 63), and Embassy 26: “These spirits [demons] are they that drag men towards idols, engrossed in the blood from the altars, even licking them round about” (ACW 65).
23 Justin Martyr, 2 Apology 5 (SC 330, FC 124).
fallen angels “subjected” (ἐδούλωσαν) humanity to themselves and “engendered” (ἐσπειραν) every species of sin. It is possible to read in this statement that Justin believes humanity’s sin can be traced back to the fallen angels and the knowledge they revealed, and this is likely because Justin does not mention Adam and Eve at all in either Apology.

The Dialogue with Trypho traces human sin to Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen 3): “He submitted to be born and to be crucified, not because He needed such things, but because of the human race, which from Adam had fallen under the power of death and the guile of the serpent, and each one of which had committed personal transgression.”

The Dialogue (Dial.) affirms the fallen angels narrative in chapter 79, though Justin does not describe the fall as he does in 2 Apology 5. In Dial. 79, Justin only affirms that there are fallen angels, who follow the devil, in refutation of Trypho’s claim to the contrary. Still, this difference is intriguing, especially if he means that human sin is not finally humanity’s fault. A. Y. Reed’s insight is helpful here. She suggests that the difference is due to the aim of each work. The Apologies are directed at Romans, attempting to show the similarity between Christianity and Greco-Roman religion, as well as explaining the sin of pagans, not of all people, whereas the Dialogue purports to be in conversation with a Jew. In the Dialogue, Jews have turned away from the true God, an act begun in Adam and Eve’s turning from God. In the Apologies, however, [pagan] sin is caused by the demons, whom Justin identifies as the various pagan gods.

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25 Reed, “The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine,” 153–58. Reed’s point is well-taken, as Jews would have been more concerned with the Biblical narrative than pagans. Moreover, in the Apologies, Justin is arguing against the pagan gods, whom he understands to be demons.
When pagans claim that δαίμονες attend the oracles and rituals, the apologists agree and believe the same beings exist. Δαίμονες are attending sacrifices and producing oracles and visions. For Christians, however, in contrast to pagans, the δαίμονες are evil. Δαίμονες are fallen angels, followers of Satan, attempting to harm Christians and keep them from salvation. The pagans know δαίμονες are part of the cult practices, but Christians believe the pagans mistaken—or better, unable to understand—regarding the nature of these beings. Justin writes:

The poets and writers of legends, unaware that the bad angels and the demons begotten by them did those things to men and women, to cities and nations, ascribed them to [their] god himself [Jupiter] and to those whom they thought were sons of his seed and to the children of those whom they called his brothers, Neptune and Pluto, and to the children of their children. For they called them by the name each of the bad angels had bestowed upon himself and his children.26

Justin is especially concerned with the power of demons to deceive. He writes, “The wicked demons from ancient times appeared and defiled women, corrupted boys, and presented such terrifying sights to men that those who were not guided by reason in judging these [diabolical] acts were panic-stricken,” and:

We warn you to be careful lest the demons, previously accused by us, should mislead you and turn you from reading and understanding thoroughly what we have said. They strive to make you their slaves and servants. They ensnare, now by apparitions in dreams, now by tricks of magic, all those who do not labor with all their strength for their own salvation—even as we, also, after our conversion by the Word have separated ourselves from those demons and have attached ourselves to the only unbegotten God, through His Son.27

Justin lives in a world full of demons, working all the time to deceive and enslave human beings. The only recourse a person has is her reason, which she can use to judge

26 Justin Martyr, 2 Apol. 5 (SC 330, FC 124-25). See also 1 Apol. 12, 25-27, 62; Dial. 55, 73, 79, 83. Athenagoras also identifies demons with pagan gods, a practice which continues into the fourth century (Athenagoras, Embassy 26). For an overview of this practice among the fathers, see J. Cardinal Ries, “Cultes païens et démons dans l’apologétique chrétienne de Justin à Augustin,” in Anges et démons (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium: Centre d’histoire des religions, 1989), 337–52.
27 1 Apol. 5.2, 14.1 (SC 136-38, 162; FC 37-38, 46-47).
actions and recognize the demons as they are. Moreover, this is reason persuaded by the Word. For Justin, conversion illuminates the Christian and gives him the knowledge he needs to see clearly: “We who believe in Him pray to be kept by Him from strange, i.e., from wicked and deceitful, spirits. . . . We do continually beseech God by Jesus Christ to preserve us from the demons which are hostile to the worship of God, and whom we of old time served, in order that, after our conversion by Him to God, we may be blameless.”

With clear sight, the converted, that is, baptized, Christian is able to see demons and what they are trying to do, which then enables the Christian to fend off demons.

Irenaeus, in his Against Heresies, written in the late second century, claims that Satan was the first angel to fall. According to Irenaeus, the cause of Satan’s fall was threefold: his envy of Adam—a theme found also in Life of Adam and Eve (c. 1st century CE)—his envy of God, and because he apostasized. Irenaeus writes:

Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man’s territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery; so likewise also the devil . . . becoming envious of man, was rendered an apostate from the divine law: for envy is a thing foreign to God.

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28 *Dial.* 30.3 (Bobichon 1:256, ANF 209).

29 In contrast to the standard narrative that claims Justin’s primary goal was to join theology and philosophy, Theodoor Korteweg argues that Justin’s aim was to show that “Christianity’s mission above all [is] breaking the spell which evil demons had cast over the world and over the culture in which he lived” (Theodoor Korteweg, “Justin Martyr and His Demon-Ridden Universe,” in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, eds. N. Vos and W. Otten (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 148-49). Korteweg cites L. W. Barnard and E. R. Goodenough as having made similar claims decades earlier: Leslie W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967); E. R. Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr* (Jena: Verlag Frommannshe Buchhandlung, 1923). But Barnard’s overall narrative of Justin’s work still highlights the use of philosophy as an apologetic tool. Barnard does note Justin’s “demon-ridden universe” and his use of reason to resist them, but he does not suggest this is the overarching goal of Justin’s work, as Korteweg’s “above all” implies.

30 *Against Heresies* (Adv. Her.) 5.24 (ANF 553). *Adv. Her.* 4.40 also mentions the rebellion of the devil, the “ringleader,” and his angels as the reason God sent them out of heaven and into everlasting fire.
However, Irenaeus also knows the watchers myth: “In the days of Noah He [God] justly brought on the deluge for the purpose of extinguishing that most infamous race of men then existent, who could not bring forth fruit to God, since the angels that sinned had commingled with them.” Irenaeus does not argue for one narrative over the other. Both are offered, suggesting that Irenaeus understands both to be true, or perhaps each useful for making a specific point. These are the two most prominent myths of demonic and diabolical origins, and Irenaeus reflects the thought of his time. Moreover, these are the two narratives that will become even more prominent in writers after Irenaeus.

The demonic activity that becomes most important for Irenaeus is temptation. As Irenaeus wants to emphasize human free will and responsibility for sin, his description of the demons’ power decreases dramatically. In contrast to the NT, where demons were able to possess people and cause various kinds of harm, forcing people to break chains or rave (Matt 8:28-34//Mark 5:1-20//Luke 8:26-39), Irenaeus claims that demons are not able to force a person to do anything. Irenaeus writes, “The devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, [namely] to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him, to the

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31 Adv. Her. 4.36 (ANF 516). See also Adv. Her. 4.16: “The angels when they had transgressed fell to the earth for judgment, but the man [Enoch] who pleased [God] was translated for salvation” (ANF 481). Irenaeus’s Proof of the Apostolic Preaching is even more explicit: “And for a very long while wickedness extended and spread, and reached and laid hold upon the whole race of mankind, until a very small seed of righteousness remained among them and illicit unions took place upon the earth, since angels were united with the daughters of the race of mankind; and they bore to them sons who for their exceeding greatness were called giants. And the angels brought as presents to their wives teachings of wickedness, in that they brought them the virtues of roots and herbs, dyeing in colors and cosmetics, the discovery of rare substances, love-potions, aversions, amours, concupiscence, constraints of love, spells of bewitchment, and all sorcery and idolatry hateful to God; by the entry of which things into the world evil extended and spread, while righteousness was diminished and enfeebled” (18, translation from Armitage Robinson, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching (London: SPCK, 1920), 85-86).
forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God.”

Irenaeus also argues, “[The devil] has set himself . . . in opposition to man, envying his life, and wishing to involve him in his own apostate power. The Word of God, however, the Maker of all things, conquering him by means of human nature, and showing him to be an apostate, has, on the contrary, put him under the power of man.”

This is the beginning of a long tradition of limiting demons’ power over humans because of Christ’s victory over Satan on the cross.

Tertullian also knows and follows the watchers myth, even going so far as to mention the book of Enoch by name. Yet, as with Irenaeus, Satan seems to have fallen at some prior time, because of envy: “All the endowments which the soul received at birth are obscured and corrupted by the Devil, who from the very beginning cast an envious eye on them.” Tertullian also adds that Satan was the first creature to sin, and through that first sin, sin entered the universe, making Adam and Eve’s sin—and the resulting fall of humanity—possible. One thing nearly all of these accounts have in common is a fall of angels. Whether the motive was envy of Adam, envy of God, lust after human women, some kind of pride, or unexplained rebellion against God, the angels fell after God created the heavens and the earth and the people on the earth. This commonality indicates that at this point in the Christian development of demonology, demonic fall narratives are intertwined with humanity’s history from the beginning, so

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33 Ibid.
35 Tertullian, De anima 39. Translation from R. Arbesmann, E. J. Daly, and E. A. Quain, trans., FC, v. 10 (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc, 1950), 270. See also De patientia 5, Adversus Marcionem 2.10.
36 De pat. 5, Adversus Marcionem (Adv. Marc.) 2.10. In the latter, Tertullian calls Satan the “author of sin” (auctor delicti).
that demons only really have significance in relation to humanity. Demons have been acting harmfully toward humanity from the beginning of their existence as demons.

The apologists emphasize the demonic responsibility for the persecutions of Christians, but Tertullian goes further. Tertullian implicates Satan as the inventor and encourager of heresy: “No one ought to doubt, either that ‘spiritual wickedness,’ from which also heresies come, have been introduced by the devil.”37 As with prior traditions, Tertullian understands demons to be responsible for natural disasters but is more explicit than many of his predecessors, writing, “Every man is attended by a demon and many are aware that sudden and horrible deaths, which usually pass for accidents, are really work of demons.”38 Statements such as this one confirmed the fear of demons most Christians already had.

**Pagan demonologies**

The term δαίμων appears in Greek literature as early as Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, where Homer often uses δαίμων and θεός interchangeably, the gods/daimons being capable of either good or evil.39 Moreover, Homer’s δαίμονες wielded impersonal

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37 *De praescriptione haereticorum* 40 (ANF 263). See also *Adversus Praxeum* 1.
38 Tertullian, *De anima* 57 (FC 304). For mention of disasters, see *Apologeticum* 22 and *Adv. Marc*. 2.14, where Tertullian distinguishes between true evils and those events only called evil but which God perpetrates for our punishment, chastisement, and good. Tertullian makes a similar distinction in *De fuga in persecution* 2, with particular emphasis on the issue of persecution, in discussion of the limits of demons’ powers.
39 The most explicit example of this synonymous usage is in *Iliad* III.420, when δαίμων refers to Aphrodite, who, two lines later, is referred to as θεοί. Most of the time Homer uses δαίμων to refer to an indefinite god, not one he intends to name (F. A. Wilford, “Daimon in Homer,” *Numen* 12 (1965): 218). For an instance of this latter, see *Odyssey* V.396-97, where in line 396 Homer uses δαίμων, and in 397, referring to the same kind of being, if not exactly the same one, Homer uses θεοί. Homer also sometimes uses δαίμων to mean fate (τύχη), as in *Iliad* VIII.166 (Hector speaking): “πάρος τοι δαίμονα δόσσω,” which Loeb translates as “before that I will deal you your doom.” For more discussion of the Homeric use of δαίμων, see Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge,
and indirect powers over humanity: they controlled the natural elements, created storms, and caused arrows to drop. 40 That θεοὶ and δαίμονες caused diseases, disasters, and other ills among humans was a common understanding of ancient Greeks. We have no writing from the “average” pagan; we have only what the philosophers tell us. And the philosophers tell us that δεισιδαίμονια, fear of δαίμονες, afflicted the common people everywhere. 41 It is significant to note, however, that the philosophers did not deny the existence of δαίμονες. The question was not whether δαίμονες populated the ancient world but how much humans should fear the δαίμονες and how likely they were to cause harm.

Plato’s use of δαίμον is a topic scholars have investigated at length. 42 Especially in Plato’s early works he, like his predecessors, used δαίμον and θεός without making a careful distinction. 43 Plato’s most prominent use of δαίμον is in the description of Socrates’s διαμονίον, a δαίμον that was personal, something like a guardian spirit.

———. And the Philosophers Tell Us That. In The Greek Orthodox Theological Review 30 (1985): 335–36. 40 For a sample of instances, see Iliad 15.458–70; Odyssey 12.169; 41.370; 19.201. 41 That we have only one perspective is important to note, and one must be aware of the possibility of an inaccurate representation of the popular understanding. However, the number of different pagan authors throughout the centuries who refer to similar beliefs and actions regarding δαίμονες and fear of δαίμονες increases the probability that we have a reliable description. 42 For a sample, see Ian Kidd, “Some Philosophical Demons,” Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies 40 (1995): 217-224; Martin, Inventing Superstition.; André Motte, “La catégorie platonicienne du démonique,” in Anges et démons (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium: Centre d’histoire des religions, 1989), 205–21; Andrei Timotin, La démonologie platonicienne: histoire de la notion de daimôn de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and Jon D. Mikalson, Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 22–25. All note the two basic understandings of δαίμον that appear in Plato—the individual guardian spirit, like Socrates’s διαμονίον, and the intermediary spiritual beings between gods and humans. The second explanation has given scholars pause, attempting to reconcile both understandings of δαίμονες. Kidd argues that δαίμονες as intermediary spirits are primarily a metaphorical construction, meant to be a helpful explanation when no other concept would suffice, an argument which later authors picked up. Mikalson agrees that the understanding of δαίμονες as intermediary spirits was Plato’s invention, but he argues it was Plato’s attempt to make theological sense of what kind of entity Socrates’s διαμονίον was, and represents Plato’s belief. For the purposes of my study, it is less relevant which theory is true than that Plato’s later interpreters further developed both ideas, but particularly δαίμονες as intermediary spirits, leading to the Hellenistic demonological milieu Chrysostom encountered.

Socrates claimed to have it, and Plato continued this theme, writing that each human being has such a διαμόνιον innately as part of his or her psychic composition. In the *Apology*, Socrates says that this διαμόνιον was a voice he had heard since childhood, and “when it comes it always holds me back from what I am thinking of doing, but never urges me forward.” This διαμόνιον guarded Socrates, keeping him from doing wrong, though he only mentions its negative function and affords it no positive function. Plato’s later works have comments that indicate δαίμονες are external to the soul and that they have a cosmic origin of some kind, though this is a subtle strand of thought, not as explicit as the equation with gods or with a guardian spirit. One thing that all of Plato’s comments have in common is the goodness of δαίμονες. The δαίμονες try to guide and guard humans, not to trick or deceive them, and δαίμονες even as intermediary spirits are servants of the gods, keeping order in the universe and watching over humanity. They are not ethically ambiguous.

One of Plato’s influential interpreters was Apuleius (c. 125-180 CE). His *On the God of Socrates* describes δαίμονες as intermediary beings, in both nature and function, between gods and humans. Δαίμονες are immortal like gods but have passions in common with humans; they are heavier than gods but lighter than humans, existing somewhere in the ether above earth but not in the celestial realms of the gods. Moreover, δαίμονες are messengers, relaying prayers and supplications to the gods from humans and blessings and assistance to humans from the gods. Apuleius also describes the various ways other philosophers understand δαίμονες: either as human souls still in the body, as

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44 Instances of this use can be found in *Timaeus* 90a-c, *Phaedo* 107d-e, and *Republic* 620d-e.
46 See *Symposium* 202d-203a and *Politicus* 271c-e.
human souls after death has separated the soul from the body, or souls after death of a higher order who preside over certain powers. From this final class also comes the idea of δαίμονες as individual guardian spirits. Apuleius is significant for understanding the reception of Plato’s demonology, and is especially significant since he is Augustine’s primary interlocutor when he discusses demonology in *De Civitate Dei*.\(^{47}\)

Another of Plato’s distant successors was Plutarch (c. 45-120 CE), a prominent Platonist philosopher of the late first and early second century whose works scholars mine for understanding of pagan demonology. Similar to Plato, Plutarch’s description of demons is inconsistent across the breadth of his corpus, and scholars have argued at length in order to articulate it. Everett Ferguson summarizes the scholarship on Plutarch’s use of δαίμον into four broad categories of definition: 1) δαίμον is equivalent to θεός; 2) δαίμονες are the souls of the deceased with the ability to change into other levels of being; 3) δαίμονες are intermediary spiritual beings that can be either good or evil; and 4) a δαίμον is a personal guardian spirit.\(^{48}\) Plutarch’s corpus contains each of these descriptions. Plutarch never decides on a given definition of δαίμον; he allows these various representations to coexist in tension.

The difficulty is Plutarch’s medium. Plutarch, like Plato, wrote dialogues; among the dialogues Plutarch presents contradictory demonologies, which scholars work toward deciphering. The primary question is which, if any, of the speakers in the dialogues articulates Plutarch’s own demonology.\(^{49}\) Plutarch himself never reconciles the various

\(^{47}\) Especially book 8.


\(^{49}\) For example, Frederick E. Brenk, writes, "Plutarch records through the masks of various personae the many strands of philosophical and religious speculation in his day, often without clearly revealing his own position" (‘‘A Most Strange Doctrine’: Daimon in Plutarch,” *The Classical Journal* 69 (1973): 1–11). For more scholarship on this question, see Brenk, *In Mist Apparelled*, 85–144, and Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 102–107. In *De defectu oraculorum* it is Lamprias whom scholars regard as most
representations of δαίμονες in his works, so it is possible that he was unconcerned with
the tension. One of Plutarch’s more elaborate descriptions of demonology is in De facie
lunae 28-30. Here Plutarch, through Sulla’s recollection of a stranger’s tale, explains that
humans are composed of bodies, souls, and minds, and on the first death—which happens
on earth—the body is shorn from the other two and returns to the earth from which it
came. The soul and mind then ascend, and the second death, which happens on the moon,
separates the final two elements. Plutarch here says no more about the mind, but the soul
is destined to wander between the earth and moon. If it was a just soul in life, it only has
to spend a little time in “the gentlest parts of the air,” where the soul has its pollutions
blown off.50 Souls that were unjust in life spend much longer wandering. While
wandering, these souls are able to do good or evil, and they ascend or descend
accordingly: those that do good ascend, whereas those that do evil descend back toward
earth. If the soul does something evil, it will be sent to earth and confined in a body
again, but if the soul ascends far enough and has all its pollutions blown away, it reaches
the moon, where it becomes a δαίμων. Δαίμονες then attend to the oracles, help with high

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50 Plutarch, De facie lunae 28 (943C).
mystic rituals, feed on exhalations (the smoke from ritual sacrifices), warn against misdeeds, and chastise humans when they perform a misdeed.\(^{51}\)

The other lengthy articulation of Plutarch’s demonology scholars often explore is from his *De defectu oraculorum*. As in *De facie lunae*, the δαίμονες Lamprias describes are the transformed souls of the dead.\(^{52}\) However, Lamprias, bypasses any purely demonological explanation for the decline of the oracles in favor of more “scientific” causes, which leads Brenk to suggest that, at least at this stage of Plutarch’s thought, δαίμονες were not a significant part of Plutarch’s theology.\(^{53}\) One thing that is consistent throughout Plutarch’s use of δαίμον is that the term is ethically ambiguous. It does not refer to solely good nor solely evil beings but beings capable of either good or evil. Moreover, whatever they are, Plutarch’s δαίμονες are some kind of spiritual being, ontologically superior to human beings. Plutarch will prove to have a significant influence on Christian demonology by way of Origen.

The *Didaskalikos* of Albinus (mid-2\(^{nd}\) century CE), a later successor of Plato, makes only this brief mention of δαίμονες:

> There are, furthermore, other divinities, the daemons, whom one could also term “created gods,” present in each of the elements, some of them visible, others invisible, in ether, and fire, and air, and water, so that no part of the world should be without a share in soul or in a living being superior to mortal nature. To their administration the whole sublunar and terrestrial sphere has been assigned.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{51}\) Plutarch, *De facie lunae* 28-30 (943A-944D).

\(^{52}\) Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 39 (431E).

\(^{53}\) The classification as “scientific” is Brenk’s (*In Mist Appareled*, 125). Brenk refers to Lamprias’s replies and theories in many places in Plutarch’s corpus (*Marius* 21; *De defectu* 435e-437c; *De animae* 1012a; *Amatorius* 758e), and here Brenk sees the same choice of “scientific” over demonological theories in Lamprias’s “inspiration theory” for the decline of oracles. Lamprias claims that δαίμονες are creatures identical to human souls (and not some other kind of spiritual creature). These souls have inherent prophetic ability, but because a person’s mind is united to a mortal body, it is clouded with impurity, and he cannot exercise this power, which it shows itself only occasionally in dreams. In fact, memory, as the complementary faculty, suggests this prophetic power (*De defectu* 431e-f).

\(^{54}\) *Didaskalikos* 15.1 (Dillon, 25).
Δαιμόνες are clearly part of Albinus’s world, inferior to the gods and superior to human beings. Here δαιμόνες appears to be a “catch-all” term for divine beings that are not gods. They are of various “species”: visible, invisible, present in ether, fire, water, and air. And they have governance over the “sublunar and terrestrial sphere.” Even the fact that Albinus offers so little about δαιμόνες suggests either that they have no real part in his understanding of the world—unlikely given the evidence of his contemporaries—or that they are so much a part of the world that they do not require lengthy explanation.

Everyone knew what δαιμόνες were and did.

One final tradition of pagan demonology important to consider is Stoic.55

Stoicism seems to have had some influence on Chrysostom, though because he does not take much from its demonology, Stoic beliefs about demons will receive only brief treatment here.56 The one aspect of Stoic demonology common to all Stoic accounts is the understanding of an internal δαιμόν, of the δαιμόν as a rational soul.57 Often Stoics considered this demon to be a kind of guardian spirit. Each person has his own demon who guides him and keeps him in line with the divine, with the will of the universe.

Marcus Aurelius describes it thus: “He lives with the gods who consistently shows them his soul content with its lot, and performing the wishes of that divinity, that fragment of

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55 I concentrate on Platonic and Stoic traditions here because they are most relevant to Chrysostom’s work. Chrysostom uses Platonic images (see Konstantinos Bosinis, “Two Platonic Images in the Rhetoric of John Chrysostom: ‘The Wings of Love’ and ‘the Charioteer of the Soul,’” in Studia Patristica, vol. 41 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 433–38), and some of his works have a distinctive Stoic tenor (indicated, for instance, by the title of his None Can Harm Him Who Does Not Injure Himself), and Chrysostom studied under the pagan rhetor Libanius, so his knowledge of Greek sources is probably thorough. Other pagan cults, philosophies, and religions’ beliefs about demons play too minor a role in Chrysostom’s thought for my purposes.

56 There is little scholarship on Stoic demonology at all. One helpful survey is Keimpe Algra, “Stoics on Souls and Demons: Reconstructing Stoic Demonology,” in Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity, 71–96. Everett Ferguson’s section on Greek demonologies in his Demonology of the Early Christian World (33–67) is also informative.

57 Algra, "Stoics on Souls and Demons," 77; and Ferguson, Demonology of the Early Christian World, 44–45.
himself which Zeus has given each person to guard and guide him. In each of us this divinity is our mind and reason.”

Epictetus also says:

[Zeus] has stationed by each man's side as a guardian his daimon, and has committed the man to its care, a guardian who does not sleep and is not to be deceived. For to what other guardian, better or more careful, could he have committed each of us? So when you close your doors and make darkness within, remember never to say that you are alone. For you are not: god is within, your own daimon is within.

The δαίμον is internal, a guiding and guarding spirit. This δαίμον is not to be deceived; it is always alert and ready to protect its charge, not unlike Socrates’s διαμόντον. Like Socrates’s διαμόντον, this internal δαίμον is good. There is no hint of evil or even mischief.

There is also a strand of Stoic thought that recognizes external demons. Some of these external demons were of human origin, souls that survived after death, just as in Plutarch’s scheme, but most external demons were pieces of the divine πνεύμα. The latter could be either good or evil. The good acted as guardians of human beings, as Diogenes Laertius writes in his Life of Zeno, “[S]tories hold that there are daemons (δαίμονες) who are in sympathy with mankind and watch over human affairs. They believe too in heroes, that is, the souls of the righteous that have survived their bodies.” Heroes are the souls of the dead, though Stoic authors often used ἥρως and δαίμον ambiguously. The role of evil δαίμον is unclear. Chrysippus is the only named believer in evil demons, and this fact is discussed only in Plutarch’s few discussions of Chrysippus’s works. In sum,

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61 The most extensive discussion is in De defectu oraculorum 429a. Chrysippus’s works are not extant, so we rely on Plutarch’s record of them.
Stoic demonology was primarily one of internal demons which amounted to something like a conscience, though some Stoic philosophers also believed in the existence of external demons who were benevolent, guarding human beings and attempting to hold them in agreement with the divine order of the universe.

**Origen**

A significant figure in the development of Christian demonology is Origen (c. 182-254 CE). Origen wrote the first developed, explicit Christian demonology, though still brief, and this account is a fusion of pagan, Jewish, and Christian thought about demons. Origen accepts that demons are some kind of fallen spiritual being, but his origin narrative has a distinctively pagan flavor to it. Instead of a narrative similar to pseudepigraphic accounts and those told by the apostolic fathers and apologists, where the fall of Satan and his angels occurs after the creation of the world, Origen, in his *De principiis* 3.2, claims that the rogue angels’ fall was pre-cosmic. Origen has a theory of pre-existent minds or intelligences (νόες) that rebelled against God, their creator, and thus fell. What the minds became when they fell depended on how deep their sin was. The worst minds became demons, the next became souls, and the best became angels. Origen writes:

> Before the ages minds were all pure, both daemons and souls and angels, offering service to God and keeping his commandments. But the devil, who was one of them, since he possessed free-will, desired to resist God, and God drove him away. With him revolted all the other powers. Some sinned deeply and became daemons, others less and became angels; others still less and became archangels; and thus each in turn received the reward for his individual sin. But there remained some souls who had not sinned so greatly as to become daemons, nor on
the other hand so very lightly as to become angels. God therefore made the present world and bound the soul to the body as a punishment.\(^{62}\)

In telling of pre-existent minds that fell and became angels, demons, and souls, Origen’s narrative resembles the Plutarchian narrative more than 1 Enoch’s description. Plutarch recounts the movements of souls that enter bodies, depart bodies, and sometimes enter new bodies; 1 Enoch tells of spiritual beings, not minds, who look on the creatures of earth and lust. 1 Enoch’s fallen angels initially descend to earth voluntarily, whereas Plutarch’s souls waft around in the air and hope not to fall too low. Origen’s demons, like Plutarch’s, sinned above the earth, not on its surface. Origen’s narrative is also similar to Plutarch’s in that the degree of descent is proportional to the degree of sin, or ethical behavior, just as the just and unjust souls ascend or descend according to their deeds.\(^{63}\)

As we shall see, after Origen, the standard Greek Christian demonological narrative is that demons are “fallen angels” and the fall occurred before the creation of the rest of the world. Competing narratives about where demons come from disappear at this point. The fall was a rebellion of angels against God; the angel’s motive of rebellion was pride; the watchers myth plays no part in the narrative. This is a significant point for demonology. In the watchers myth—at least according to some Christian readings, Justin Martyr’s and Athenagoras’s among them—demons are the progeny of miscreant angels and human women, which means that demons are born evil. In Origen’s explanation, demons are

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\(^{63}\) An excellent article comparing Origen’s demonology with Plutarch’s is Mikoda, “A Comparison of the Demonologies of Origen and Plutarch.”
created good by God but became evil by their own will. Following Origen, Christians would hold that demons are not evil by nature, only by choice.

By contemporary standards Origen gives a lengthy description of the nature of demons, and his description is similar to Plutarch’s. Origen writes that demons have ethereal or “airy” bodies and that they feed on the smoke of sacrifices: “This body is by nature a fine substance and thin like air.”\textsuperscript{64} The more they feed, the fatter they become; the fatter they become, the farther they fall. If the demons fall too close to earth, they become dangerous, because that is when demons are able to do harm to human beings. Thus, Origen says, do not feed the demons by sacrificing (presumably to pagan gods). Origen has continued the Jewish-Christian demonological tradition of holding that demons are evil spiritual beings and identified with pagan gods, but he adds that demons have bodies, or that they are not incorporeal just because they are invisible.\textsuperscript{65} This all resembles Plutarch’s myth in \textit{De facie lunae}, where δάιμονες have ethereal bodies that feed on the smoke of sacrifices.

About the activities of demons Origen has nothing new to add to prior Jewish-Christian accounts. Origen writes, “We must now see how, according to the scriptures, the opposing powers and the devil himself are engaged in a struggle with the human race, provoking and inciting men to sin.”\textsuperscript{66} Similar to Irenaeus and Tertullian, Origen asserts that demons are able to tempt but not force human beings to sin. Origen also has an emphasis on the Christian’s free will and responsibility, though he does list Judas’s betrayal of Christ as an act of a demon, probably because of John’s statement that “As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him” (13:27). Origen also says that

\textsuperscript{64} Origen, \textit{De prin.} preface 8 (Butterworth, 5).
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Origen, \textit{De prin.} 3.2.1 (Ibid., 211).
“Christ was crucified by ‘the princes of this world,’ who are ‘coming to nought.’”\textsuperscript{67} After cataloguing demonic activities which, apart from entering Judas and crucifying Christ, involve only temptation, deception and persuasion at the acquiescence of humans, Origen writes:

Through all these instances, therefore, the divine scripture teaches us that there are certain invisible enemies fighting against us, and it tells us that we must be armed to meet them. This leads the simpler sort of believers in Christ the Lord to suppose that all the sins that men have committed come from the persistent influence of the contrary powers on the sinners’ minds, because in this invisible contest the powers are found to be superior.\textsuperscript{68}

The “simpler” folk believe the devil and his demons are too persistent; they wear down the weaker human beings. The invisible powers seem to such folk to be superior to anything a human being can do, so the devil and his demons win, and humans sin. Origen says that demons are not stronger than humans: “We however, who look more carefully into the reason of things, do not think that this is so.”\textsuperscript{69} Demons do fight against human beings, but they are not stronger.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Demonology prior to and including Origen was a vast, complex field. Jews, Christians, and pagans all held various detailed beliefs about what demons were, where

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid. (Butterworth 213). Origen is quoting from 1 Cor 2:6-8: “Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God’s wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (NRSV). The immediate context of 1 Cor 2 suggests the “rulers of this age” are the earthly authorities, but Origen reads the passage in conjunction with Eph 6:12, (“For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places”). This juxtaposition leads him to understand “rulers of this age” to mean “the cosmic powers of this present darkness,” and to suggest that these were the true agents of Christ’s crucifixion.

\textsuperscript{68} De prin. 3.2.1 (Butterworth 213).

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 3.2.2 (Butterworth 213).
they came from, and what they could do to human beings, though none of the traditions questioned the existence of demons. Pagans were, on the whole, unsure of the ethical status of δαίμονες. Plato argued for their goodness, whereas Plutarch and later authors argued for a moral ambiguity. Δαίμονες could be either good or evil. Jews, and later, Christians, understood demons to be evil as a result of their fall from heaven. Christian narratives drew on older Jewish narratives, and pagan demonologies built one upon the next, even as each author had his own distinctive features. The one constant was a world populated by demons. Accounts of what demons were and what they could do were written in order to put some order into the chaos of living surrounded by demons. To the particular chaos of Chrysostom’s time we now turn.
CHAPTER 2: DEMONOLOGY FROM ORIGEN TO CHRYSOSTOM

The late third and fourth centuries, and even beyond, were centuries of lively spirituality. Not only do we have writings extant from Jewish, pagan, and Christian traditions, but there is much archaeological evidence of magical artifacts that provide a window into the popular spirituality of the time. There are papyri, gems, amulets, bits of metal, bowls, and other objects inscribed with spells for every realm of life from headaches and fevers to love to protection against evil demons. Most significantly, not only have these items been found in pagan traditions, but there are items distinctly Jewish and Christian as well. Spirits were everywhere, and people wanted to control them. There were also voices that wanted to subdue this magical trade. Christian ascetics, even as they too saw a world inhabited by spirits and demons who wanted to harm them at every moment, had an entirely different way of controlling the demons. It is this world of visible and invisible beings that Chrysostom and his congregation inhabited.

Jewish Demonologies

During the third through sixth centuries, Satan, the figure of the OT who through pseudepigraphic literature had become the chief enemy of God and humanity, became prominent in the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash. On the whole, there is no significant change regarding the origin narratives of demons. Given the nature of these sources as interpretations and expansions on Jewish tradition, the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash assume the etiologies—the watchers myth, angelic rebellion, envy of Adam—provided
by earlier Jewish works. Only two statements discuss origin at all, and both provide a
different narrative than we have thus far seen. One Mishnah source posits that God
created demons on the sixth day: “Ten things were created on the eve of the Sabbath
between the suns at nightfall: the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the well, the mouth of
the she-ass, the rainbow, and the manna and the rod and the Shamir, the letters and the
writing and the Tables [of stone]. Some say also: The evil spirits.”¹ Another rare theory is
that God turned some who were building the tower of Babel into demons as punishment:
“The party that said, ‘Let us go up and make war’ turned into apes, spirits, devils, and
night-demons.”² Each of these is the only one of its kind, and these are the only two
mentions of such origins in later Jewish literature. The majority of the literature assumes
earlier narratives.

Both of these minority reports refer to God's making the demons, whether making
them outright on the sixth day or making people into demons as punishment, which
complicates the issue of whether God is the source of evil. Neither passage intends to
raise these questions—one is a discussion of creation and the other an exegesis of
Genesis 11—they provoke the issue nonetheless. Even more significantly, neither
passage attempts to explore this issue. We saw in earlier Jewish traditions that demons
sometimes serve as protection for God against fault for evil: God tells Abraham to
sacrifice Isaac only because Mastema incites him, and demons are responsible for
hardening the Egyptians' hearts. In the two instances, cited above, where God creates
demons, there is no attempt to protect God from being tainted with evil at all.

One of the more descriptive accounts of the nature of demons in the Talmud comes from Berakhot, where the rabbis describe demons as innumerable, invisible, and responsible for difficulties:

If the eye had the power to see them, no creature could withstand the demons. Said Abaye, ‘They are more numerous than we and stand around us like the ridge around a field.’ Said R. Huna, ‘At the left hand of each one of us is a thousand of them, and at the right hand, ten thousand.’ Said Raba, . . . ‘The fact that the clothing of rabbis wears out from rubbing comes on account of them, the bruising of the feet comes from them. If someone wants to know that they are there, take ashes and sprinkle them around the bed, and in the morning he will see something like the footprints of a cock.’

Though these demons are invisible, they make footprints in ashes. Footprints imply bodies, as does “rubbing against” the scholars' clothes and wearing them out. Therefore the demons are not incorporeal, even as they are invisible and, according to other statements, spiritual. Note, too, the dark and foreboding tenor of this passage. “No creature could endure seeing them” likely because they were so awful to behold; the demons “surround us,” implying an inability to escape the demons. There is a note of fear here, or at least a description of corporeal, though spiritual, demons and their physical harm that are both worth fearing, a theme we will see repeated in this period.

The primary feature of the Talmud and Midrash that differs from earlier Jewish sources is that increasingly more sins are attributed to the work of Satan than in previous

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3 Berakhot 6a, Nuesner 1:53. The passage quoted continues on to explain how a person can see the demons: “If one wishes to see them, let him take the after-birth of a black she-cat, the offspring of a black she-cat, the first-born of a first-born, let him roast it in fire and grind it to powder, and then let him put some into his eye, and he will see them. Let him also pour it into an iron tube and seal it with an iron signet that they should not steal it from him. Let him also close his mouth, lest he come to harm.”

4 The Mishnah and Talmud do include a lot more speculation as to the nature of demons, but since these traditions had little do with Chrysostom's own demonology, I will not spend time on these speculations here. For an excellent survey, see Ferguson, Demonology of the Early Christian World, 87–95. One thing to note is that the corporeality or incorporeality of demons is not uniform across the sources. We saw in this passage an account of bodily spiritual beings, but other passages describe incorporeal spiritual beings. See Midrash Rabba, Genesis 7:5, 5d, where demons were left “without bodies” because the Sabbath interrupted creation. Whether this passage means only that the demons are spiritual rather than physical or whether it means they are also incorporeal is unclear.
sources. Talmud *Shabbat* claims Satan was responsible for people worshipping the
golden calf: “At the end of forty days Satan came along and confounded the world” and
convinced the Israelites that Moses was dead.\(^5\) Talmud *Sanhedrin* attributes David's sin
with Bathsheba to Satan: “Bath Sheba [*sic*] was shampooing her hair behind a screen.
Satan came to [David] and appeared to him in the form of a bird. He shot an arrow at [the
screen] and broke it down, so that she stood out in the open, and he saw her.”\(^6\) In both
cases, Satan makes sin possible, though in neither is Satan the cause of sin. He is
responsible only indirectly, for example, breaking the screen and exposing Bathsheba, but
not possessing David or forcing him to commit adultery. In fact, the rabbi says that David
asked God to be tested as Abraham was tested, and God obliged, suggesting a sanctioned
adversarial role for Satan not unlike the one in the story of Job. In the case of the golden
calf, Satan works independently of God, inciting Aaron for his own purposes rather than
for God's. Thus, in terms of agency, Satan tempts and deceives, but the human commits
the sin. The Talmud also records demonic temptations of rabbis, not only interpretations
of Scriptural narratives:

> R. Meir would ridicule sinners. One day Satan appeared to him on the opposite
side of a canal in the form of a woman. There being no ferry, he grabbed a rope
and got across. As he had reached half way down the rope, Satan released him.\(^7\)

Demons appear as instigators of sin, not at all unlike what we will see in Christian
monastic literature.

> Jews understood demons to be malicious spirits. One Talmudic warning reads, “It
is forbidden to a man to greet another by night for fear that he is a demon.”\(^8\) We saw that

\(^5\) *Shabbat* 89a, Neusner, 2C:87.
\(^6\) *Sanhedrin* 107a; Neusner, 23C:187.
\(^7\) *Kiddushin* 81a, Neusner 19B:171.
the demons sought to incite sin and cause humans to fall before God, attempting to ruin the relationship between God and humans. Demons can also be the explanation for any kind of misfortune, from disease to robbery to death, and for this reason it was not uncommon for Jews in late antiquity to carry amulets or to use incantation bowls and other devices for repelling demons. Jews, no less than pagans—or Christians—worried about what demons could do to a person, what (primarily physical) harm they could inflict, and took the necessary precautions. These amulets and talismans, found in graves, private homes, public spaces, and even in synagogues, demonstrate what precisely people feared demons were capable of doing. Many of the Jewish magical items were either for

8 Megillah 3a. Translation from Isidore Epstein, ed., The Babylonian Talmud, v. 4 (London: Soncino Press, 1961), Megillah 12. 9 The most extensive Talmudic discussion of demons and ailments they can cause is Pesahim 110a-112b. The Talmud also has sections of instructions for remedies for various maladies considered to be the work of demons. For one such representative list, see Gittin 69a. One important exception to the use of δαίμονες in an exclusively negative manner was Philo, who used δαίμονες as the pagans did, referring to deities and even, at times, to the souls of the dead. Philo also used δαίμονες about Biblical angels, which Philo further claims were souls: “It is Moses' custom to give the name of angels to those whom other philosophers call demons (or spirits), souls that is which fly and hover in the air” (On the Giants II.6, translation from F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, Philo vol. 2, Loeb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), 449). Philo's influence on Origen makes this a notable point. 10 For modern discussion, see Isaacs, Ascending Jacob's Ladder, 92-97; Edwin M. Yamauchi, “Magic Bowls: Cyrus H Gordon and the Ubiquity of Magic in the Pre-Modern World,” Biblical Archaeologist 59 (1996): 51–55; Markham J. Geller, “Eight Incantation Bowls,” Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica 17 (1986): 101–17; J. N. Ford, “Phonetic Spellings of the Subordinating Particle D(y) in the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Magic Bowls,” Aramaic Studies 10, no. 2 (July 2012): 215–47; Charles D. Isbell, “Story of the Aramaic Magical Incantation Bowls,” Biblical Archaeologist 41 (1978): 5–16; Hershel Shanks, “Magic Incantation Bowls,” Biblical Archaeology Review 33 (2007): 62; Shaul Shaked, “Transmission and Transformation of Spells: The Case of the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls,” in Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition, ed. Gideon Bohak, Yuval Harari, and Shaul Shaked (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 187–217; Markham J. Geller, “Tables and Magic Bowls,” in Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity, ed. Shaul Shaked (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 53–72. A helpful collection of incantations and inscriptions on amulets, bowls, and other artifacts is Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1993). 11 Gideon Bohak describes the various locations in which archaeologists have discovered magical items (Ancient Jewish Magic: A History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 151). Such frequent use of these objects and practices led to the Jews having a reputation as magicians. To Jewish clients, Jewish magicians could offer a “kosher” version of magic, and to non-Jewish clients, Jewish magicians could promise powerful and effective techniques and names they had not encountered in their pagan contemporaries. Even Christians were known to seek them out for magical remedies for illnesses or other needs. In fact, this was a major motivation for Chrysostom's homilies Against the Judaizing Christians (see especially Adv. Iud. 1.1; 4.4-5; 8.5, 7). Chrysostom spoke against the false belief Christians
exorcising demons afflicting a patient or for preventing harm from demons in general, such as in this inscription on an incantation bowl:

This is the figure of the mbklt'-demon who appears in dreams, and in images. Gabriel and Suriel appear to him. This bond is from this day and forever, amen, amen, selah. This strong seal and guarding and seal of Solomon is for Pana'-Hormiz bar Resanduk and for Bustai bat Givat . . . and for all of their household, their possessions, their food, and all their houses, that they might have favorable healing from heaven in the name of El Saddai.\textsuperscript{12}

Other incantations are more specific: “To heal . . . the body of Marian daughter of Sarah and of her fetus that is in her belly . . . Afflictions and enemies . . . That they may have power neither over Marian nor over her fetus.”\textsuperscript{13} Another reads, “Exorcise the fever and the shiver, the female demons (and) the spirits from the body of Ya’itha the daughter of Marian.”\textsuperscript{14} And, “I adjure you evil spirit, whether flying or resting, that you should not touch Habibi son of Herta, and that you should not appear to him by any likeness by

\textsuperscript{13} Amulet 28, Translation from Naveh and Shaked, Magic Spells and Formulae, 97.
\textsuperscript{14} Amulet 2. Translation from Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1985), 45.
which you appear to people.”¹⁵ These imply that pregnancy complications, fevers, and appearing to people in various guises were common actions of demons.¹⁶ It is interesting that these are all offenses against individuals. Illness is the foremost affliction caused by demons, but there are amulets and bowls for protection of a person's house and for protection against thieves as well, and even one accusing a demon of murder and asking protection against further killing.¹⁷ The magical objects do not refer to natural disasters or events against large communities. The attacks are also primarily, though not exclusively, physical. Some refer to dreams, as in the above quotation about “the demon who appears in dreams and in images.” Another amulet reads, “I adjure you, spirit . . . you should not be seen to Shlamsu daughter of . . . neither at night nor at daytime.”¹十八

The world was populated with spirits that could harm physically and sometimes mentally, and people hoped the spirits would not harm them or their families. People wanted protection, a way to ward off these spirits who cause bruises, diseases, and miscarriages.

**Pagan Demonologies**

Iamblichus (c. 245-325 CE), and Calcidius (early 4th century CE), help to fill out Platonic demonology after Plutarch. In his *De mysteriis*, Iamblichus describes the various inhabitants of the cosmos: gods, archangels, angels, δαίμονες, heroes, and souls. Δαίμονες are intermediaries connecting gods with souls, since the order and harmony of

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¹⁵ Amulet 26, Naveh and Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, 89.
¹⁶ Other amulets seek protection from premature births. See amulet 30, Ibid., 102.
¹⁸ Amulet 11, Ibid., 95.
the universe requires that the extremes—gods and souls—be linked. Iamblichus does not explain how δαίμονες link gods and souls, but we know that it is not, as for Calcidius a few years later, because δαίμονες are immortal like gods but subject to the passions like human beings. Iamblichus is adamant that none of the superior beings—δαίμονες included—are possible: “They [superior beings] completely transcend the distinction between passible and impassible, because they do not even possess a nature that is susceptible to passion.” Furthermore, Iamblichus is concerned with the spectrum between gods and souls, all “superior beings,” rather than gods and humans, as Calcidius is. As with Albinus, Iamblichus understands that δαίμονες have been given administration “over certain restricted portions of the cosmos,” and they are also in service to the gods and must do what they command.

Iamblichus claims that δαίμονες, like the other “superior beings,” are able to manifest themselves to human beings, and he spends considerable time describing the effects of such a manifestation so that humans may be able to recognize when they are seeing a δαίμων. Δαίμονες may appear in any shape or size, will be accompanied by “tumult and disorder,” will be obscure and “glow with smouldering fire.” There are both good and wicked δαίμονες, but most of Iamblichus's work concerns δαίμονες in general. Toward the end of De mysteriis, Iamblichus explains the personal δαίμον each person's soul has, which the soul has chosen to be its guide:

It [the δαίμον] stands over it as the fulfiller of the various levels of the life of the soul, and as the soul descends into the body it binds it to the body, and it

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20 Commentarius 131 (J. den Boeft, Calcidius on Demons: (Commentarius Ch. 127-136) (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 26).
21 De mysteriis 1.10 (Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell, 42-43).
22 Ibid. 1.20 (Ibid., 76–79).
supervises the composite living being arising from it, and personally regulates the particulars of the life of the soul; and all our reasonings we pursue thanks to the first principles which it communicates to us, and we perform such actions as it puts into our minds; and it continues to direct men's lives up to the point at which, through sacred theurgy, we establish a god as the overseer and leader of our soul; for then it either withdraws in deference to the superior principle, or surrenders its administrative role, or subordinates itself so as to contribute to the god's direction of the soul, or in some other way comes to serve it as master.\(^\text{23}\)

The δαίμον is a guide that directs the soul where it needs to go, even so far as putting thoughts in a person's mind, until it can deliver the soul to a being higher than itself, to a god. Here again we have a guiding δαίμον who is good, and the echoes of Socrates's διαμόνιον can be heard.

Calcidius, too, like Albinus and Iamblichus, claims that δαίμονες have charge over humanity. As mentioned, Calcidius also understands δαίμονες as necessary intermediary beings, though between the extremes of gods and humans rather than gods and souls.\(^\text{24}\) Δαίμονες are immortal and passible, and their passible nature is what makes them care for humans.\(^\text{25}\) Calcidius even gives a definition of δαίμονες: “a demon is a rational, immortal, sensitive, ethereal living being taking care of men.”\(^\text{26}\) Like the beings Hebrews call angels, δαίμονες take humans' prayers to God and make God's will known to humans.\(^\text{27}\) Calcidius is primarily concerned with these good δαίμονες who watch over and take care of humanity, but he does mention wicked ones also, who can act as avengers of “crimes and impiety according to the sanctions of divine justice.”\(^\text{28}\) This description of wicked δαίμονες' activities—the only one Calcidius provides—implies a limit: they are subject to “the sanctions of divine justice.” Thus, though the moral status

\(^{23}\) Ibid. 9.6 (Ibid., 334–37).
\(^{24}\) Comm. 131 (Boeft, 26).
\(^{25}\) Ibid. 131 (Boeft, 26–27).
\(^{26}\) Ibid. 135a (Boeft, 36).
\(^{27}\) Ibid. 132 (Boeft, 28).
\(^{28}\) Ibid. 135b (Boeft, 37).
of δαίμονες is ambiguous, even the wicked δαίμονες are not unrestrainedly wicked.

Calcidius prefers to speak of the good δαίμονες who watch over humanity.

During the fourth century in Antioch, pagan cults were still in existence, though sacrifices and mystic rituals were much less common than they had been in prior centuries. Libanius, Chrysostom's own teacher, was a strong advocate for classical pagan worship. Another of Libanius's students, the Emperor Julian (c. 331-363), was mocked even by pagans for his excessive piety. Julian saw himself as returning the empire to its old religion and promoted sacrifices, cults, and other rituals intended to seek the favor of the gods. In his Letter to a Priest, Julian tells the priest his job is to “take care to exhort men not to transgress the laws of the gods, since those are sacred.” Just prior to this, Julian writes about evil demons who punish those who do not sacrifice to the true gods:

The tribe of evil demons is appointed to punish those who do not worship the gods. . . . Some men there are also who . . . seek out desert places instead of cities, since they have been given over to evil demons. . . . And many of them have even devised fetters and stocks to wear; to such a degree does the evil demon to whom they have of their own accord given themselves abet them in all ways, after they have rebelled against the everlasting and saving gods.

Julian sees demons as servants of the gods. Though the first part of the letter has been lost, Julian's designation of the punishing demons as “evil” suggests that he believed there were also good demons.

People used δαίμον to refer to any divine or occult power when it was impossible or undesirable to attribute a given event to a specific deity. Δαίμονες caused illness, disease, and natural disaster. Additionally, διάβολος does not appear in ancient pagan

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31 Ibid. 288b, Loeb 2:296-97.
32 Ian Kidd suggests that it was the vagueness of the term δαίμον that made it so useful among pagans (Kidd, “Some Philosophical Demons,” 218).
literature, nor does a concept of a chief δαίμων. The devil is a peculiarly Judeo-Christian figure. People made sacrifices to δαίμονες in order to placate them and to curry favor, since the δαίμονες could not only cause evil to befall a person, but δαίμονες were also capable of conferring prosperity. Just as the amulets do in Jewish traditions, various Greek magical papyri and other magical texts allow a glimpse at popular Greek religion. Common were curse tablets, or defixiones, thin sheets of lead or other metal with a magic inscription, often rolled or folded and either worn or deposited somewhere said to be effective for the particular kind of spell. Often these spells were either for inducing a person to fall in love with the spell-caster or for invoking harm to one's enemies. Some of the defixiones seem to be written by amateurs, possibly by the user himself, but others appear to be written by professional scribes, often even written in advance, with a blank left for the name of the client. Magic texts were a common trade. An example of one defixione is “I hand over to Demeter and Kore the person who has accused me of preparing poisons/spells against my husband. Having been struck by a fever, let him go up to Demeter with all of his family, and confess (his guilt). And let him not find Demeter, Kore, or the gods with Demeter (to be) merciful.” Many of these tablets called on the gods, not δαίμονες, but many were left in or near graves, with the understanding that the souls of the departed would help carry out the curse or spell. They speak to the

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33 See the introduction to John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) for nuances in the various uses of such defixiones and spells. For instance, Gager notes that some defixiones have been found nailed to the floor at a racetrack, implying that people believed the spirits could interfere at the races.

34 An excellent book on the magicians and sorcerers themselves is Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001). Dickie surveys what kinds of people were engaged in peddling magical items as well as who was accused of magical practices. He concludes that often sorcerers were women but notes that sorcerers came from every demographic: women, men, poor, rich, uneducated, educated, pagan, Jewish, Christian. This may be one more reason to think the clients also came from all manner of society.

35 No. 85 [DT 4], quoted in Gager, *Curse Tablets*, 190.
magical world populated with spirits in which the Greeks lived, spirits who constantly interact with human beings but whose actions may be either malicious or beneficent and require proper attention from humans to ensure good treatment.

**Christian Demonologies**

**Cappadocians and Augustine**

The Cappadocian Fathers were predecessors of Chrysostom who also lived and wrote in Asia Minor. Basil and the two Gregorys wrote less about demons than did the ascetic traditions, and, as with most of their predecessors, the demonic rhetoric they did use is scattered throughout their writings, but a few relevant things may be said about their demonology. First, Satan is the chief demon who was created good by God but who fell by pride or envy—Gregory of Nazianzus alone cites both motives—and caused others to fall with him.36 Also as with their predecessors, the Cappadocians identified the pagan gods as demons.37 All three Cappadocians held that God won victory over demons in Christ, that God allowed demons still to roam the earth willing evil, and that God would have final victory over the demons at the end of all things.38 Most significant here

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36 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carm.* 1.1.7.68-69, 73-77 (pride): “After arrogance destroyed him [the devil] there fell with him a multitude”; 1.1.7.56-66 (envy): “Because of this he cast them out of paradise, the envier, in his lust for a glory equaling God's.” Compare Gregory of Nyssa, *Res.* 4 (GNO 9:311); *Hom. in Cant.* (GNO 6:166, 421); *Or. catech.* 5-8 (GNO 3/4:15-36). The first two cited passages of Nyssa's accounts speak only of a fall, not of the fall's cause. In the *Or. catech* 5-8, however, envy is given as the reason for Satan's fall.


38 The three Cappadocians do not agree about the details of this final victory. Gregory of Nyssa follows Origen and argues all demons will be transformed and redeemed in the end (*Anim. et res.* (PG 46:72)); Basil rejects Origen's universalism and claims God will use demons as the agents of his eternal wrath (*Hom. in Ps.* (PG 29:369)); and Gregory of Nazianzus also argues that demons are “God's agents of
is that the Cappadocians believed God allowed humans to cooperate with demons to do evil, a theme that Chrysostom will emphasize. Basil writes, “The demons, who are enemies of all that is good, use for their own ends such [human] free acts (προαιρέσεις) as they find congenial to their wishes.”

Humans have the προαιρέσις to work with demons, and demons take full advantage of it with constant temptations.

As with prior Christian tradition, the Cappadocians know the demons' primary objective is to prevent humans' salvation. Gregory of Nazianzus writes, “[The devil] utterly hates the wise of heart, and shuts off all heaven's ways, maddened at his disfigurement. Nor did he wish God's creature to draw near to the divinity whence he'd fallen, since he longed to have humans with him in a common sin and darkness.”

According to Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Thaumaturgus refers to the devil as “the demon who is the enemy of the true religion.” And Basil writes in his Hom. in Ps., “Plotting as an enemy, again he deceives the victims of his plots into thinking that they should flee to him as to a protector. Consequently, a twofold evil surrounds them, since they are either seized by force or destroyed by deceit. Therefore, the unbelievers flee to demons and idols, having the knowledge of the true God snatched away by the confusion which is produced in them by the devil.”

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punishment in hell” (Ludlow, 185) and those against whom humans struggle in this life in order to be purified (Carm. 1.1.6.88-95).


40 Gregory of Nazianzus, Carm. 1.1.7.61-65 (PG 37.443, Gilbert 59). English from Peter Gilbert, trans., On God and Man: The Theological Poetry of St. Gregory of Nazianzus (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001). Gregory writes Or. 40.37 that there are two kinds of light: “The one is a lamp for our directive faculty, making straight our steps according to God. The other is deceptive and meddling and opposed to the true light while pretending to be that light, that it may defraud through its appearance” (SC 282; English from Nonna Verna Harrison, trans., Festal Orations: St. Gregory of Nazianzus (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008), 132).


42 Basil, Hom. in Ps. 45 (PG 29:416-17, FC 46:298).
Demons could also take up residence in one's soul as a form of demonic possession. Speaking of post-baptismal sin and referring to Luke 11:24, Gregory of Nazianzus writes:

But if it [the evil spirit] finds the place in you “swept and adorned,” empty and unused, equally ready to receive whoever takes it first, it bursts in, enters and dwells there with a larger entourage. And “the last condition becomes worse than the first,” inasmuch as then there was hope of correction and safety, but now evil is manifest, the flight from the good attracts the bad, and because of this the inhabitant's possession is somehow more secure.43

Gregory uses the case of demons taking up residence in the soul as a direct contrast to God's divine indwelling, spoken of a few lines earlier. Where Christ indwells a person, the evil spirit cannot enter. In contrast to Gregory's understanding of an external spirit taking possession of a person's soul in a literal reading of Scripture, Basil's talk of possession has a tendency to use the terms δαίμων and πάθος ambiguously, so it is unclear whether the demon of anger is a demon or a passion in the soul, as in his On Those Prone to Anger: “[Anger] is a malady upon the soul, a dark mist over the reason. It brings estrangement from God. . . . It is a wicked demon coming to birth in our very souls, taking prior possession of our interior . . . and barring entrance to the Holy Spirit. Whenever there are enmities, strifes, bursts of anger, intrigues, rivalries, causing restless agitation in the soul, there the Spirit of Meekness does not take His rest.”44 Here, too, God and a demon cannot simultaneously indwell a human being.

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43 Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 40.35 (SC 278, Harrison 131). Dayna S. Kalleres focuses on Gregory's understanding of the human being as an impression to say that Gregory was concerned with the thoughts, words, logic, and other sophistries demons used to snatch away a person's salvation and restoration to the divine image. Kalleres does not mention the possibility of possession in the sense of a demon entirely taking over a human's soul and body but emphasizes the intellectual nature of demonic attacks. Though her argument about Gregory's understanding of demonic attacks is sound, it is deficient for delineating a more complete understanding of possession, i.e., what Gregory means by demons inhabiting the soul. See Kalleres, “Demons and Divine Illumination.”

44 Basil, Hom. 10 (PG 31:372, FC 9:460-61). Vasiliki Limberis points out that Basil's sermon on envy makes the passion (envy) a mere tool of the devil in his constant war against God, rather than a demon
Augustine is another near-contemporary of Chrysostom, though in the West, and his corpus is similar in size to Chrysostom's. Augustine did not speak often about demons nor, as so many others, did he write an explicit demonology, but he did refer to demons in scattered comments throughout his works as he found them relevant. Most of these references are in the context either of the fall of humanity, discussions about free will, or both. To begin, Augustine claims that God created the devil and his demons good; they were all angels. Because of pride, however, the devil sinned and fell, and many other angels fell with him. These miscreant angels became Satan's demons. Augustine understands pride to be the first sin, the reason for the fall, and rejects the watchers myth as a story of the fall. Most of Augustine's demonological work is concerned to explain that the devil's sin was because of his own free will. Augustine also makes mention of the nature of demons as having airy bodies, primarily as a direct rejection of Apuleius or the

possessing the soul. Limberis even goes a step further, arguing, “The devil is warring with God, and human beings are caught and compelled by the devil to carry out its purpose. Because he overlooks human responsibility for actions, Basil can say that the sins that the devil makes human beings commit as part of its battle plan ‘damage everything until the end of the ages’” (Vasiliki Limberis, “The Eyes Infected by Evil: Basil of Caesarea’s Homily, On Envy,” Harvard Theological Review 84 (1991): 168, quotation from PG 31.377). Ludlow, however, argues for a reading of Basil wherein Basil “implies that humans have a choice to give way to envy or not, but he is also aware, from a pastoral perspective, that some people become so enslaved by passions like envy that they unwittingly become the dupes of demons” (Ludlow, “Demons, Evil and Liminality in Cappadocian Theology,” 197). Ludlow uses Limberis and discusses how Limberis understands the devil's “compulsion” of humans as a person's own “spiritual blindness” “muddying” her free will, but does not address Limberis's claim that Basil “overlooks human responsibility for actions.” This difference of reading highlights the difficulty in understanding precisely how Basil understood demonic possession to work.

It appears that Augustine had some awareness of Chrysostom, but the likelihood that either read a significant amount from the other is negligible. In Contra Julianum 1.6.22 (PL 44.655, 661), Augustine, defending Chrysostom, describes the bishop as a great man, places him among the other learned men of his time, and quotes one of Chrysostom's sermons to the neophytes. Aside from this, neither gives any indication of knowing the other. Furthermore, Augustine's De civitate Dei, where most of Augustine's demonological work resides, was written after Chrysostom's death. See Peter B. Ely, “Chrysostom and Augustine on the Ultimate Meaning of Human Freedom,” Ultimate Reality and Meaning 29 (2006): 165-67; and Panayiotis Papageorgiou, “Chrysostom and Augustine on the Sin of Adam and Its Consequences,” St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 39 (1995): 361–78.

De natura boni 33; De vera religion 13.26; Enarrationes in Psalmos 58.2-5; De civitate Dei 11.15; De libero arbitrio 3.25.75-76; De correptione et gratia 10.27; De trinitate 4.10. For Augustine's argument that demons are fallen angels rather than a different species altogether, see De civ. 8.14-17, 5.9, 5.19, 9.2.

De Genesi ad litteram 3.10.
Platonists generally. Outside of *De civitate Dei* 5, 8-9, 11, however, Augustine offers nothing about demonic nature, which suggests that the nature of demons is less important than their free will, on which he spends more time.\(^{48}\)

Augustine’s understanding of demonic activity it is not unlike other Christian explanations of his time.\(^{49}\) As with many early theologians, including Chrysostom, Augustine distinguishes between natural and moral evils, concluding that natural evils are not true evils but only appear to be evil. If a human being could understand the mind of God, he could understand God's plan for the good of all the cosmos and thus understand that natural disasters and diseases have a place in this plan.\(^{50}\) Moral evil, however, is true evil and the result of a human's exercise of her free will.\(^{51}\) In Augustine's understanding, then, demons can tempt and deceive but cannot cause a human being to sin. This is not surprising, given Augustine's well-known emphasis on human free will. Augustine writes, “The demons, however, those false and deceitful mediators . . . strive to distract and divert us from making spiritual progress. . . . They do not offer a path to God; rather they block us from keeping to the path.”\(^{52}\) Demons aim to hinder us and keep us from God.

Augustine did write one treatise on a particular aspect of demonic activity: demonic divination. Therein Augustine explains that demons suggest thoughts to humans, affecting their minds: “[Demons] persuade [people] in marvelous and unseen ways,

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\(^{48}\) *De civ.* 8.14-16, 21; 9.3, 7-8, 12-13. 18; *De Gen. ad litt.* 12.16.32, 12.17.34-38. The latter even includes mention of the demons' ability to run fast and pretend to prophesy, just as in *Life of Antony*, a text Augustine had read. For more on Augustine's understanding of demonic composition, see G. A. Smith, “How Thin Is a Demon?,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008): 479–512.

\(^{49}\) Though Augustine had no direct influence on Chrysostom, I include his thought here briefly in order to complete the picture of fourth-century demonology and to show trends.

\(^{50}\) *De ordine* 1.1; Letter 210.


entering by means of that subtlety of their own bodies of men who are unaware, and through certain imaginary visions mingling themselves with men's thoughts, whether they are awake or asleep. Augustine, too, believes demons can implant thoughts in the mind, though the will is still a faculty demons cannot possess and take over. The human's will, aided by grace, is able to resist demonic temptation, manipulation, and even possession.

The Antony Tradition

Ascetic traditions had great influence on Chrysostom. He spent years as a monk himself in the mountains outside Antioch, and Chrysostom exhorted his congregation to visit the monks in the mountains on the outskirts of Antioch, learning from them as exemplars of virtue. Moreover, asceticism influenced popular imagination. Because of this strong influence, I will spend more time on ascetic demonology.

Antony the Great, considered the “father of desert monasticism,” holds a place of prominence in ascetic tradition. Patristic literature presents us with three very different

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54 This is, of course, bracketing the discussion of demon possession. There are too many intricacies in this issue to deal with for each of our authors, especially one who had no direct influence on Chrysostom. I deal extensively with demon possession only in Chrysostom’s thought (see ch. 3).

55 The monks themselves were popular. People often went out to see the monks in their “natural habitat,” either as a trip to view exotic Christians out of curiosity or as a form of pilgrimage to see the holy men and learn from them. Many accounts speak of Christians visiting monks in order to receive general spiritual wisdom, advice about a specific problem, or even a judgment on a dispute. The collections of sayings and lives, then, were also popular. With so much interaction, it is likely the popular imagination absorbed at least some aspects of ascetic demonologies.

56 I spend this time on Antony because of the prominence of the Antony tradition in asceticism, not because of any direct (or provable) influence on Chrysostom. It is likely that Chrysostom knew both the Life and Sayings traditions of Antony through his own contact with asceticism and Syrian monasticism, though the link between Egyptian and Syrian ascetic traditions has not been established. In particular, Chrysostom's own understanding of Job and in what way demons are powerless are similar enough to what
Antonys. 1) Antony the author of the *Letters of Antony*; 2) Antony as portrayed by Athanasius in his *Life of Antony*; and 3) Antony the Great as presented in the various collections of the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. I treat the first two here, but because the Antony of the *Sayings* is not different in any significant way from the other abbas mentioned in the collection, I treat that Antony as part of the sayings tradition.

Antony's 6th letter focuses on demonology and shows a distinct Origenian influence. Antony writes, “They [demons] are, moreover, all from one (source) in their spiritual essence; but through their flight from God great diversity has arisen between them since their deeds are varying. Therefore all these names have been imposed on them after the deeds of each one.”

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Antonys: Current scholarship holds that the historical Antony was born about 252 CE at Koma in Heracleopolis in Middle Egypt, a fact scholars draw from Sozomen's recording (*Hist. Eccl.* 1.13, 2), and both the *Life* and Jerome record Antony's death in 356. Other events and the movements of Antony's life—from the outskirts of his village to a tomb to Alexandria—are reconstructed from the *Life*, but very few details are known with certainty. A good summary of the historical Antony is found in Vincent Desprez, “Saint Anthony and the Beginnings of Anchoritism,” *American Benedictine Review* 43 (1992): 72–73; and an excellent critical discussion about both the historical Antony and the scholarship on him is Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 9–12.

Each source presents a different Antony. Antony of the *Letters* is an intellectual, and the *Letters* themselves are less dramatic than the *Life*. Athanasius's Antony is unlettered and has a tendency toward the theatrical. The most comprehensive treatment of each of the three sources is found in Rubensohn's *The Letters of St. Antony*. Rubenson not only translates the letters but provides a lengthy introduction on the history of the letters, manuscript tradition, history of scholarship, and themes. In order to give proper context to the letters, Rubenson also gives a thorough accounting of the scholarship on the *Life*, including the debate about whether the Greek or Coptic is the original and whether or not Athanasius is the author (*Ibid.*, 126–31). See also David Brakke, “The Greek and Syriac Versions of the *Life of Antony*,” *Muséon* 107 (1994): 29–53, for a summary of scholarship on the Greek and Syriac *Lives*. On the Antony of the sayings, Rubenson again is the current standard: Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 145–57.

Antony, Letter 6. Translation from Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 220. Rubenson makes the case that Antony's letters were originally written in Coptic and quickly translated into Greek; we have fragments in both Coptic and Greek. There is also a Syriac copy of the first letter but no others. The only full versions we have are in Arabic, Georgian, and Latin, and the Arabic manuscripts are most numerous with 13 copies (Georgian has 2, and Latin has but 1 from the 15th century). Rubenson made his English translation from a critical comparison and use of all extant manuscripts (“on the basis of all the extant versions”), and so I do not hesitate to use the English here. For a full discussion both of the extant versions and Rubenson’s own translation, see Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 15-34, 196.
Creator” are named “archangels . . . thrones and dominions, principalities, powers and cherubim,” but “due to the wickedness of the conduct of others it was necessary to name them devil and Satan. . . . Others are called demons, evil and impure spirits, spirits of seduction and powers of this world, and there are many other varieties among them.”

Antony even talks of a categorization of names for classes of humans, which also resulted from this fall: “patriarchs . . . prophets and kings and priests and judges and apostles.”

This echoes Origen's description of the minds that fell to different degrees as a result of various degrees of sin, resulting in diversity. Antony's explanation makes no mention at all of the watchers myth. Athanasius's Antony, when speaking to a group of the brothers about demons, mentions that the demons “were not always called ‘demons' and did not come into being as demons, for God has made nothing bad. No, they too came into being good, but when they fell from heavenly wisdom, from that time on they wandered the earth.” In the next sentence, Antony further refers to heaven as “the place from which they fell.” This is vague, and could potentially refer even to the watchers myth, but Antony does consider demons to be fallen angels, not the progeny of fallen angels, since he notes that the demons were created good. Athanasius also writes, “There is . . . a great crowd of them [demons] in the air around us. . . . There are great differences among them.”

Antony is also similar to Origen regarding the nature of demons. Antony's sixth letter speaks of demons as invisible and spiritual, but if the monk does not put on his

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61 Ibid.
62 The Life of Antony, 22.1-2 (Greek Life). English from *Life of Antony*, trans. Tim Vivian and Apostolos N. Athanassakis (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2003), 111. All subsequent references will be to the Greek, rather than the Coptic Life, for simplicity. Where there are substantial germane differences between the two Lives, I will note them.
63 Ibid.
64 Life of Antony, 21.4-5 (Vivian and Athanassakis, 109).
rational mind and be vigilant, if he gives the demon a place, the monk will become the
demon's body: “They are not visible bodily. But you should know that we are their
bodies, and that our soul receives their wickedness; and when it has received them, then it
reveals them through the body in which we dwell.” In the Life, Antony, again in his
speech to the brothers, says that the demons have bodies “more subtle than humans
possess.” Demons can pretend to prophesy, or to predict the future, by running
exceedingly fast because they are so subtle and thin. Antony says, “If someone begins to
walk from the Thebaid . . . the demons do not know before he sets out walking whether
he will walk. But when they see this person on his way, they run on ahead and, before he
arrives, report it.” From Athanasius's Antony we also learn that demons are invisible but
can become visible. They can take the form of women, “black boys,” beasts, and all kinds
of creatures.

The stories in the Life of Antony's physical struggle against demons provide a
glimpse of demonic interaction with human beings. As with prior Jewish and Christian
tradition, Antony understands the demons' goal to be the thwarting of salvation.

Athanasius has Antony say to the brothers: “The [demons] envy us Christians and create
all sorts of disturbances, wishing to impede us on our way to heaven.” Antony
continues to speak of the various wiles by which the demons attempt their hindrance:
suggesting filthy thoughts to the monks; fabricating apparitions of women, beasts,
reptiles, and armies; pretending to prophesy; deception; throwing their voices or speaking

65 Letter 6 (Rubenson, 219).
66 Life of Antony 31.2 (Vivian and Athanassakis, 129).
67 Ibid. 31.5 (Vivian and Athanassakis, 129).
68 Life of Antony 22.2 (SC 194-96; Vivian and Athanassakis, 111).
without becoming visible; appearing as monks in order to deceive.\textsuperscript{69} In addition to these machinations, the \textit{Life} speaks of the physical brutality the demons wrought on Antony, beating him without mercy.\textsuperscript{70} Thus, in the \textit{Life}, demons' activities are both external and internal to the monk. By contrast, the Antony of the Letters—the “Origenist” Antony—says that the demons' attacks are all internal, that is, psychological or spiritual. Letter 6 gives a long list of psychological means that demons use. It includes:

- evil counsel,
- their secret persecution,
- their subtle malice,
- their sprits of seduction,
- their fraudulent thoughts,
- their faithlessness which they sow in our hearts every day . . . all their wrath,
- the mutual slander which they teach us,
- our self-justifications in our deeds,
- and the condemnations they sow in our hearts . . . the contempt they send into our hearts through pride so that we become hard-hearted and despise one another . . . and they incite us to do things which we are unable to do and whose time it is not, and makes us weary of things we do and which are good for us.\textsuperscript{71}

Both the \textit{Letters} and the \textit{Life}, though, insist that the demons are powerless. As with Irenaeus and Origen, Athanasius's Antony claims that the demons only cause wickedness in persons when they open their souls to the demon. He says that demons “make us their slaves” through deceit and “fill our hearts with all these [evil thoughts and inclinations],” but this happens because “we feed on them and they become our food.”\textsuperscript{72}

The Antony of the \textit{Life} says that the demons are “powerless” (\textit{εἰσι μηδὲν ἵσχύοντες}, 28.5), though most readers would understand the demons' ability to inflict \piληγάζ on Antony as a form of power. Therefore, in his claims, Antony is defining and

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid. 23.1-25.4 (SC 198; Vivian and Athanassakis, 111–119).
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid. 8.1-10.4 (SC 156-64; Vivian and Athanassakis, 79–85).
\textsuperscript{71} Letter 6 (Rubenson, 218).
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid. In Stoic terms, Demons can make an “impression” which triggers an impulse, but they cannot make a person consent to that impulse. Antony is neither using Stoic vocabulary nor making any explicit reference to Stoic thought, but the Stoic way of explaining this motion is helpful for understanding. For more Stoic echoes in Antony, see Brakke, \textit{Demons and the Making of the Monk}, 52–55. Brakke draws on Michel René Barnes's analysis in his “Galen and Antony: Anger and Disclosure,” in \textit{Studia Patristica} 30 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 136–43. This vocabulary will be further helpful as we see resonances of Stoic anthropology in Chrysostom's works.
circumscribing the demons' power. Antony tells the brothers, “We have no need to fear them [demons], even if they seem to be assaulting us, even if they are threatening us with death, for they are weak and are unable to do anything but make threats.” The demons only “seem” (δοκῶσι) to be assaulting the monks, including Antony (27.5). In what way, then, are demons powerless? The question of how demons are powerless will be key for Chrysostom's arguments about demons.

The answer appears to be, for Antony, that demons are powerless to harm physically. Athanasius provides the logic: “[Demons] desire to do evil and are ready to do harm. . . . Nevertheless, we are still alive; what is more, we live our lives in opposition to them. Therefore, they clearly have no power at all.” What the Life means by “harm” (τὸ βλάπτειν) is implicitly defined in Athanasius's insistence that demons cannot harm even as he tells stories of Antony's suffering physical beatings by demons, something most people would understand to be some manner of harm. Antony says, “There is nothing they [demons] care more about than doing harm to those who love virtue and worship God. But because they are unable to act, they do nothing except make threats.” This is why the demons “sport about like actors on the stage, changing their shapes.” They try to frighten by apparitions because they are powerless to do more. Athanasius does not address the question of whether the beatings Antony received constitute a case of the demons' visiting τὸ βλάπτειν upon him, but later in this speech he has Antony speak of

73 Most often Athanasius uses some form of the verb δύναμαι with the negative μή or οὐ to explain that the demons are unable to do something or anything. For example, μηδὲν δυνάμενος (28.2), or μηδὲν δύνασθαι ποιεῖν (28.6). Athanasius will also say that demons are “weak” (ἀσθενεῖς) or “not strong” (εἰσὶ μηδὲν ἰσχύοντες) (28.5).
74 Life of Antony 27.5 (SC 210, Vivian and Athanassakis, 121).
75 Ibid. 28.5 (SC 212-14, Vivian and Athanassakis 123). “Εἰσὶ δὲ κακοθελεῖς καὶ πρὸς τὸ βλάπτειν ἔτοιμοι. . . . ζόμεν δὲ νῦν ἡμεῖς καὶ μᾶλλον κατ' αὐτοῦ πολτευόμεθα, δηλοὶ εἰσὶ μηδὲν ἰσχύοντες”
76 Ibid. 28.9, (SC 214, Vivian and Athanassakis 125).
the Devil's attack on Job. The story of Job is an example of Satan's weakness. Satan must ask permission from God before he can afflict Job. Antony does not say that Satan harms (τὸ βλάπτειν) Job, but Antony does say that Satan tests (πειράω) Job and does so when God handed Job over. Though there is no direct evidence either way, it is possible that Antony understood his own beatings in a similar fashion—or, at least, that Athanasius did. Antony may have viewed his beatings as an attack allowed by God for his strengthening, or to display virtue to the demons; thus, God was responsible, not the demons. The *Life of Antony* is ambiguous about whether the demons harmed Job, but it does say that things happened to Job and to his cattle, possession, and so on. At the very least, then, one can say that Antony's understanding of εἰσὶ . . . πρὸς τὸ βλάπτειν ἔτοιμοι is complex and dependent upon his understanding of God's will. Ultimately, this understanding is not explicitly consistent.

In the *Life*, Job's function is to highlight God's superiority over the devil. In *Life of Antony* demons are powerless to cause harm of their own volition: only with God's permission can demons act against a human being with more than threats and apparitions. Christians thus have no need to fear demons. The demons may harbor all kinds of ill will toward Christians, but demons are not able to act on their ill will except by God's permission. Notably, the *Life* does not address how, when, why, or whether God

78 Ibid. 29.1 (SC 216, Vivian and Athanassakis 125). ὁ θεὸς ὁ παραδός αὐτῷ πρὸς παίραι τὸν Ἰκῷ.

79 *Life of Antony* says, “Because they are unable to do anything, they only threaten” (28.6 (SC 214, Vivian and Athanassakis 125)). Speaking about Job as example and proof of the devil's weakness, Antony says, “If he had had power, he would not have asked. But when he asked, not once but twice, he showed that he was weak and unable to do anything. It is not remarkable that the Devil had no power against Job, seeing that nothing would have happened even to Job's cattle if God had not consented. The Devil did not have authority even over Job's pigs! But 'they begged' the Lord, as it is written in the Gospels, saying, ‘Allow us to depart into the swine.’ If the demons have no authority over pigs, how much less authority do they have over human beings, who have been created in the image of God!” (29.3-5 (SC 216-18, Vivian and Athanassakis 126-27)).
might grant a demon permission to harm a person. What is assumed, however, is that God is purely good and any action God takes, even allowing suffering to befall a human, is good. Therefore, though God can and does give permission for the devil to physically harm humans, as in the case of Job, Antony thinks one has no reason to fear demons because God is still governing the universe, and God is good.

The *Letters* do not draw on Job's story at all. The focus in the *Letters*, particularly Letter 6, is human resistance to demonic works. Demons attempt to bring about evil, but only when a person cooperates and allows a demon to work in him can the demon do anything. Antony also tells his audience to pray for help in resisting, that Jesus “died because of them in this world, and prepared for them to inherit Gehenna.” This is the way the Antony of the Letters speaks of God's superiority over demons, rather than by employing Job.

A few texts in the *Life* and *Letters* offer three further dimensions of demonic interaction with human beings. First, demons are able to suggest, tempt, and even deceive monks in an attempt to get the brothers to abandon their ascetic discipline and do wrong. Antony says, “They drag (ἑλκύσωσι) away wherever they wish those who have been deceived by them.” When a demon successfully deceives a person, she is under the demon's power and will be “dragged” wherever the demon wishes, regardless of the person's wishes. Second, demons characteristically provoke fear. Antony's continual

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80 Note that the devil is able to kill Job's children, cattle, and so on, even though he cannot kill Job. Neither Antony nor Athanasius comments on this apparent injury to humans but assumes that Job is the exemplar and so focuses on demonic interaction with Job, not with Job's family. This aspect of Athanasius's exegesis will be seen in Chrysostom's exegesis of Job as well.

81 Admittedly, for most people this thought is unlikely to eliminate fear. If God has allowed harm in the past, God could allow harm in the future. Demons can still cause suffering, and now they have divine permission. It is no wonder people remained afraid of demons.

82 Letter 6 (Rubenson 218).


84 Ibid. 25.3 (SC 206, Vivian and Athanassakis 117).
refrain as he speaks to the monks is “do not fear” the demons. They can deceive, yes, but only if the person allows it. They are not nearly so frightening as people think; indeed, people *ought not* fear demons. Antony's concern is to empower and encourage the monks, but he has also made way for later writers like Chrysostom to argue that demons should not be an excuse for sin. Since demons can only tempt and deceive, not coerce, any wrongdoing is the Christian's own fault. This is the third dimension of demonic interaction, and Antony's letters speak even more about the human's responsibility for his own sin than does the *Life*. Antony writes, “We are called sensible, but have put on an irrational mind, so that we are ignorant of how the secret contrivances and manifold crafts of the devil work, and how they might be known,” and “If you neglect (*neglegatis*) yourselves and do not discern your works, you fall into the hands of the devil.”

Christians who are neglectful or who choose “to put on an irrational mind” bring harm upon themselves. Negligence is an important theme in Letter 6. If the demons do anything, it is through a Christian's own negligence. Christians have no excuse for their sin or their resulting enslavement by the devil and suffering in Gehenna. This third dimension will be a particular emphasis of Chrysostom's.

**Other Ascetic Demonologies**

Other ascetic demonologies reflect themes similar to those found in *Life of Antony*, especially the focus on a constant struggle against demons and the demons'
inability to cause sin. Vigilance becomes a key theme among Antony's successors, and Job comes to a place of prominence as an example for emulation of the virtuous man who withstood all the demon tried. There are various collections of sayings and lives of the desert fathers and ascetics; most were written after people had been going to the desert for some time. Most were also written after Chrysostom had died. The exception is the anonymous *A History of the Monks of Egypt*, likely written about 400 CE, just after Chrysostom came to Constantinople and just before he was exiled for the first time. Since this is the case, it is unlikely Chrysostom knew these works as collections or completed works. However, since the collections were compiled from oral traditions, and since Chrysostom himself spent a substantial amount of time among the monks outside Antioch, it is reasonable to think that Chrysostom did know the tradition, if not the stories which are recorded in the various collections.

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87 An excellent treatment of ascetic thought about demons is Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk*. Brakke argues that the development of monks and demons cannot be understood apart from the antagonistic relationship they have with one another, though the particular character of the struggle and development varies between monks and traditions. Brakke also explores the various functions of demons in ascetic literature. 88 Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk*, 128. 89 For more on the particular brand of asceticism practiced by Chrysostom, see Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 18–20; Jean M. Leroux, “Saint Jean Chrysostome et le monachisme,” in *Jean Chrysostome et Augustin* (Paris: éditions Beauchesne, 1975), 125–44; Wendy Mayer, “Monasticism at Antioch and Constantinople in the Late Fourth Century: A Case of Exclusivity or Diversity?,” in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church* (Everton Park, Queensland: Australian Catholic University, 1998), 275–88. Wendy Mayer argues that, though we know much of what Chrysostom did while he was in the mountains, there is much more work to be done to understand the relationship between asceticism and Chrysostom’s role as a priest and bishop. She cautions scholars to be careful when they claim Chrysostom remained a monk, or monastically inclined, through the whole of his life (Wendy Mayer, “What Does It Mean to Say that John Chrysostom was a Monk?,” *Studia Patristica* 41 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 451–55). 90 Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk*, 128. In particular, Theodoret of Cyrhus's *A History of the Monks of Syria* is dated between 437–448 CE and is said to be a record of oral tradition, reports from bishops Theodoret knew, and Theodoret's own observations. Written only a few decades after Chrysostom's death, the *History* recounts stories of past generations of Syrian monks, and it is possible Chrysostom also knew these stories from his own time as an ascetic. Even so, the influences of Egyptian asceticism on Syrian forms is unclear. What can be said is that the Syrian form of asceticism Theodoret describes in his *History* is more theatrical, individualistic, and extreme than the Egyptian form described in the *Sayings* and even the *History of the Monks of Egypt*. As Peter Brown phrases it, “Syria was the great province for ascetic stars” (“The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 82). I only suggest that there are similarities between Chrysostom's thought and the
These collections of sayings and lives of desert fathers offer nothing about the origin of demons. The stories assume demonic existence but do not ponder where they come from. Even with regard to demons' composition there is little to say. Monks assumed that the devil and his demons existed, that they were evil, and thus they focused their instruction on the demons' various tactics: how demons interact with monks, what harm this interaction threatens, and what this interaction has the potential to accomplish. The demons' purpose, just as for Antony, is to disturb the Christian's soul and to destroy human beings morally, for moral destruction leads to damnation. Also as in the Antony tradition, the demons use all manner of temptations, deceptions, and apparitions in order to achieve this goal.

The narratives often portray demons as "afraid" (φοβέω) of the monks who are virtuous. In fact, a monk's virtue can drive the demons away. For instance, Isidore the Priest refused an invitation to a meal, and, when a brother questioned him about it, asking ideas in ascetic literature to which we have access, and that it is possible Chrysostom knew of the traditions, if not individual stories. Theodoret is, of course, another of the authors classified as belonging to the Antiochene school of which Chrysostom is said to be a member. Their thought is often compared in scholarship, though Chrysostom could not have known Theodoret's work since Theodoret was about fourteen when Chrysostom died.

There is no philosophical reflection on the subtly of demons' bodies or on demons' feeding habits as in Origen or even Antony's letters, but the reader is able to infer a few things from the stories. For one, demons are spirits. Sometimes the stories give demons physical powers, such as when a demon tried to drag a man bodily from the temple (Elias 7, Apophthegmata Patrum (alphabetical collection). English translation is from Benedicta Ward, trans., The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection, (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1975), 71). Palladius also describes instances of a demon beating a monk physically, just as Athanasius records having happened to Antony (Palladius, The Lausiac History 38.12, 71.2. English translation is from Palladius, The Lausiac History, trans. Robert T. Meyer, ACW, no. 34 (New York: Newman Press, 1965), 114, 153), and there is a narrative of a demon attempting to enter Theodore of Pherme's cell by force but being unable to do so. Theodore binds the demon and keeps it out of his cell (Theodore of Pherme 27, Apophthegmata (Ward, 78)). Notice, too, that the tradition of attributing some kind of body to demons continues. In contrast to Evagrius, who seems to internalize or psychologize the demons by referring to different passions as demons, the collections of sayings allow for external demons as well.

if he was afraid to leave his cell, Isidore replied that he was afraid to go because of the
devil and the way the devil is always prowling like a lion for prey. Isidore continues,
“When someone gives himself a drink, he will not escape being attacked by thoughts.
Lot, indeed, being constrained by his daughters, got drunk with wine, and through the
effect of drunkenness, the devil easily brought him to a shameful act of fornication.”93
Isidore seems to be saying of the devil what is said in a children's story: “If you give a
mouse a cookie, he will want a glass of milk.” That is, once a monk allows the devil a
place by his own momentary weakness, the devil will lead the monk on to much graver
sins, and so the monk must choose not even to leave his cell lest he give the devil a
foothold. In another story, Moses the Ethiopian suffers repeated attacks by a demon, and
finally a most holy man is able to drive the demons away. About this holy man Palladius
writes, “He was deemed worthy of power over demons (Κατηξιώθη δὲ οὗτος χαρίσματος
κατὰ δαμόνων).”94 This particular platitude is repeated about Innocent, who “was
deemed worthy of the gift of power against demons.”95 Theodoret also records a story
about Marcianus, who was able to drive a demon out of a girl from four days' journey
away. According to the story, “As [Marcianus] gave this order [for the father of the girl
to return a flask], the demon at a distance of four days' journey cried out at the power
(δύναμις) of the one who was driving him out.”96

One interesting nuance to the desert collections which does not appear in Antony
or other earlier works is that demons are not able to create temptations; demons are able

93 Isidore the Priest 1, Apophthegmata (Ward, 106).
Lausiac History of Palladius: A Critical Discussion Together with Notes on Early Egyptian Monachism
(Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprints, 1967). A more accurate translation is to say, “He was deemed
worthy of a charism, or a divine gift, over demons,” but the sense of the statement is the same. God graced
the monk with a gift that is a power over demons.
95 Lausiac History 44.3 (Butler 131, Meyer 121).
96 History of the Monks of Syria 3.9 (SC 264, Price 41).
only to exacerbate or “flare up” an existing temptation. Abba Poemen (d. 450 CE) tells a disciple, “[Demons] do not fight against us at all as long as we are doing our own will. For our own wills become the demons, and it is these which attack us in order that we may fulfill them.” Though one may understand this saying as a symbolic interpretation of demons that yields a simple psychological explanation, many of Poemen's other sayings, which refer to demons external to the monk, preclude such an interpretation. In this case, however, it seems that a person's will can become like a demon, demanding attention and attacking the Christian. Elsewhere, when a brother comes to Poemen seeking help because of a demon who keeps trying to get the brother to blaspheme, Poemen says, “Everything that the soul does not desire (θέλει), does not long remain.”

For a demon's temptation to have traction, the sinful desire must already be present in the monk's soul. Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c. 393-457 CE) writes in the prologue to his History of the Monks of Syria,

[Demons] are not able to make war when they lack the thoughts that betray the interior and are deprived of the cooperation (συνεργίας) of the human limbs, since the devil uses our own limbs as weapons against us; for if the eyes are not enticed nor the hearing bewitched nor touch titillated nor the mind receptive of evil intentions (μηδὲ τοῦ νοὸ τὰ πονηρὰ δεχομένου βουλεύματα), the zeal of those plotting harm is in vain.

Theodoret here claims the demons are unable to wage war at all if a person does not already have wicked thoughts. More than the necessity of some preexistent inclination

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97 That is, a demon can place dessert before a monk, but it is only a temptation if the monk already desires dessert. A monk who is content and has no sweet tooth will not be tempted, even if the dessert is a three-tiered chocolate cake.
98 Poemen 67, Apophthegmata (Ward, 176).
99 Poemen 93, Apophthegmata (PG 65.345, Ward, 180).
100 History of the Monks of Syria prologue 6 (SC 132-134, Price 5-6). Τοῦς γὰρ τὰ ἐνδον προϊεμένους λογισμοὺς οὐκ ἔχοντες καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων μελῶν συνεργίας ἐστερημένοι, πολεμεῖν οὐκ ἠδυνάντο. Βέλεσι γὰρ καθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ διάβολος τοῖς ἡμετέροις μέλεσι κέχρηται. Ὀφθαλμῶν γὰρ μὴ δελεαζομένων, μηδὲ ἀκοῦν καταθελγομένων, μηδὲ γαργαλαξομένης ἀφῆς, μηδὲ τοῦ νοὸ τὰ πονηρὰ δεχομένου βουλεύματα, μάταιος τοῖς ἐπιβουλεύουσιν ἡ σπουδή.
toward sin, this statement indicates the necessary cooperation of a human being with a
demon in order for sin to occur. Theodoret asserts that no amount of demonic zeal is
effective unless the human offers his limbs to the demon's cause. Here again, then, the
ascetic tradition upholds the notion that demons cannot make people do anything they do
not want to do, which reinforces the idea that being tempted by demons is not a valid
excuse for human sin. Demons tempt and deceive, but a Christian only sins if he or she
assents to the demons' temptations or is negligent enough to be deceived.

This matter of demonic-human cooperation also poses a question about whether a
demon can access a person's soul or mind at all. One of the stories about Abba
Arsenius records a brother coming to Arsenius and saying, “My thoughts trouble me,
saying, ‘You can neither fast nor work; at least go and visit the sick, for that is also
charity.’” The story continues, “But the old man, recognizing the suggestions of the
demons, said to him, ‘Go, eat, drink, sleep, do no work, only do not leave your cell.’”
Here the troubled brother cannot distinguish his own thoughts from those given to him by
demons, though the holy man can discern the spirits for the brother, demonstrating that
demons are able not only to suggest thoughts to the mind but also to do it in such a subtle
way as to convince the monk a demonic thought is his own. This suggests that demons

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101 Jeffrey B. Russell argues that ascetics thought demons were unable to enter a person's soul
(Satan, 181). Peter Brown explains that demons could implant thoughts in a monk's mind. In fact, Brown
claims that there was a point at which the monk could not distinguish his own thought from that suggested
by the devil (Peter Brown, The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early
recognize demoniacs and those who have been possessed, but it is not clear which part of a person needs to
be accessed and taken over or controlled in order for the person to be considered “possessed.” Those who
talk of demon possession, however, seem to mean something different from suggesting thoughts to the
mind; they seem to mean total possession of a person, a taking over of all faculties. The ambiguity in the
desert literature leaves scholars without a clear consensus on which parts of a person a demon could access
and what constitutes possession rather than influence.

102 Arsenius 11, Apophthegmata (Ward, 10).
have some kind of access to a human's mind, though the mechanics of how a demon
implants a thought are unclear.

At one point Macarius the Great tells some brothers about two true monks he once
saw. He begins by explaining, “One day when I was sitting in my cell, my thoughts were
troubling me, suggesting that I should go to the desert and see what I could see there. I
remained for five years, fighting against this thought, saying, perhaps it comes from the
demons.”

This saying, too, hints that demons could suggest thoughts to a monk and
that the monk may not know whether it comes from a demon or is his own. Macarius,
however, fights against the thought because it might be from a demon. What causes
Macarius's suspicion? It does not seem to be any specific characteristic of the thought: he
says only that “perhaps” (μήπως) it comes from demons. It seems most likely to be the
thought's content that belies its origin. Macarius knows the ascetic value of remaining in
one's cell, but his thoughts keep suggesting he go to the desert and look around. Similarly,
Poemen instructs the brothers in how to recognize demonic thoughts, and his instructions
are about the content: “Everything that goes to excess comes from the demons.”

It seems to be content, rather than any other inherent characteristic, of a thought that helps a
monk discern its origin.

Still, in the stories discussed above, the monks could resist the thoughts of the
demons. Poemen says that if the soul does not desire a thought, the thought will not
remain. In another saying Poemen says that a monk can cause evil thoughts suggested by
demons to disappear through patience. In addition, Theodoret writes in the prologue to

103 Macarius 2, Apophthegmata (Ward, 125).
104 μήπως has a connotation of “in case it is from the demons,” but the uncertainty is still present.
105 Poemen 129, Apophthegmata (Ward, 185).
106 Poemen 21, Apophthegmata (Ward, 170).
his History of the Monks of Syria, "It is impossible for the demons making war from outside to overcome a soul (ψυχῆς) surrounded by divine grace, unless the compliance of some thought open some postern in our senses and receive the enemy within it."\textsuperscript{107} All of these examples indicate some faculty of the monk which the devil and his demons cannot penetrate unless allowed in. The monk's will is significant in this, for the monk must choose to resist, or if the monk does not exercise his will against the demon, the demon will gain entrance and the monk cooperate with the demon's scheme. It is not clear whether the will is a separate component part of the human being alongside the soul and mind or a faculty of the soul or mind. It does seem clear that, according to ascetic demonologies, demons have the ability to implant thoughts in the mind, but not the ability to tamper with any other aspect of the monk is will or soul.\textsuperscript{108}

It is significant that so much of monastic literature in both Egypt and Syria is concerned with the demons' attempts to destroy morally rather than physically. People, especially in Syria, came to the monks for blessings and protections against the physical harm demons could inflict; this physical harm was the primary fear regarding demons.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{107} History of the Monks of Syria, prologue 6 (Price, 6). ἀδύνατον τοῖς ἐξοθεν πολεμοῦσι δαίμοσι τῆς θείας χάριτος κθκλουσίας περιγενέσθαι ψυχῆς, εἰ μὴ τίνος λογισμοῦ ῥαστόνη πυλίδα τινά τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν αἰσθητηρίων ἀνοίξει καὶ ταύτῆς εἴσο τὸν πολέμον δέξαιτο.

\textsuperscript{108} As we noted above, Brakke points out the similarities with Stoicism in Antony's thought, explaining that in Stoic terms, demons can provide "impressions" (φαντασία) but cannot compel the monk to assent to these impressions. Brakke does the same with Evagrius, focusing on the language of protopassions and passions. Even as Brakke concentrates on these figures, we can see similar themes in later monastic literature, and Stoicism helps us understand what demons are able to do or not do. Beyond Antony and Evagrius, however, scholars are not drawing connections between Stoic psychology and that found in monastic literature.

\textsuperscript{109} Theodoret recounts, "The wife of a nobleman fell ill of morbid gluttony; some called the illness a demonic attack, others thought it a sickness of the body. Whether the former or the latter . . . her relatives took pity on her and made supplication to the man of God. He came and offered prayers, and by placing his hand over water, tracing the sign of salvation, and telling her to drink, healed the disease" (History of the Monks of Syria 13.9, Price 103). Peter Brown argues that one of the primary characteristics of the ancient holy man was his power. He writes, "To visit a holy man was to go to where power was" ("Rise and Function of the Holy Man," 87). That power was demonstrated most acutely in exorcisms, where a holy man stands in the midst of demonic abuse; the holy man’s ability to drive out demons was a “dramatic articulation” of his power (89). Brown even goes so far as to argue that the holy man was a replacement of
In spite of this, the majority of what authors chose to record was sayings and stories about the moral, rather than physical, attacks, as well as the human’s ability to resist those attacks. The authors attempted a shift in focus and a de-emphasizing of physical harm caused by demons, implying that they understood the true danger of demons to be in their attempts to destroy a person’s virtue. This is a re-definition of harm, just as we will see Chrysostom do. Physical harm is not true harm, even though the monks address this harm as well; true harm is harm done to one’s virtue, and this is the monks’ emphasis. It is an implicit theodicy: demons are not the source of true suffering, humans are.\(^{110}\)

This shift in emphasis is also the monks’ casting their anthropology in terms of demonology. A holy person is one who resists the devil, one who has power over demons. A Christian is a person who struggles against the devil’s attacks. A Christian is able to resist the devil, which implies something about the spiritual make-up of a Christian.

Ascetic demonology highlights ascetic anthropology.

**Popular Demonologies**

Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Antony, and the ascetic tradition all emphasize the ability of humans to resist demonic attacks. That several different writers address the limits of demonic powers and emphasize the Christian's ability to resist demons is...
evidence that there were significant populations living in fear of demons and what they
could do. More than the words of priests, bishops, and theologians, though, there is
archaeological evidence to provide a view of popular beliefs about demons. Incantation
bowls found with Christian inscriptions or crosses indicate Christian use. For example,
bowl 26 in Naveh and Shaked's *Magic Spells and Formulae* is in Syriac and has a distinct
cross in the center. Part of the inscription reads:

May it [the house] be bound and sealed by the seal by which the heaven and the
earth are sealed, and by the seal by which Noah sealed his ark, and by the seal of
Solomon, by which the demons and the dews are sealed and by the great seal.
May there be sealed, sealed [sic], girded and scattered these amulets that were
written for the healing and the preservation of Khusrau son of Qaqay and Shelta
daughter of Qayunta. . . .Hallelujah. By your name, living god, the god who
annuls all demons and dews. Healing, health, cure, sealing, existence, and the
preservation of life from heaven. I have written and God cures. Amen. Now and
forever. Yes, and Amen, Amen, Amen, Selah.

Such items were used to ward off the devil and his demons, to protect the Christian from
harm.

There are also papyri, metal amulets, and various talismans whose inscriptions
and pictures leave little doubt as to their Christian origin. One Christian jasper amulet
from the 3rd or 4th century has a figure of a fish-shaped boat with the word ΙΧΘΥΣ

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111 For various examples of Christian magical items with translated inscriptions, see James A.
Languages and Literatures* 34 (1918): 137; Theodore S. De Bruyn, “Appeals to Jesus and the One ‘Who
Heals Every Illness and Every Infirmity’ (Matt 4:23, 9:35) in Amulets in Late Antiquity,” in *Reception and
Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 65–81; Theodore S. De Bruyn, “The Use
of the Sanctus in Christian Greek Papyrus Amulets,” in *Studia Patristica* 40 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 15–19;
Geller, “Eight Incantation Bowls”; and Philippe Gignoux, “A New Incantation Bowl Inscribed in


Lucas Van Rompay, “Some Remarks on the Language of Syriac Incantation Texts,” in *V Symposium
1990), 369–81; H. Gitler, “Four Magical and Christian Amulets,” *Studii Bibliici Franciscani Liber Annuus*
Ascetic literature speaks often about the power of Jesus' name to repel demons; it is possible amulets and incantations that call on the name of Jesus belong to a similar tradition. What may have begun as a call on Christ who has defeated the devil and is able to protect a person from demons became a sort of “magic word.”

As with Jewish and pagan texts, many spells concerned medical ailments or were for general healing, as in this text:

I invoke you, [god] of heaven and god of the earth and [god] of the saints through [your blood] . . . who has come through Gabriel in the womb of the virgin Mary, who was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth, who was crucified . . . The sovereigns [and] the powers and the world-rulers of darkness, whether an unclean spirit or a demon falling at the hours of midday, or a chill, or a mild fever or a shivering fever, or ill treatment from people, powers of the adversary—may they not have power against the figure.

Although many of the spells are for protection against demons and for healing of various kinds, there are also Christian spells for inducing love or for cursing and hurting an enemy, and even some for the most mundane aspects of life, like a good singing voice or for silencing a dog. The number of these artifacts that are distinctly Christian is smaller than those considered to be Jewish, but there are plenty of bowls and amulets to provide support for the idea that Christian use of such items was common. From this evidence, popular demonology was one of fear which led to the use of material repellants. For pagans, Jews, and Christians alike, demons were real, and demons could do real harm, causing disease or other suffering.

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114 Gitler, “Four Magical and Christian Amulets,” 373–74. IΧΘΥΣ was common on amulets, the letters are initials for Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτῆρ.  
115 Cairo, Egyptian Museum 10263, translated and quoted in Meyer and Smith, Ancient Christian Magic, 35–36.  
116 For a sample of these, see Meyer and Smith, Ancient Christian Magic. The spells for a singing voice and silencing a dog are at pp. 246-50.  
117 In addition to this archaeological evidence, Chrysostom's lack of attempts to convince his congregation that demons exist suggest the popular assumption of demonic reality. As we shall see, Chrysostom takes the devil and demons' existence and wickedness as his starting point, just as all other
J. Kevin Coyle suggests that by the fourth-century, Christians—lay, ascetic,\textsuperscript{118} and clergy alike—assumed the standard accounts of the origins and natures of demons which had been developed by earlier thinkers like Justin Martyr or Tertullian and therefore did not spend time discussing demonic origins themselves.\textsuperscript{119} Coyle further suggests that the absence of such explanations or discussions about the existence of demons illustrates how commonplace demons were in the thought-world of early Christians. So common, that is, that the presence of demons required as much explanation in the fourth century as cars do in the twenty-first.\textsuperscript{120} Peter Brown makes a similar statement regarding Augustine's own fourth-century context: “Augustine grew up in an age when men thought that they shared the physical world with malevolent demons. They felt this quite as intensely as we feel the presence of myriads of dangerous bacteria.”\textsuperscript{121} As both Coyle and Brown point out, demons were so much a part of the world that most people, however they interacted with demons, did not need to comment on them; they lived with them.

\textsuperscript{118} Ascetics were members of the laity, but I separate them here because ascetics had a different way of life than the non-ascetic lay Christian and a somewhat different thought-world.

\textsuperscript{119} J. Kevin Coyle, “Early Monks, Prayer, and the Devil,” in Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church, ed. Pauline Allen et al. (Everton Park, Queensland, Australia: Australian Catholic Univ, 1998), 230. Coyle cites the insight of Dwayne E. Carpenter regarding this point: “By the time that the Desert Fathers were writing (or being written about), at least certain basic conceptions of the Devil and of evil in general had been accepted by the Church. . . . The Desert Fathers' treatment of the Devil is based upon a theological foundation constructed by earlier Christian apologists and theologians” (Dwayne E. Carpenter, “The Devil Bedeviled: Diabolical Intervention and the Desert Fathers,” American Benedictine Review 31 (1980): 183, 199). Neither Coyle nor Carpenter suggests particular earlier thinkers they believe the desert fathers to be assuming, but Carpenter does speak of the watchers myth and also of Tertullian, indicating a perceived reliance on Justin and Tertullian.

\textsuperscript{120} Coyle, “Early Monks,” 231.

\textsuperscript{121} Peter Brown, Augustine of Hippo: A Biography (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 41. E. R. Dodds makes the same claim: “Virtually everyone, pagan, Jewish, Christian or Gnostic, believed in the existence of these beings and in their function as mediators, whether he called them daemons or angels or aions or simply ‘spirits’” (E. R. Dodds, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 37–38).
We are also able to reconstruct the demonological views of Chrysostom's congregation from Chrysostom's sermons. Using the comments Chrysostom made to his congregation, we gain a picture of what the congregation believed. He writes in De proph. obsc., “Not so manifest is the Sun, as the providence of God is clear. But nevertheless some dare to say that Demons administer our affairs.” The devil is the “ruler of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2), and the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31). The devil and his demons are evil, having rebelled against God and having as their single purpose the destruction of God's work. Natural disasters, famine, and the like are large events outside the control of humanity. It is reasonable that these beliefs would work together in a person's mind toward the conclusion that demons cause natural evils.

Moreover, the pagans believed that evil demons caused natural disasters, illness, disease, even, in some cases, death. In this world spirits were active in all manner of earthly occurrences.

122 De prophetiarum obscuritate 3.6 (PG 49:253; NPNF, 183). Again, following Pelenau's argument, what the NPNF lists as the first homily of De diabolo tentatore, I list (with Pelenau) as the third homily of De obscuritate. The English translation will still come from the NPNF vol. 9. Thus far there is no critical edition of De obscuritate, so I use Migne's Patrologia graecae.

123 Porphyry writes, “One thing especially should be counted among the greatest harm done by the maleficent daimones: they are themselves responsible for the sufferings that occur around the earth (plagues, crop failures, earthquakes, droughts, and the like), but convince us that the responsibility lies with those who are responsible for just the opposite.” (On Abstinence from Killing Animals 2.40, trans. Gillian Clark (Ithaca, N.Y., 2000), 71). Sometimes the source of an event is not named as an evil daimon but only a god or a spirit, as in the poetry of Aeschylus. In his Agamemnon, Cassandra cries, “This revel-band drinks human blood, thus emboldening itself, and then remains in the house, hard to send away—the band of the house's kindred Furies” (1188-90, Loeb 141-43). This line of verse speaks of a world filled with spirits, and its tenor includes hints of fear (“drinks human blood,” “hard to send away”). Further, it was common among pagans to blame Christians for various natural occurrences, as noted by both Tertullian and Augustine: “If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls... if there is an earthquake, a famine, a plague—straightway the cry is heard: ‘Toss the Christians to the lion!’” (Apol. 40, FC 102), and “If there is a drought, blame the Christians” (Civ. Dei 2.3, FC 78). The pagans blamed the Christians for offending the gods by their “atheism,” thus calling down droughts, floods, and earthquakes.
Conclusion

In the late fourth century the demonological milieu was vast and complex. The “average” person—pagan, Jewish, or Christian—saw evidence of demons running rampant through the world. For the most part, people understood the same kind of being indicated by the term δαιμων. In short, δαιμονες were spiritual beings ontologically inferior to God or the gods yet superior to human beings. They were invisible to humans, though their invisibility did not hinder the δαιμονες’ ability to interact with humans. Δαιμονες attended the mystic rituals of the Greeks, received pagan sacrifices, and provided the oracles. Christians, too, believed these to be functions of the demons. What these things implied was an ability to interfere with human lives. Countless spells and amulets of every religion sought to ward off the evil actions of demons, and pagan magic often sought to bring demons into the service of human aims. Christians believed demons could cause physical harm—note the stories of Job and Antony—or even, according to Origen, “plagues, or barrenness, or tempests, or similar calamities.”

Since demons could cause such enormous harm, the natural response was fear. Δαιμονες could at any moment bring an earthquake or a famine. Demons could cause a person, or a person’s loved one, to fall deathly ill or to be in a fatal accident. For Christians, even beyond causing physical harm, demons could deceive a person or tempt him and cause him to sin, and if a person sinned, he or she could be in danger of suffering the fires of hell. This fear must have been overwhelming to some, perhaps merely troubling to others, but it was common among the laity. Beyond this the commonality begins to break down. Unlike the pagans, for whom δαιμονες were ethically ambiguous,

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124 Contra Cel. 1.31; ANF 409. See also Contra Cel. 8.31, 54, for similar statements.
capable of bringing either fortune or disaster, Jews and Christians knew that δαίμονες were without exception evil. Δαίμονες meant only harm, and the severest harm. Δαίμονες tried to prevent a person's salvation.

Each tradition drew on its own long history of demonological development; pagans, Jews, and Christians each came to their own understanding of the moral character of δαίμονες. Still, among all of these groups living together in Antioch, there was some transfer of ideas. Pagans had sacrifices and rituals with which to placate their δαίμονες, Jews were known as magicians, and even the Christians had amulets, papyri, and other magical paraphernalia similar to their neighbors' but calling on the name of Christ. Christians knew the demons were wholly evil, and there was no placating them, but they did try to gain God's protection from them. One thing that can be said, if the theologians whose writings are extant can be believed, is that the “average” Christian feared demons. “Average” Christians felt powerless against demons, unable to resist not only the physical harm demons could bring but also the temptation they wrought. It is this fear, and its resulting lack of understanding and trust in the gospel, that Chrysostom would address.
CHAPTER 3: CHRYSOSTOM’S DEMONOLOGY

Chrysostom understands the fear that plagues his congregation. Demons were spiritual beings in league with the devil, seeking to harm Christians in every way possible. This much both clergy and laity agreed on. Exactly how dangerous the demons were and what precisely they aimed to do was another matter. This chapter is an exploration of Chrysostom's demonology. For this exploration I focus on Chrysostom's *De diabolo tentatore* and *Daemones non gubernare mundum*¹ but supplement these texts with others from the breadth of Chrysostom's corpus in order to demonstrate that his demonology undergoes no significant change through the course of his career.

We begin with a description of Chrysostom's theodicy, since this is the context of much of Chrysostom’s demonology. Then we will investigate his demonology in three parts: the origin, nature, and activities of demons, with a final look at the limits of demons' powers as Chrysostom understands them. At this point we will take a moment to compare Chrysostom’s demonology to that of other writers, both predecessors and contemporaries of Chrysostom, to see what Chrysostom does that is unique. From there we will examine the use to which Chrysostom puts his speech about demons, where we will see that Chrysostom preaches both reactively as well as preemptively to his audience. He wishes to respond to their fears and questions about suffering, and he wants to prepare them to fight for their salvation. This investigation of Chrysostom’s demonology will make clear that his demonological discourse highlights his anthropology and aims at encouraging virtue in his congregation.

¹ *Daem. Gub.* is also the third homily in the series *De prophetiarum obscuritate*, and will be so cited. For the discussion of this re-classification, see the introduction, p. 22.
Chrysostom’s Theodicy: An Overview

Much of Chrysostom's demonology appears in the context of theodicy. The traditional title of De proph. obsc. 3 is “That Demons Do Not Govern the World,” and De diab. tent., often translated “On the Powers of Demons,” argues that demons are not as powerful as the congregation thinks and are not the cause of all suffering and sin in the world. In Quod nem. laed., Chrysostom's most explicit theodicy, demons are less prominent but still appear as part of Chrysostom's argument. When Chrysostom speaks of the question of evil, he speaks of demons. For this reason, we will begin this chapter on Chrysostom's demonology with an overview of Chrysostom's theodicy, and we will use as our primary text Chrysostom's Commentary on Job (Comm. in Iob). The book of Job is widely regarded as a work of theodicy itself, so it is not surprising that Chrysostom finds here an answer to the question of the origin of evil. In addition to Chrysostom's Comm. in Iob, I will use passages from Quod nem. laed. and De proph. obsc. 3, to outline Chrysostom's theodicy and demonstrate that what is particular to Chrysostom is his

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2 Not even the SC volume suggests a possible date for the Comm. in Iob, though there is a lengthy investigation of both the manuscript tradition and whether it is authentic to Chrysostom. Henri Sorlin and Louis Neyrand, editors of the SC volume, conclude that Chrysostom is the author (Henri Sorlin and Louis Neyrand, eds., Commentaire sur Job, Sources chrétiennes 346 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1988), 33-69).

3 Roland Murphy and James Crenshaw are representative of those who argue that Job is a theodicy, the dominant view in scholarship. Murphy writes, “The problem of divine justice and retribution is an issue that receives particular emphasis in the wisdom tradition. Whereas the traditional theory is reflected in the Book of Proverbs, it is only in Job and Ecclesiastes that it is seriously controverted. The theory is pretty much a biblical mindset: there is connection between sin and suffering -- prosperity is attained by the wise and virtuous, but destruction is the fate of the foolish and wicked. The Book of Job is a vehement attack on this view” (Murphy, The Book of Job: A Short Reading (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 7). Crenshaw’s Defending God: Biblical Responses to the Problem of Evil (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) also argues that Job is an exploration of the question of evil, noting the similarity between the testing of Abraham and the testing of Job (pp. 65–71). There is a strand of scholarship that argues against this traditional view, which Timothy Johnson reviews in the first chapter of his “Job as Proto-Apocalypse: Proposing a Unifying Genre” (Ph.D., Marquette University, 2004). Notable are Claus Westerman’s claim that Job is “dramatized lament,” Heinz Richter’s proposal of a forensic genre, Horace Kallen’s argument for Job as Greek tragedy, and Bruce Zuckerman and Katherine Dell’s naming Job a parody (see Johnson, “Job as Proto-Apocalypse,” 11-40).
inclusion of a discussion of demons. De proph. obsc. 3 (c. 386-88) is Chrysostom's argument against those who see chaos and suffering in the world and assume demons to be in charge; Chrysostom argues for God's sovereignty. De proph. obsc. 3 and Quod nem. laed. lend a depth of understanding to Chrysostom's work in Comm. in Iob.

The goal in Christian theodicies is often to protect God from accusations that he is the author of evil. In this regard, Chrysostom is no different from his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors. In the case of the Comm. in Iob, this is almost easy: the devil is the cause of Job's suffering. Job, however, does not know that, so Chrysostom says that Job believes God to be the author of his suffering. This does not trouble Chrysostom; he explains that God can indeed be the cause of a person's suffering. That is, God can be the cause of poverty, disease, or loss. According to Chrysostom, God is the ruler of all things, and for this reason all events and misfortunes can be attributed to him. Because God is just and loving, however, Chrysostom says that these misfortunes are either punishments or tests, both intended pedagogically. Chrysostom makes this point in Quod nem. laed., arguing that God does punish “on account of the malice of those who do wickedly.” Some suffering, then, is God's chastisement and therefore not true evil.

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4 I include Quod nem. laed. in this discussion because it is regarded as a primary locus of Chrysostom's theodicy. Moreover, Chrysostom wrote Quod nem. laed. during his final exile (c. 406-7), while he was himself experiencing great suffering.

5 Translator Hill explains that the term διάβολος, the LXX translation of “Satan,” would “carry for [Chrysostom's] congregation the overtones of a malignant, demonic person” rather than the adversary or any other role it would have for the Hebrews (St. John Chrysostom Commentary on Job, St. John Chrysostom: Commentaries on the Sages, v. 1 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006), 7). Though Hill is judging Chrysostom's commentary by modern historical-critical standards of interpretation, he is right to point out that it would not have occurred to Chrysostom to interpret διάβολος as anything other than the being he often writes about, the enemy of humanity's salvation.

6 Quod nem. laed. 4 (SC 78, NPNF 274).

7 On punishments as part of God's care for humanity and serve a pedagogical purpose: “Whenever therefore you see that famines have taken place, and pestilences, and drought . . . Or any other of the things which chasten human nature, be not distressed, nor be despondent, but worship Him who caused them. . . . For He who does these things is such that he chastens the body so the soul may become sound” (De proph. obsc. 3.4 (PG 49.250, NPNF 182)).
Job's suffering is not this chastisement but a test: “He seems to me to be suggesting here that such suffering of his is not due to sins (surely, if God strikes someone, it is by no means certain that they are suffering for sins. The case here, too), but for testing and greater rewards.”

Such instances of suffering are not truly evil. For Chrysostom, theodicy is a matter of understanding events correctly. He writes, “The general run of people, in fact, and especially the masses, judge events naively and superficially.” Chrysostom is clearer in De proph. obsc. 3.5:

There is then evil, which is really evil: fornication, adultery, covetousness, and the countless dreadful things which are worthy of the utmost reproach and punishment. Again there is evil which rather is not evil but is called so: famine, pestilence, death, disease, and others of a like kind. . . . Were they evils, they would not have become the sources of good to us, chastening our pride, goading our sloth, and leading us on to zeal, making us more attentive.

Suffering that leads to good, even to virtue, is not evil. Therefore, though God causes these disasters or other forms of suffering, since they are not truly evil, God has not caused evil. God is still both sovereign and innocent of creating evil.

Those things listed as true evil are sins, and their origin is in the person who commits them. The way Chrysostom often begins to explain this is by demonstrating that true evil is separate from external circumstances; it is instead a matter of a person's γνώμη and προαιρέσις. These terms will be discussed at length in chapter five, but for now it is enough to know that they are both aspects of the free part of a human, that part which makes a person self-determining and which allows a person to be the cause of her own actions. Chrysostom begins the Comm. in Iob by establishing Job's righteousness,
which Chrysostom describes as “virtue in its entirety” (ὁλόκληρος ἀρετή). An important part of his argument is that Job was virtuous both when he was wealthy and when he was in poverty:

Though he was wealthy, it was for you to learn that he had wealth as an inclination towards evil (ῥοπήν πρὸς κακίαν εἶχεν), and that it is not wealth that is responsible (αἴτιος) but γνώμη. Observe him also in poverty in case you likewise conclude that poverty is responsible for bad decisions (αἰτία ἐγνωμοσύνης). Observe him both in wealth and in poverty, and see in both cases a fine athlete, God-fearing as he was. . . . Clearly it was from his own resources (οἴκοθεν).

Job's virtue is something independent of his external, in this case financial, circumstances. Judas is another of Chrysostom's favorite examples, since Judas had all the “right” external circumstances in his favor and yet was still wicked. Neither virtue nor vice is a matter of one's outward situation but of human choice and action.

In this way, Chrysostom answers the question of the origin of evil by having recourse to anthropology. Evil is a result of human choice. All the way through his Comm. in Iob, Chrysostom upholds Job as virtuous because he remained faithful to God in spite of all of his suffering. The circumstances of Job's suffering, which Job believed to be caused by God, were not evil but tests. Evil would have been cursing God (as recommended by Job's wife). We see Chrysostom's answer to theodicy even more clearly in Quod nem. laed., of which the primary argument is that the only person who can cause true harm is the person herself, since true harm is harm to the soul through vice.

So far, Chrysostom is not different from his predecessors and contemporaries in any substantial way. It is an established practice to answer theodicy with anthropology.

11 Comm. in Iob 1.1 (SC 1:84, Hill 15).
12 Comm. in Iob 1.1 (SC 1:88, Hill 17).
13 Quod nem. laed. 11 (SC 114, NPNF 279).
14 We will look more closely at Methodius's and Gregory of Nyssa's works on this matter in chapter five.
The point at which Chrysostom diverges from traditional theodicy is his addition of demons to the discussion. The devil and his demons play an important role in Chrysostom's discussions of theodicy, though not as free agents who are able to defy God. In *Comm. in Job*, for all Job thinks that his suffering is caused by God, his suffering is actually caused by the devil, even as Chrysostom allows that much suffering in the world is a result of God's action. Though the devil is a character in the book of Job only in the first two chapters, Chrysostom devotes fully one quarter of his commentary to a discussion of the devil and his role in Job's story. Chrysostom is concerned to point out that the devil, who afflicts Job with poverty, destruction, and the loss of children, is only able to act against Job with God's permission. The devil is powerful in that he is able to cause death and disease, but he is also powerless because he is only able to do these things when God allows: “Let us learn from this that it is with permission that he can do all he can do, that even if defeated, he does not desist; he keeps trying further things. It is up to God, however, to allow him or not to allow.”\(^{15}\) The devil makes periodic appearances throughout the remainder of the commentary as well, as when Chrysostom understands Job's friends to be in league with the devil: “Note that they [Job's friends] not only bring nothing by way of comfort, but even do the opposite, conspiring with the devil in joining in combat and destruction of his strength.”\(^{16}\)

The devil's role in Job's story is one of usefulness, and Chrysostom explains how the devil is indeed useful to human beings. The devil is responsible for the attacks on Job,

\(^{15}\) *Comm. in Job* 2.5 (SC 1:164, Hill 50). Chrysostom also writes, “Note the degree of the devil's power, how he prompted nations such as these [the Chaldeans who carried off Job's camels]” (*Comm. in Job* 1.19 (SC 132-34, Hill 36)). Also, “Do you see that he [the devil] does not touch cattle if he has not received authority?” and “Do you see also the devil under restraint?” (*Comm. in Job* 1.16 (SC 1:126, Hill 33-34)).

\(^{16}\) *Comm. in Job* 19.1 (SC 2:38, Hill 135).
and the attacks are a test, giving Job the opportunity to display his virtue, even to strengthen his virtue. Chrysostom writes:

Do not be distressed that he [the devil] has been cast down from heaven to earth; rather, give thanks that he has given you need for staying alert, for appointing you a frightening and harsh tutor. Do you want me to show you the value of the devil? . . . Not that the devil is responsible for good things; rather it is God's loving-kindness using the evil one properly.\(^{17}\)

The devil is part of Chrysostom's theodicy as a temptation to do evil, and evil originates neither with God nor with the devil but with humans and with human choice. The devil's (God-controlled) presence on earth is for the purpose of encouraging humans to be vigilant and of giving them opportunities to resist evil. Thus, the devil allows humans the opportunity to be virtuous.

We now turn to Chrysostom's demonology.

**Origin of Demons**

Chrysostom does not often speculate about the origin of the devil and his demons. In *De diab. tent.*, there is only one passage that addresses the devil's origin, and that only tangentially:

Let the Devil be allowed to be exceeding wicked, not by nature (φύσις), but by choice (προαίρεσις) and conviction. For that the Devil is not by nature wicked (πονηρός) . . . He is called wicked. But his wickedness is not from his φύσις, but from his προαίρεσις. . . . For it was not indeed with him at the beginning, but afterwards came upon him; wherefore he is called apostate (ἀποστάτης). Although many men are wicked, he alone is called wicked by pre-eminence. Why then is he thus called? Because though in no way wronged by us, having no grudge whether small or great, when he saw humankind having been honored, he straightway (εὐθέως) envied him his good.\(^{18}\)

\(^{17}\) *Comm. in Job* 1.9 (SC 1:110, Hill 26-27).

\(^{18}\) *De diab. tent.* 1.2 (SC 128-32, NPNF 187-88).
Chrysostom wants his congregation to understand that the devil is not evil by nature, but by his own choice. Because the issue of nature vs. choice is central to Chrysostom's argument about human self-determination and moral responsibility, Chrysostom here emphasizes that there was a time when the devil was not wicked, and a time when he became an apostate. The details of this change are less important than the fact of it for Chrysostom's larger purposes. The biggest hint of the cause of Satan's fall in this passage is mention of the devil's immediate envy of humanity: “Satan envied (ἐβάσκηνεν) him [Adam] his good.” The statement about envy is, however, only indirectly linked to Satan's change into wickedness, for envy is given as the reason he is “pre-eminently” wicked, not as the reason for the beginning of his wickedness. Although it seems here that for Chrysostom the cause of Satan's fall is his envy of Adam, not unlike the claims of Life of Adam and Eve and Irenaeus, more passages from Chrysostom’s works will show that this picture is incomplete.

In his De poenitentia homiliae, also written early in his career, Chrysostom preaches, “In the beginning, the devil was good, but from laziness and despair he fell into such wickedness that he could no longer recover. Listen to what Scripture says, revealing that he was good: ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’ This comparison to lightning shows the brilliance of his mode of life before his fall, and how suddenly he fell.” Though Luke 10:18 is cited for the original goodness of the devil, Chrysostom

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19 De diab. tent. 1.2 (SC 132, NPNF 188).
20 GLAE 12-17; Irenaeus, Adv. Her. 5.24 (ANF 553). For the full discussion of these two texts, see above, p. 46.
21 De paen. hom. 1.2 (PG 49.279, FC 5-6). The fall due to “laziness and despair” is significant because it is the disposition against which Chrysostom frequently warns his own congregants as leading to the gravest sins. Regarding the “could not recover,” Chrysostom says that laziness casts down, but despair keeps one there. His positive examples are Paul, the thief on the cross, and the publican (of the Pharisee and publican parable). Each of these people had fallen into wickedness but did not become discouraged and so rose up. Judas, however, became discouraged after his fall and did not rise again. In this way
does not explain how he knows the cause of the fall to be “laziness and despair.” In fact, this section of the sermon is a warning to his congregation against laziness, which he says causes falls which can cast a person out of heaven. The devil is his prime example. In a homily on John where the warning to his audience is against pride, Chrysostom will argue that pride was the cause of the devil's fall.\(^\text{22}\) Chrysostom's inconsistency on this point demonstrates his willingness to use the devil in whatever way is most beneficial to his congregation at the time, in service of whichever virtue he is impressing on his audience.

A passage from Chrysostom's *Homilies on Genesis*, written around the same time as *De diab. tent.*,\(^\text{23}\) is his most extensive discussion of the devil's origin, and it is prompted simply by his coming to Genesis 6 in the homiletical series. Because it provides more depth to Chrysostom's understanding of the devil's origin, it bears quoting at length:

There is need to make a careful study of this passage [Gen 6:2] and confute the fanciful interpretations of those people whose every remark is made rashly. . . . Is it not true, then—that they [angels] are now fallen, and that this is the cause of their fall? Scripture in fact teaches us differently, that before the creation of the first formed human being the devil fell from that dignity and with him those whose pretensions outran their stage, as a sage has also remarked, ‘Through the devil's envy death entered the world' [Wis. 2:24]. I mean, tell me, if he had not fallen before the creation of the human being, how could he have envied the human being while retaining his former status? After all, what sense does it make for an angel to envy a human being, the incorporeal being enjoying such great

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\(^{22}\) “Not even the Devil would have been cast down and become the Devil—he who was not a demon before—if he had not been sick with this sickness [pride]. It deprived him of that well-known position of trust, it sent him into hell, it became for him the cause of all evils” (*In Ioh. hom.* 16.4 (PG 59.106, FC 158-59)).

\(^{23}\) Both are considered to have been preached early in Chrysostom's career as priest in Antioch. The *Homilies on Genesis* are debated but generally accepted as having been preached between 386-389, with most recent scholarship arguing for 389. *De diabolo tentatore* was likely preached in either 386 or 388. See Pelanau's introduction to the SC volume of *De diab. tent.*; Hill's introduction to the FC volume of *In Gen. hom.*; and Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 89. On the dating of *De diab. tent.*, see my introduction.
dignity to envy a creature encumbered with a body? Since, however, he had fallen from heavenly glory into utter disrepute, and though incorporeal himself he saw the newly created human being enjoying such great esteem despite its bodily condition through the love of the Creator, his burning rage led him into envy. . . . So it is plain for all to see that in times past the devil and all his company fell from that condition of glory and were numbered among the disreputable. Is it not a particular hallmark of folly to claim that angels descended to have intercourse with women, and that incorporeal nature of theirs was reduced to association with corporeal creatures? . . . After all, it is not for that kind of incorporeal creature to ever feel the onset of desire. 

Chrysostom's primary argument in this passage is to refute those who propound the interpretation that Gen 6:2 is about angels descending from heaven to engage in intercourse with human women, the interpretation offered by 1 Enoch's Book of Watchers which some of the early fathers, most notably Justin Martyr, followed. Chrysostom gives two reasons for his refutation. The first reason the watchers myth cannot be correct is that the devil and his demons fell before the creation of human beings. Chrysostom here assumes this, takes it as his starting point, and then emphasizes to his congregation that this is obvious because the devil envied human beings even though he was incorporeal. An uncorrupted incorporeal being would not envy a corporeal being since incorporeality is the superior state. That the devil in his incorporeality still envied the corporeal proves the devil must have fallen at some time prior to this envy. Behind Chrysostom's belief that the devil's envy is proof of the devil's earlier fall is Wis 2:24, which says it was the devil's envy that brought death into the world. Chrysostom understands “brought death into the world” to be Satan's deception of Adam and Eve, which resulted in their first sin and the cause of death in the world.

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24 In Gen. hom. 22.2-3 (PG 53.187-189, FC 72-73).
25 Justin Martyr, 2 Apology 5 (SC 330, FC 124). For a full discussion of Justin's demonology, see above, p. 42ff.
26 Chrysostom also makes an argument that those who believe the watchers myth interpret the “sons of God” in Gen 6:2 as angels, but they are incorrect because nowhere in Scripture are angels referred to as “sons of God.” That term is reserved for human beings and even the collective Israel. Angels are referred to as messengers and ministers. His texts are Ps 104:4, 82:6; Is 1:2; Ex 4:22 (In Gen. hom. 22.2).
Chrysostom's understanding of Scripture has direct bearing on his demonology. He accepts Wisdom as authoritative Scripture—he quotes it as irrefutable evidence just as he does verses from the gospels or the OT—but 1 Enoch is outside his canon. What constitutes Chrysostom's canon is significant, as is his hermeneutical method, for Scripture is the foundation of his reasoning. Scripture is not, however, Chrysostom's only source. The second reason Chrysostom rejects the watchers myth, he says, is that demons are incorporeal, and incorporeal beings are incapable of lusting after corporeal women. Angelic beings do not feel desire. Chrysostom does cite Matthew 22:30 ("At the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God") to support his claim—or as the impetus of his understanding—that angels could not be united with women at all, but he does not cite a text as evidence for his assertion that incorporeal beings do not experience the onset of desire. He assumes it. Moreover, Chrysostom assumes this knowledge of his congregation. To believe the things he is refuting is the “hallmark of folly” (ἀνοίας ἀνάμεσαν) and “to admit this notion into one's mind is the height of absurdity” (πάντη τῶν ἀτοπωτάτων ἔστι τὸ τοῦτο δὲξασθαι τῷ λογισμῷ). The rhetorical questions Chrysostom employs not only indicate his own position but also show that the congregation ought to know the answers as well. It is a logical argument based on common knowledge.

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27 It may also provide a new angle for exploring early Jewish and Christian demonology. By comparison, Justin places a high emphasis on the watchers myth. It is worth asking whether this is because he considered 1 Enoch to be authoritative Scripture. Origen rejects the watchers myth, and his canon may have been slightly different from Justin's. The question of Scriptural sources and what counted as Scripture for the early fathers is one that would enrich our understanding of early demonologies, even as we recognize that Scripture was not the only influential factor.

28 For more on Chrysostom's canon, see above, chapter 1, n. 4.

29 In this case it is not possible to know which resource or thought was the impetus for the other.

30 In Gen. hom. 22.2 (PG 53.188, FC 73).
The level of specificity of *De diab. tent.* differs greatly from that of *In Gen. hom.*. *De diab. tent.* is vague and lacking in description of the devil's fall, whereas *In Gen. hom.* is more specific, refuting the watchers myth and giving reasons for doing so.

Even more, in the *In Gen. hom.* passage, Chrysostom offers a relative chronology for Satan's fall: before the creation of human beings. He is prompted to such speculation by the verse under examination, Gen 6:2, as well as by Wisdom 2, Genesis 3, and various interpretations he takes to be incorrect. The *De diab. tent.* excerpt is concerned only to explain that the devil is not evil by nature but by choice. Any hint of the devil's origin comes only in service of this point. In the two homilies Chrysostom preached explicitly about demons, he is unconcerned with demonic origins and concerned instead with whether Satan's wickedness is intrinsic or by his own choice. This suggests that the perspective of *De diab. tent.* specifically and of Chrysostom's demonology generally is psychological. Where the devil comes from is less important than *that* he exists and that his wickedness is a result of his choice.

There are other comments scattered throughout Chrysostom's corpus which indicate that his understanding of demonic origins remained largely consistent, regardless of the vice he ascribes to Satan. That is, whether the devil fell because of laziness, pride, or some other vice against which Chrysostom warns his congregation, the devil’s fall is always his own choice. A few years after *De diab. tent.* and the *In Gen. hom.*, around 391, Chrysostom preaches in his *Homilies on John*, “Not even the Devil would have been cast down and become the Devil—he who was not a demon before—if he had not been sick with this sickness [pride]. It deprived him of that well-known position of trust, it sent

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31 *De diab. tent.* 1.2 (SC 128-32, NPNF 187-88) and *In Gen. hom.* 22.2-3 (PG 53.187-189, FC 72-73).
him into hell, it became for him the cause of all evils.”32 Here again there is a time when the Devil was not evil and a time when the devil was cast down from a good position. This statement also adds a new element to Chrysostom's earlier discussion of demonic origins. Here Chrysostom claims that the devil not only fell out of heaven but was thrown into hell. Since Chrysostom also speaks of the devil and his demons as working in the earth, in fact even having dominion on the earth, hell must be the devil's home and the earth his workplace. Other homilies, especially the Matthean homilies (c. 390), talk of the devil's final end in hell, but in the passage from In Ioh. hom. Chrysostom says that the devil was sent to hell by his pride. It is also possible to interpret this statement to mean that the devil's pride caused his fall which will, in the end, result in hell for him.

Except for a passing reference to the devil “and all his company” in the passage from In Gen. hom., Chrysostom does not speak about the origin of demons themselves, only of Satan's origin. However, in that passage he says that “in times past the devil and all his company fell from that condition of glory,”33 indicating that the demons also fell at some time prior to the creation of humanity, but without more we can know little beyond that bare assertion. Whether they fell because they followed Satan, thus falling simultaneously with him, or at some later time at the devil's instigation is unclear. Chrysostom is not concerned to speculate for his congregation about such details.34

32 In Ioh. hom. 16.4 (PG 59.106, FC 158-59). Pride as the cause of the devil's fall is a popular fourth-century assertion. For a small sample, see Gregory of Nazianzus, Carm. 1.1.7.68: “arrogance destroyed him [Satan]”; Augustine, De trin. 4.10: “The devil through pride led man through pride to death”; Jerome, Letter 12: “Pride is opposed to humility, and through it Satan lost his eminence as an archangel.”

33 In Gen. hom. 22.3 (PG 53.189, FC 72-73).

34 Chrysostom's silence regarding the fall of demons is not unusual. Except for Evagrius Ponticus, none of Chrysostom's contemporaries discuss this fall. Evagrius follows and develops on Origen's fall narrative, arguing for a fall of νοοῦς. As in Origen's account, Evagrius maintains that the level of fall determined the kind of being the νοοῦς became (see Praktikos 45, 59). The Cappadocians, however, refer to the devil's fall but not the angels'. Given that Chrysostom also separates—rather than conflates—demons
Nature

Chrysostom makes even fewer comments regarding the nature or composition of demons than he does about their origin. From the origin narratives Chrysostom employs, it is clear that demons and angels are ontologically the same; the only difference is the way in which they exercised their προαίρεσις, their own choice, which resulted in a moral difference. Chrysostom emphasizes the devil's (and his demons') original goodness. In a discussion on whether evil is created or uncreated, Chrysostom writes, “There is no such thing as evil by nature.”35 Though this is a parenthetical comment in this homily, it is an important point, and one Chrysostom makes often. In this instance, Chrysostom is arguing against those who believe that evil is uncreated and therefore equal to God, and Chrysostom contends that this is blasphemy. God alone is uncreated. Evil things become and are evil only by choice. Chrysostom writes in a similar discussion in his Homilies on Matthew, “‘Whence then are evils?’ one may say. From willing and not willing. . . . For evil is nothing else than disobedience to God.”36 If nothing is evil by nature, then neither is the devil. If nothing is uncreated, then neither is the devil.

and passions, we know he does not follow Evagrius fully in demonology. Methodius, one of Chrysostom's predecessors, claims the watchers myth as the explanation for fallen angels, but we have seen Chrysostom reject this myth outright. It is possible that Chrysostom refrained from speculating about the demons' origins as a way of avoiding being labeled an Origenist, since the Origenist controversies were beginning during his career. It is more likely, however, that Chrysostom did not think the matter pressing. Chrysostom has shown a tendency—even a calculated aim—to provide his congregation the knowledge, exhortation, rebuke, etc. that they need and often explains that he is talking about a topic because it is a particular concern to the audience. He does this in both homilies of De diab. tent. as well as De proph. obsc. 3. Since he did not speak of demonic origins when speaking of demons because he thought his congregation did not need to hear about them, it is likely he regarded demonic origins as of less import than other aspects of demonology. Moreover, Chrysostom’s later support of the “long brothers” suggests that he was less concerned with being labeled an “Origenist” than with being a faithful priest and bishop. For an account of the “long brothers” episode, see Kelly, Golden Mouth, 191–202.

35 In Act. apost. hom. 2.4 (PG 60.31, NPNF 15).
36 In Matt. hom. 59.3 (PG 58.576, NPNF 348).
This discussion shows that according to Chrysostom, the devil and his demons all have προαίρεσις, the faculty to which moral responsibility is applied. A detailed discussion of Chrysostom's understanding of προαίρεσις will appear in the next section; here it is enough to say that a being's προαίρεσις is what accounts for creatures' self-determination, and it occupies a significant place in Chrysostom's anthropology. Not only human beings have προαίρεσις, however, but the devil as well. Moreover, the devil's abuse of his προαίρεσις caused his fall.37 This emphasis, as in the first passage quoted from De diab. tent., implies that if not even the devil, who is the most evil being and beyond redemption, was created evil but became so by choice, then human beings, who are not as evil as the devil and who are offered redemption, are also not evil by nature but by choice. From his belief that even the devil is a creature inferior to God, Chrysostom reasons that there is no evil in the world which is beyond God's power.

What exactly demons—or even angels—are is something Chrysostom does not discuss. As with other writers, much of what we know about demons' natures can only be surmised from their origin narratives. Therefore, for Chrysostom, that demons are fallen angels means that they are incorporeal; that they are incorporeal means they cannot feel corporeal desire; and that they cannot feel corporeal desire means that they cannot have fallen through lust for human women. That they fell at all implies a freedom to choose, since demons are creatures and God creates nothing evil.

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37 Chrysostom does not comment specifically on whether demons also have προαίρεσις, but it is reasonable to assume he believes they do. Since he insists God did not create anything evil, and since he further insists that the devil has προαίρεσις, and given his emphasis on choosing evil, it is logical to assume Chrysostom extends προαίρεσις to demons as well.
What little Chrysostom does offer makes it clear that demons are spiritual beings. Chrysostom writes, “The demon is without body: he is everywhere going about.”38 His refutation of the watchers myth begins with the assumption that demons are incorporeal; their very incorporeality is what makes the idea of their lusting after human (corporeal) women absurd: “After all, what sense does it make for an angel to envy a human being, the incorporeal being enjoying such great dignity to envy a creature encumbered with a body?”39 This statement further assumes that demons, because they have no body, are ontologically superior to human beings. Of course, because they are incurably evil, they are ethically inferior to humans. A being's composition does not dictate its moral stature. The devil might be bodiless, but he is still wicked because of his choice. This is a theme that will become important as Chrysostom argues for the priority of choice in humans.

**Demonic Activity**

What Chrysostom is most concerned about, far more than demons' origins and natures, is that his congregation has a detailed understanding of demonic activities. His audience must be aware of the ways in which demons interact with the world and especially the ways they interact with human beings, a concern prompted by the congregation's misunderstandings about demons as well as Chrysostom’s general concern for the virtue, and salvation, of his people. That Chrysostom preached two, rather than only one, homilies on the powers of demons and a third titled *That Demons Do Not Govern the World* implies that Chrysostom knew that some of his parishioners believed

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38 *In 1 Thess. hom.* 3.6 (PG 62.414, NPNF 338). Chrysostom likely preached his homilies on 1 Thessalonians around 402, in Constantinople, just a year before his first banishment from the city.

39 *In Gen. hom.* 22.2 (PG 53.188, FC 72).
demons to be ruling the world, at fault for all the evil they observe, and capable of hurting humans, and that he repeatedly turns to address this false belief.\textsuperscript{40} Chrysostom states the importance of the question plainly in \textit{De diab. tent. 1}:

\begin{quote}
The Devil is evil. I know it myself and it is acknowledged by all, yet give heed strictly to the things which are now about to be said. For they are not ordinary matters, but those about which many words, many times, and in many places arise, about which there is many a fight and battle.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

For some of Chrysostom's parishioners, the power they attributed to demons meant that demons, not God, ruled the world: “No so manifest is the Sun, as the providence of God is clear. But nevertheless some dare to say that Demons administer our affairs.”\textsuperscript{42}

According to Chrysostom, demons have made themselves evil, and without proper knowledge and vigilance on a human's part, demons can lead human beings to become evil as well. At the outset of \textit{De diab. tent.} Chrysostom explains his reason for preaching this series: “[The devil] is an enemy and a foe, and it is a great security to know clearly, the tactics of your enemies.”\textsuperscript{43} Chrysostom phrased his intent in gladiatorial terms. This is Chrysostom’s motivation: to prepare the congregation for the devil's attempts so they can defend themselves. Such defense is an easy enough task, Chrysostom thinks, if they know exactly where the enemy is going to throw his spear. In this spirit, then, Chrysostom describes demons' primary activities.

The devil and his demons have one goal above all: to prevent a person's salvation. Chrysostom opens one of his sermons on the gospel of John, “Mighty and vigorous, the

\textsuperscript{40} The most recent scholarship dates all three homilies to either 386 or 388. See the introduction, p. 23, for a full discussion of the dating of these homilies.
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{De diab. tent. 1.2} (SC 132, NPNF 188).
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{De proph. obsc. 3.6} (PG 49.253, NPNF 183).
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{De diab. tent. 1.1} (SC 122, NPNF 187).
Devil presses to the attack, laying siege on all sides to our salvation.” Chrysostom emphasizes the enormity of the devil's aim when he discusses the armor of God (Eph 6:10ff), explaining why the congregation should take such care to defend themselves: “Observe how the power of the enemy startles us; how it makes us all circumspection, to know that the hazard is on behalf of vast interests, and the victory for the sake of great rewards.” Chrysostom has just said, “It is not that they may gain anything by the conquest, but that they may despoil us.” Destruction itself is the demons' sole aim, not some gain on their part. Moreover, Chrysostom wants his congregation to understand that it is not some little destruction, some head cold or starvation or poverty; it is the worst kind of destruction. When Satan tempts a person to distraction by the theater, it is an attack not merely against the person's health or reputation but against her very salvation. Satan “is eager to cast us out of heaven” (τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλειν σπουδάζει).

Two aspects of this statement are interesting. First, the whole sentence, capped by this final, pointed clause, tells the listener that they need to take the devil's threat more seriously than they have thus far. The stakes are higher than the congregation thought. It is the very loss of heaven the audience faces, not the proverbial slap on the wrist from the grandfatherly God. This suggests that though there are many in the congregation who fear the devil because he is powerful, even to the extent of governing the world, there are others who do not consider demons seriously enough. Given the size of Chrysostom's average audience, it is likely people with both ideas were present. On the other hand, maybe Chrysostom is preaching to those who fear the demons' governance but do not

44 In Ioh. hom. 23.1 (PG 59.137, FC 221).
45 In Eph. hom. 22.3 (PG 62.159, NPNF 160).
46 In Eph. hom. 22.3 (PG 62.159, NPNF 160).
47 In Eph. hom. 22.3 (PG 62.159, NPNF 160).
realize that his governance is a more serious matter than mere poverty or starvation.

Second, ἐκβάλλω implies one is thrown out of a place in which one already is. For a person to be thrown out of heaven, she must already be in heaven. Chrysostom seems to think that Christians already live in heaven. Whether God, in his saving work, placed the Christian in heaven at baptism or from birth or whether the Christian's virtue put him there is a matter for a later chapter, but in any case, heaven is the Christian's to lose.

In his pursuit of humanity's destruction the devil uses many schemes, and his arsenal is extensive. Chrysostom describes the devil as attacking humans and describes humans as locked in a constant struggle with demons. The attacks may come either by word or by deed. In De diab. tent. Chrysostom offers Adam and Job as examples of the two types of attack, word and deed. Adam and Eve will be the negative example, Job the positive. Chrysostom writes:

[The devil] attacked Adam indeed by means of mere words, but Job by means of deeds. For the one he denuded of all his wealth, and deprived of his children. But from this man he took not away anything, great or little of his possessions. But let us rather examine the very words and the method of the plot.

Chrysostom continues to retell the story of Genesis 3 with commentary. Regarding the serpent's question to Eve, Chrysostom says, “See the villainy of the Devil. He said that which was not spoken, in order that he might learn what was spoken” and “exciting the woman with mere words and puffing her up with vain hopes, thus he deceived her.”

The devil's attack on Eve was by word alone. Deception is one of the devil's principal

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48 For example, see Comp. reg. et mon. 3; In Matt. hom. 48.3, 68, 69, 82; In 1 Tim. hom. 14; De stat. 17.
49 De diab. tent. 2.3 (SC 178-80, NPNF 194).
50 Ibid. Chrysostom claims the serpent's words and action as Satan's deception, but he does not suggest that the serpent was possessed. Chrysostom says the serpent “was a mere serpent” (De diab. tent. 2.4), suggesting that Chrysostom thought the serpent to be a form the devil took in that instance, though he is not clear enough to allow a decisive conclusion.
51 De diab. tent. 2.4 (SC 184, NPNF 194).
schemes. In particular, the devil will make wicked and sinful things look like good things. In Eve's case, the devil presented the fruit from which God had told her not to eat as something desirable. More than this, the devil claimed that what God had told Eve about the fruit was wrong. It would not cause her death. This is Chrysostom's negative example: Eve should have recognized the devil's words as a deception and refused to be deceived, just as the congregants ought to be vigilant, recognize the devil's deceptions, and refuse to be fooled.

Job is Chrysostom's primary exemplar of virtue when he is discussing human interaction with demons. In De diab. tent. 2.3, Chrysostom notes that the devil wasted no words on Job but rather attacked him with deeds, the devil's other primary mode of attack. Chrysostom writes, “To Job after the destruction of his wealth, after the loss of his children, after being stripped bare of all his goods, her [Job's wife's] wiles were added.” In De proph. obsc. 3.6, he says, “Consider the herds, the flocks of Job, how in one instant of time he annihilated all, consider the pitiable death of the children, the blow that was dealt to his body.” When that apparently was not enough, Satan, through the words of Job's wife, tempted Job to “curse God and die” (Job 2:9). Job, however, endured his suffering and the devil's attacks and refused to curse God, in a direct contrast to Eve's action in the face of temptation.

Temptation is without question the devil's primary work. The devil can tempt a person to any number of sins, from lust to laziness to overactivity to attending the races

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52 De proph. obsc. 3.6 (PG 49.253-54, NPNF 184).
53 In Comm. Job 2.9, Chrysostom says that the devil had Eve in mind when he used Job's wife to tempt him to curse. Words alone brought down Eve; perhaps they would also vanquish Job when the deed of causing suffering could not (SC 174, Hill 54). The contrast is also drawn in De diab. tent. 2.4.
instead of worship on Sunday morning. Chrysostom speaks in many places and in varied ways about the snares of the devil, but rarely in any detail: “this is the wicked demon's plan, to trip you up by little things;”

“the devil tries to hurt us in every way, but especially through our tongues and mouths;”

“it is the policy of Satan not to set his snares in open view.”

Even stripping humans of wealth or afflicting them with illness or famine is an attempt to tempt them to lose faith and thus their salvation. Most of Chrysostom's many statements about demonic activity speak of generic “wiles” and “snares,” or the aim of the devil to cause a person harm.

One of the most detailed descriptions of the devil's attacks comes from Chrysostom's homilies on Ephesians, and it brings insight into his understanding of the nature of demonic plots:

To use “wiles,” is to deceive and to take by artifice or contrivance; a thing which takes place both in the case of the arts, and by words, and actions, and stratagems, in the case of those who seduce us. I mean something like this. The Devil never proposes to us sins in their proper colors; he does not speak of idolatry, but he sets it off in another dress, using “wiles,” that is, making his discourse plausible, employing disguises.

Deception is the tool the devil uses to bring about temptations. He will not present a sin as the ugly thing it is but will put it in a tuxedo and make it dance so that it is enticing, seductive, and desirable to a person, even distracting enough so that she will not realize it is a sin until it is too late. This implies that the devil makes suggestions to a person.

Chrysostom's primary examples are Adam and Eve and Job, where Satan's action is clearly defined, and when he describes the devil's using “words, actions, and stratagems”

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54 In Gen. hom. 61 (PG 54.525-532, FC 186-97), on Joseph with Potiphar's wife; In Joh. hom. 7.2 (PG 59.65-66, FC 80); and Cat. Or. 6 (S 215-28, ACW 93-103), respectively.
55 Cat. Or., Stav. 1.40 (S 129, ACW 39).
56 Cat. Or., P-K 1.17 (SC 146, ACW 141).
57 In Gal. comm. 1.5 (PG 61.621, NPNF 7).
58 In Eph. hom. 22.3 (PG 62.158, NPNF 159-60). This statement is prompted by Eph 6:11: “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
(λόγοι, ἔργα, παλαίσματα) against humans, Chrysostom does not explain the details of these attacks. How does a human hear the devil's words? In his mind? In her soul? Is it a general impression? As with the monks, is it a suggestion of thought indistinguishable from one's own thought? Chrysostom even says that Christ's being crucified with two others was Satan's strategy, though again he offers nothing regarding how Satan brought this about. How precisely demons “dress up” sins and tempt humans Chrysostom leaves vague. It is most important to him that his congregation know both that demons do tempt and deceive by both words and deeds and that a person ought to be able to recognize temptation and deception and resist them. However great the devil's attempts to injure humanity, he is often unsuccessful because God has put a limit on his power, and these limits are Chrysostom's chief concern.

**Demonic Limits**

The devil and his demons may not force human beings or use violence against them to achieve their ends. Chrysostom notes, “The Devil does not injure,” and, “He does not overcome by force, nor by tyranny, nor through compulsion, nor through violence. Were this possible, he would have destroyed all men.” The argument is logical. If the devil's aim is to destroy humanity and keep them from the salvation God has for them, and if the devil is utterly evil, then the devil will pursue this goal with every tool available to him. Furthermore, if the devil's power were limitless, there would be no

59 In one of his earliest works, his letter Ad Theodore, Chrysostom does speak about the devil plaguing a person with “thoughts of despair” (1.2; SC 86, NPNF 92).
60 In Ioh. hom. 85 (PG 59.460, FC 429).
61 De diab. tent. 1.2 (SC 126, NPNF 187).
62 De diab. tent. 1.1 (SC 122, NPNF 187).
question of humanity's destruction; it would be fact. Since humanity is still flourishing, there must be some hindrance to the devil's plan. The devil and his demons must not be able to destroy by force or violence. This is an empirical argument. Chrysostom takes the fears, assumptions, and excuses of his congregation—that demons would want to be cause of all ills, sins, and harms to human beings—and extends them to their logical conclusion to show that the congregation's understanding is incorrect.

Chrysostom's argument is not only logical, however. Job is the primary Scriptural example of the devil's limitations. Chrysostom highlights the necessity of the devil's asking and receiving permission from God to harm Job. The devil was not able to destroy Job's herds and flocks without first gaining God's permission. Moreover, Job is an example of the devil's defeat at the hands of a human being. Job never curses God, however great the temptation becomes. Thus, Job is Chrysostom's example of an athlete of virtue who overcomes the devil. If Job, a human being, could defeat the devil, then there is a limit to the devil's power.

For all that Chrysostom praises Job and holds him up as a shining example of resistance for his congregation to emulate, Job also complicates Chrysostom's argument. In the story of Job's misfortunes, Job's herds and children are killed. The devil kills them. Chrysostom, in retelling the narrative, uses the word “annihilate” (καταναλίσκω). Most reasonable human beings would consider this to be an example of the devil's power, but Chrysostom insists that the devil is powerless. The devil must ask permission of God before he is allowed to cause death, and this is Chrysostom's proof that God has placed limits on the devil's power. This permission is the key to understanding Chrysostom's

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63 Ibid.
64 Ibid. and De diab. tent. 2.4-5 (SC 186-192, NPNF 194-96).
view of Satan's power. It is not that Satan is incapable of causing physical harm—he is plainly capable—but that Satan is incapable of causing physical harm *simply by his own choice*, whenever he wants. Chrysostom finds this reassuring. God has limited the devil's power, even if God allows him to be in fact capable of great destruction.\(^{65}\)

The other way Chrysostom explains what he means by the devil's powerlessness is that the devil is powerless to cause *true* harm. Chrysostom distinguishes between apparent harm—disease, famine, even death—and true harm—sin. The devil was powerless against Job because the devil was powerless to cause Job to sin. Therefore, for all the suffering he caused, the devil did not cause any true injury. This distinction between true and apparent harm is central to Chrysostom's theodicy. It is what allows him to separate suffering from evil and therefore the devil's actions from the human being's. Differentiating between true and apparent evil is what drives Chrysostom to insist that his congregation resist the devil. A person can resist the devil; it is within her power.

For instance, in his *In Ioh. hom.*, Chrysostom offers a method for successfully resisting the devil:

> If he ponder his own nature and the multitude of his sins, and the greatness of the punishments in the next world, the transitoriness of things which seem beautiful here, but are just like grass and die more readily than the flowers of spring—if we continually revolve these reflections within ourselves and keep remembering those who lived the most virtuously, the Devil will not be able to overcome us easily, though he make a thousand attempts, nor will he be able even to begin to prevail over us.\(^{66}\)

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\(^{65}\) One might wonder whether his congregation found this as reassuring as Chrysostom intended them to. Chrysostom trusts that God's character prohibits destruction on a whim, but Chrysostom also believes that God allows punishment and even suffering for pedagogical purposes. Even as Chrysostom gives his congregation a new way to understand suffering, the devil remains a being who can destroy physically.

\(^{66}\) *In Ioh. hom.* 9 (PG 59.72-73, FC 95).
People can thwart the devil's attempts at destruction, which implies that the devil's powers are not only finite, but limited enough that human beings can resist them. Thus, the devil's powers are limited to the realm of apparent evil.

Chrysostom does not say that a person must pray and wait on God to fight the devil but that she can stand against him herself. Here the emphasis is entirely on the human. Indeed, it even sounds vaguely Platonic. A person is supposed to value the goods properly: eternal life is better than eternal punishment and eternal joy than temporary joy. As with Plato, the immaterial is by definition better than the material. By valuing these things rightly and judging events accordingly, one will choose the correct course of action, and it is on the basis of one's choice that God rewards or punishes.

The reason this is so interesting is that it makes no mention of Christ's action. We know, however, that Chrysostom believes Christ to have played a significant role in the Christian's struggle against the devil. In his Cat. Or., Chrysostom preaches that the devil will be frightened of a Christian who has come from the Eucharistic table and will flee from him.67 That the Christian in question has come from the table is significant because he has just fed on Christ.68 There is something about the Christian—not as a human being but specifically as a Christian—that the devil fears. A few paragraphs before this Chrysostom explained what Christ does in our struggle with the devil: “In our combat

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67 Cat. Or., Stav.3.12 (SC 158, ACW 60).
68 Some of Chrysostom's more graphic descriptions of what the Eucharist is about can be found in In Ioh. hom. 46.3: “Christ has done even this to spur us on to greater love. And to show the love He has for us He has made it possible for those who desire, not merely to look upon Him, but even to touch Him and to consume Him and to fix their teeth in His Flesh and to be commingled with Him” (PG 59.260, FC 468-69); In Rom. hom. 8.8: “Christ, who was slain for our sake . . . is the sacrifice lying on this altar . . . . The table makes those who were crueler than wild beasts gentler than lambs. But after we share in such a table and such food as is on this altar, we arm ourselves against each other. Instead we should be doing this against the devil, who is waging war against all of us” (PG 60.465, Papageorgiou 160). NPNF 394); and In 1 Tim. hom. 15.4 (Jesus' words to the faithful): “I not only am mingled with you, I am entwined in you. I am masticated, broken into minute particles, that the interspersion, and commixture, and union may be more complete” (PG 62.586, NPNF 464).
with the devil, Christ does not stand aloof but is wholly on our side. . . . He bound the devil with fetters that cannot be broken to keep him shackled hand and foot for the combat.”\(^69\) Even in the *In Ioh. hom.*, Chrysostom explains the devil's destruction by Christ. The devil, Chrysostom argues, had the power and the right to destroy all people because they had sinned.\(^70\) The devil reached beyond his bounds, however, and tried to destroy Christ as well. This reaching is the reason for the devil's own destruction: “The Devil will have punishment demanded of him for what he has done to us, because of what he dared to do to Christ.”\(^71\)

Chrysostom is clear that Christ has overcome the devil. We must, then, understand Chrysostom's emphasis on the ability and method for human resistance in *In Ioh. hom. 9* within the context of Christ's prior action. It is Chrysostom's directions for resistance now, after Christ has struck the first blow. That Chrysostom spends so much time instructing his audience about how to resist the devil implies that Christians both *can* and *must* still resist. *Cat. Or. 3* makes it clear that the struggle against the devil is not over; Christ bound him, but we must still fight because, in spite of his chains, the devil still fights. A person knows she *can* successfully resist the devil's wiles because Christ has put the devil in chains, and in the coming chapters we will see that a person *must* resist because it is part of what God requires for salvation.

Before continuing, we note that Chrysostom acknowledges the reality of demon-possession and that this makes more difficult questions of προαίρεσις and responsibility. For all that demons cannot force or tyrannize, they can, apparently, possess a person. Chrysostom speaks of possession only infrequently, and even in his discussion of Jesus'

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\(^69\) *Cat. Or.*, Stav. 3.9 (SC 50.156; Harkins, 58).

\(^70\) By “destroy” (ἀναιρέω), Chrysostom means “put to death.”

\(^71\) *In Ioh. hom. 67.3* (PG 59.373, FC 232).
exorcisms in the gospels, he often focuses on issues other than the possession. For instance, the healing of the Gerasene demoniac is for Chrysostom primarily a rebuttal of the claim that demons are the souls of the dead, though Chrysostom does make a side comment about the “hidden meaning” that “swinish sort of men are especially liable to the operations of demons.” Other points that receive brief mention include the demonstration of God's providence, the demons' sin, and the crazed nature of sinners, especially the covetous, that resembles that of demoniacs.72

On occasion, Chrysostom mentions the presence of demoniacs in his audience and tells his congregation that they ought to be pitied and prayed for. For instance, he asks, “Is not the sight of [the demoniacs] alone enough to frighten you and bring you to feel sympathy for them? Is your brother in chains, and do you feel no concern? . . . What excuse will you have for being so unsympathetic, so inhuman, and so cruel?”73 Demoniacs are to be pitied as those who are ill or captive, unable to control themselves.74

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72 In Matt. hom. 29.2-5 (listed as homily 28 in the NPNF) (PG 57.352-357, NPNF 191-94).
73 De incompr. hom. 4.37 (SC 256, FC 129). For other examples, see De incompr. hom. 3.42, 4.31-41 (224, 252-260; In Gen. hom. 29.5 (PG 53.267); and De res. dom. 1-2 (PG 50.434-35).
74 For an excellent dissertation on the relationship between demoniacs, the mentally ill, and sinners in Chrysostom's rhetoric, see Claire E. Salem, “Sanity, Insanity, and Man’s Being as Understood by St. John Chrysostom” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2010). Salem argues that Chrysostom has in mind a spectrum of what it is to be human. She frames this spectrum as one of sanity—with the upper limit being the monks (“preeminently sane”) and the lower limit the self-centered person at war with God and neighbor and focused only on temporal things (insane) (p. 5-6). As a way of exploring this spectrum, Salem focuses on Chrysostom’s rhetorical treatment of the demon-possessed and the mentally ill. She concludes that Chrysostom saw both groups as those to be pitied because of their lack of self-control, but sinners are to be pitied even more because they sin of their own choice. We will see in chapters five and six the significance of responsibility, reward, and punishment in Chrysostom's accounts of virtue and salvation. One question Salem does not treat whether a demoniac can be responsible for the initial possession, a possibility suggested by the De incompr. hom. 4 passage quoted below. What Salem does note is Chrysostom's use of μανία to describe the mentally ill, the demon-possessed, and sinners. Wendy Mayer notes this broad use of μανία and draws out the differences among each kind of maniac in her Wendy Mayer, “Mania and Madness in the Works of John Chrysostom: A Snapshot from Late Antiquity,” in The Concept of Madness from Homer to Byzantium: History and Aspects, ed. H. Perdicoyianni-Paléologou (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, forthcoming). She is particularly interested in whether Chrysostom considered mental illness to be caused by demons and whether it was a μανία in Chrysostom's thought. She concludes that both mental illness and possession are “purely physiological and involuntary” madness, whereas sin is a “volitional...
It is for their lack of control that they are to be pitied, but it is also their lack of control that removes responsibility from them for their actions. No choice, no responsibility. We see this when Chrysostom states that demoniacs are not punished (with an eternal punishment) but those who come to Eucharist unworthily are “delivered over to undying punishment.” 75 We will explore the details of the relationship between responsibility, reward, and punishment in chapter five, but here it is enough to know that, according to Chrysostom, one is punished only for things one chooses; punishment implies responsibility. If a demoniac is not punished, neither is he responsible.

Though Chrysostom makes it clear that demoniacs are not in control of their own actions, he suggests that possession only occurs when one allows it to:

While you chatter away, while you show your brother no concern and make such small account of him, are you not afraid that some demon may not leap out of his soul and, with no trace of fear, enter into yours? Why should he be afraid? In you he has found a soul unoccupied and swept clean; he has found a house with an open door. 76

By alluding to Jesus' caution here, Chrysostom is not making a philosophical or anthropological statement about what an “unoccupied, swept-clean soul” looks like beyond the soul of one who chatters and shows no concern for his brother. Chrysostom is using the allusion to say that the sinner, by his sin, has prepared his soul for the demon to take possession of it. Sin made the soul an inviting house for a demon. 77 Even when someone is possessed by a demon, when a demon compels action from a human being, madness” (author’s typescript). These two categories, Mayer argues, are of primary significance for Chrysostom.

75 In Matt. hom. 82.6 (PG 58.745, NPNF 496).
77 See also, “It is . . . necessary to be watchful and awake and to wall off his approach in all directions. If he discovers even a small opening, he thereupon prepares a broad entrance for himself and gradually introduces his whole power. Well, then, if we have regard for our salvation, let us refuse him entrance in small ways in order that thereby we may check great ones beforehand” (In Ioh. hom. 23.1 (PG 59.137, FC 221-22)).
the human is responsible for the possession in the first place. This leaves the matter of responsibility in the case of demon possession ambiguous, and Chrysostom does not say enough in his corpus to allow a conclusion regarding how much responsibility a demoniac has for her sin. Because the issue of possession and responsibility is unclear in Chrysostom, I will bracket that discussion from the rest of this study and leave it for future research.\textsuperscript{78}

**Chrysostom in Context**

At this point we have sketched Chrysostom's demonology in isolation. It is necessary now to put Chrysostom among his predecessors and contemporaries in order to understand better what Chrysostom is doing when he speaks about demons.\textsuperscript{79}

In many ways, Chrysostom's demonology is ordinary. Much of his thought is similar to that of his contemporaries, and he coheres with his fourth-century context. First, Chrysostom's origin narrative is that Satan is a fallen angel, created good by God but fallen before the creation of the world.\textsuperscript{80} This story rejects the watchers myth of 1 Enoch, a view Chrysostom is explicit about. The tradition of Satan's fall prior to the creation of the world is part of the Christian demonological trajectory set by Origen. We noted that prior to Origen there existed competing narratives of demons' beginnings and

\textsuperscript{78} This study, therefore, is a one of Chrysostom's demonology, anthropology, and soteriology for “normal” (i.e., unpossessed) Christians.

\textsuperscript{79} For this section, I compare Chrysostom's demonology with those outlined in chapters one and two. Since I have already cited most of the primary sources in the previous two chapters, I refer the reader to those pages for full quotations rather than copying them here.

\textsuperscript{80} As noted above, Chrysostom is not clear about the reason for the fall, though the two main options were “laziness” and pride. See page 113.
that Origen is the figure whose ideas survived.\footnote{Notable exceptions are Lactantius and Methodius, both of whom transmit the watchers tradition. Lactantius, \textit{Divine Institutes} 2.15; Methodius, \textit{On the Resurrection} 3.7.} We also saw that Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, and Augustine noted pride as the reason for the devil's fall (again before the creation of the world). The view is widespread enough that it is impossible to say whether Chrysostom drew his narrative from any particular theologian; it is more likely that he preached the common wisdom of the church.

Regarding the nature of demons, Chrysostom again follows tradition in noting the incorporeality of the demons, but that is all the speculation he does. Unlike Origen or Antony, who write about the demons' composition—and, in Origen's case, their feeding habits—Chrysostom seems uninterested in the question.

Where the comparison between Chrysostom and his predecessors and contemporaries is most germane to this study is in their discussions of demonic activities and limits.\footnote{In contrast to Chrysostom's one quotation of Luke 10:18 ("I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"), he quotes 10:19 (Christ's promise to the disciples, "I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you") fifteen times (Robert Allen Krupp, \textit{Saint John Chrysostom, a Scripture Index} (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 140).} In large part, Chrysostom is an ordinary Christian theologian in this respect as well. The devil is the enemy of salvation.\footnote{The Cappadocians say this specifically, as we saw in chapter 2 (Gregory of Nazianzus, Carm. 1.1.7.61-65), but this is by no means a new notion in Christianity. Paul and Ignatius of Antioch talk about the devil as the enemy.} Demons deceive and tempt, just as they always have for Christians. Like Justin and Origen before him, Chrysostom says that demons provide false information, trying to lead Christians into heresy.\footnote{Justin, \textit{Dial.} 30.3, \textit{1 Apol.} 56; Origen, \textit{De prIn}3.2.4-5, 3.3.2-3; and Chrysostom, \textit{Dom., non est in hom.} 2, \textit{De incompr. hom.} 2.55.} Chrysostom acknowledges the reality of demon possession, just as all those before him. He even refers to the pagan gods as demons and pagan temples as the dwelling places of demons,
a practice we saw from the earliest theologians. There is one further interesting similarity between Gregory of Nazianzus and Chrysostom. Both authors argue that God allows demons to remain on earth in order for humans to struggle against them. Gregory of Nazianzus argues that the struggle against demons leads to purification, whereas Chrysostom argues that it makes a person stronger and more virtuous.

The most significant comparisons concern the parts of demonology Chrysostom finds most important, and it is here we find a distinct similarity to the ascetic tradition above all. We saw that Athanasius's Antony is adamant that demons have “no power at all.” They aim at the destruction of human beings, but because humans are not only alive but actively resist demons, it is clear that they are powerless. Job also serves as a key example of the devil's lack of power, indicated by the devil's asking permission to afflict Job. Antony is also insistent that the brothers not fear demons, precisely because of their powerlessness, just what Chrysostom tells his audience. Antony's letters take this idea further. Because demons are powerless and Christians need not fear, Christians must resist demonic temptations and deceptions. Antony writes that the brothers know the devil's tricks and strategies, so, he says, “If you neglect yourselves and do not discern your works, you fall into the hands of the devil.” The Christian's negligence is Chrysostom's primary focus when speaking about demons. He continually warns his congregation not to be negligent and urges them instead to be vigilant against the devil's attacks, which come often and in many varied ways.

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85 In Act. apost. hom. 4.4; Adv. Iud. 1.6, 1.7; De Bab. c. Iul. et gent. 68. Chrysostom does not make this assertion often, but when he does, it is with a tone that suggests everyone knows it as fact needing no explanation.
86 Nazianzen, Carm. 1.1.6.88-95; Chrysostom, De diab. tent. 1.1-2. We will see that Chrysostom views the struggle to be more virtuous as leading to salvation, which is similar to Gregory's understanding of purification, but the two schemas are different.
87 Life of Antony 28.5, (SC 212-14, Vivian and Athanassakis 123).
88 Letter 6 (Rubenson 217, 224).
Vigilance and the resulting moral responsibility of the human is likewise a central theme in the monastic literature arising after Antony. Demons are unable to cause trouble without the human's cooperation, and for this reason the monks are told continually to be on their guard. Theodoret's introduction to his History of the Monks of Syria is particularly concerned to tell his audience that demons are powerless unless the human cooperates. He writes, “It is impossible for the demons making war from outside to overcome a soul surrounded by divine grace, unless the compliance of some thought open some postern in our senses and receive the enemy within it.”

Monks must watch and be wary of demons and temptations. In particular, demons will dress up their suggestions to sound like good things, as in the saying from Abba Arsenius we saw in the previous chapter:

Someone said to Abba Arsenius, “My thoughts trouble me, saying, ‘You can neither fast nor work; at least go and visit the sick, for that is also charity.’” But the old man, recognizing the suggestions of the demons, said to him, “Go, eat, drink, sleep, do no work, only do not leave your cell.” For he knew that steadfastness in the cell keeps a monk in the right way.

We saw Chrysostom argue the same thing, saying that the devil will never show sin in its true colors but will make it appealing, even righteous-sounding. The Sayings and Lives of the Desert Fathers, as well as Palladius's and Theodoret's accounts, uphold monks as men and women who consistently resist demons. They remain aware of the demonic, and they refuse to give in, serving as examples for others who may encounter temptation.

This vigilance is Chrysostom's pet theme as well. He constantly tells his audience not to 

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89 History of the Monks of Syria, prologue 6 (Price, 6): ἀδύνατον τοῖς ἐξοδεῖν πολέμοδοι δαίμοσι τῆς θείας χάριτος κύκλουμένης περιπεφεύγαν ψυχῆς, εἰ μὴ τινος λογισμοῦ ραστώνη πυλίδα τινά τῶν ἐν ἑκατὸν αἰσθητήρων ἀνοίξει καὶ τάυτης ἑσσώ τοῦ πολέμου δέξατο.

90 Arsenius 11, Apophthegmata (PG 65.89, Ward, 10).

91 Above, p. 128.
be lazy or careless, for that is when the demons attack and their deceptions work. A Christian must be always on guard.

Any of these similarities on its own is not enough to demonstrate Chrysostom's awareness of ascetic demonologies, but in aggregate they increase the likelihood that Chrysostom knows and uses the monastic tradition. Both cast their anthropologies in terms of demonology. The struggle to be a monk is the struggle to be virtuous in the midst of temptation and deception worked by the devil and his demons. The same struggle for virtue against the devil's deceptions and temptations defines the Christian life for Chrysostom.

One final point of Chrysostom's demonology that is significant to place in context is his emphasis on human προαίρεσις against demons. We will see this emphasis at the end of this chapter and flesh it out in chapter five, but here it is important to note the similarity of Chrysostom's thought with Augustine's. Augustine often speaks of demonology in the context of free will arguments. Nothing, not even demons, can curtail a person's free will. Augustine also emphasizes the devil's free will in several places. Though Augustine does not speak of this with the frequency of Chrysostom, and though there is no evidence of either borrowing from the other, it is worth noting that both theologians argue the same point in different places and contexts.

So far Chrysostom seems ordinary in his demonology. He follows the broad Christian trajectory set by Origen regarding the origin of demons; he does not speculate

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92 For the discussion of whether and how Chrysostom could have known the ascetic literature and traditions, see chapter two, p. 92.
93 Demons are not the only source of temptation for monks since a monk's own passions and thoughts can themselves be trouble, but demons are a significant and undeniable source of temptation.
94 De civ. 8.14-16, 21; 9.3, 7-8, 12-13, 18.
95 De Gen. ad litt. 12.16.32, 12.17.34-38.
about demonic composition but spends most of his time discussing demons' interactions with human beings; and he insists that demons are enemies of salvation. More specifically, Chrysostom falls in line with ascetic literature, particularly the Antony tradition, regarding demons. What makes Chrysostom interesting is where his demonology diverges from this tradition. Chrysostom speaks about demons with more frequency than any other author excepting monastic literature, and he does so in interesting places. Following the monks by discussing demonology in relation to anthropology, Chrysostom also discusses demons in sermons about theodicy, which the monks do not do (though some theologians do, even if not nearly as often as Chrysostom does). He is more technical in his vocabulary than the monks get, by synthesizing monastic ideas with the vocabulary and concepts of the Cappadocians and others on issues of anthropology. Chrysostom wants to use demons to spur his congregation on toward virtue and, finally, salvation. The rest of this chapter explores Chrysostom's particular use of demonological discourse, which is the beginning of Chrysostom's divergence from his predecessors.

**Excursus: The Reality of Demons**

Before discussing the uses to which Chrysostom puts demonic rhetoric it is important to note that demons are not mere rhetorical devices for Chrysostom but real spiritual beings. It was common belief in the late fourth century that the world was populated not only with visible beings, but with invisible ones as well. Chrysostom never refutes this assumption; it is where he begins. In his *De obs. 3*, traditionally titled *That Demons Do Not Govern the World*, the problem is not that the congregation believes
demons to exist, but that they believe demons to be governing the world. Similarly, in the two homilies *De diab. tent.*, Chrysostom speaks about the powers the demons have (and do not have), but not about their existence. It would be strange if Chrysostom had not believed in demons and never mentioned this to his congregation. His constant attempts to correct errant beliefs in his audience suggest that if Chrysostom had not believed in the devil as a real being, he would have tried to convince his congregation of it.

Chrysostom's belief in demons was not merely psychological, as may be the modern expectation. Demons are external to human beings in Chrysostom's thought. They can tempt a person, deceive her, even suggest thoughts to a person's mind, but these are all attacks on a person from outside her. The passions are something that afflict a person from within, and demons and passions are not the same for Chrysostom. Evagrius described passions as demons, such as the demon of anger or the demon of sloth, but Chrysostom is not doing this. Chrysostom sometimes speaks of passions without mentioning the devil or his demons. Passions are the desires humans have that, left unchecked, can lead to sin. Demons are also not simply a way to explain certain illnesses or the inclination to sin. Chrysostom dismisses both of these ideas in *De diab. tent.* by arguing that demons are spiritual beings external to human beings who tempt, deceive, and sometimes cause natural disasters or illnesses, all in attempt to destroy humanity. They are not mere psychological creations or another name for our sinful desires. This conviction was a shared cultural assumption, and there is no reason to think

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96 I explain Chrysostom's understanding of the passions in chapter five below.

97 *In Ioh. hom.* 74,3: “Let us quench the fire of lust; let us slay anger; let us destroy envy. . . . Cut out of your heart what is superfluous and does not belong there. . . . Disorderly impulses and evil desires have the habit of preventing the entrance of God's word. . . . Let us do away with our evil desires” (PG 59.403, FC 297-99).
Chrysostom did not share it too.\footnote{Ludlow’s article about the Cappadocians’ demonologies argues that the Cappadocians believed demons to be real and not mere rhetorical devices, even as they did at times use demons for a given rhetorical purpose or effect. Her claim is that belief in demons was not limited to the laity or the “uneducated” or lower classes, but the intellectual elites believed in the existence of demons as well, a point that transfers to Chrysostom, an intellectual and near-contemporary (Ludlow, “Demons, Evil and Liminality in Cappadocian Theology,” 182). Peter Brown also argues that belief in demons was not restricted to any one group of people but was a “fact of life” in late antiquity: Peter Brown, The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 114–15. Brown indicates the externality of demons as well: “They were invoked to explain sudden and incongruous misfortunes, deviations from normative behaviour such as riots, plagues and inappropriate love-affairs” (Peter Brown, The World of Late Antiquity: From Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 54). So too David Brakke, who is concerned with monastic demonology and wishes to show that monks were not all from illiterate, uneducated classes: “Demonology . . . is an activity of literate, educated persons, who often use demons to address pressing intellectual problems,” and demons are not “remnants of a pagan past that uneducated monks could not leave behind but adapted to their new Christian worldview” (Brakke, Demons and the Making of the Monk, 9–11).} I make this note about the reality of demons for Chrysostom because much of this discussion will emphasize demons' rhetorical usefulness for Chrysostom, and it is important that we not take rhetorical usefulness to preclude existential reality.

**Demons in Chrysostom’s Speech: Don’t Fear the Reaper**

I have argued that Chrysostom's motivation for preaching about demons is reactive. He hears people saying that demons are governing the world and responsible for all the world's evil, and Chrysostom responds to these false beliefs and fears with discussions of theodicy and the difference between suffering and true evil. However, to say that Chrysostom's motivations for speaking of demons is only reactive is to neglect another of Chrysostom’s significant motivations. We will see here that Chrysostom also has a preemptive motivation. The devil is attacking people and trying to prevent their salvation, and Chrysostom wants to warn his congregation about these attacks so they can resist them and attain salvation. We will look first at Chrysostom’s reactive demonology, and then at his preemptive rhetoric.
Chrysostom's comments about demons most often arise either because the passage he is expounding mentions demons or because mention of demons will help his argument to be useful in some way. Examples of the first instance are Chrysostom's discussion of Ephesians 6, which speaks of the armor of God used to stand against the devil's wiles, and in his Comm. Job, a discussion of Satan's role in Job 1-2. Even in these cases Chrysostom aims at usefulness because he understands that Scripture has mentioned demons for this reason. Job would not have mentioned Satan unless Christians could learn something from his role in Job’s suffering. As we saw in his homily on Gen 6:2, where Chrysostom discusses the origin of demons at greater length than anywhere else, he writes thus not only because he wishes his congregation to know where demons come from but also because they have been told erroneous things about the devil's origin and he wants them to have correct information. In other places, Chrysostom might choose to mention the devil or demons because they help his argument to a useful goal, such as in a homily on Jer 10:23, where Chrysostom says that the devil pressures people to “give a distorted account of the contents of the Scriptures” and in his attempt to blaspheme adds words to Scripture and suggests poor readings. False readings of Scripture come from the devil and therefore should not be listened to.

As mentioned, Chrysostom’s reactive demonological speech is primarily an attempt to eradicating the fear of demons from his congregants, which is Chrysostom's

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99 Chrysostom believes that everything in Scripture is present for a reason, and that reason should be sought out and explained. He writes, “Notice the precision of Scripture, how you can't find even a chance syllable contained there to no purpose” (In Gen. hom. 23.2 (PG 53.198, FC 90)). For Chrysostom, there is no wasted syllable; it stands to reason that syllables about the devil fall under the same principle. For more about Chrysostom's understanding of Scripture's precision, see Robert C. Hill, “Akribeia: A Principle of Chrysostom's Exegesis,” Colloquium 14 (1981): 32-36; and Hill, “On Looking Again at sunkatabasis,” Prudentia 13 (1981): 3-11.

immediate goal in *De diab. tent.*, *De obs.* 3, and the *Cat. Or.* Chrysostom understands that fear of demonic powers plagues his congregation, but he is insistent that his audience not be afraid either of the devil nor of his demons. This is surprising given Chrysostom's predilection for inspiring fear in his audience in other contexts, for example, through vivid images of the horrors of hell. In a letter to his friend Theodore, Chrysostom writes:

That fire [of hell] is continually burning those who have once been seized by it, and never ceases: therefore also it is called unquenchable. For those also who have sinned must put on immortality, not for honor, but to have a constant supply of material for that punishment to work upon; and how terrible this is, speech could never depict.\(^{101}\)

Chrysostom's aim is to put the fear of hell in his friend so that he might avoid behaviors, sins, that would lead to his suffering such torment. He does the same with his congregation in statements such as this:

The Kingdom incites toward the good, and hell frightens usefully. For God threatens with hell, not to throw into hell, but rather to deliver from hell. If He wanted to punish, he would not have threatened beforehand in order for us safely to escape the things He threatens. He threatens with the punishment so we will escape experiencing the punishment. He frightens with words so He will not punish with deeds.\(^{102}\)

Chrysostom believes his preaching is following the example God has set in Scripture. God threatens with hell so that people will not have to experience hell. The threat is a tool to frighten people into virtuous living.

But Chrysostom tells his congregation *not* to fear the devil nor his demons. Insistence on not fearing demons is not exclusive to Chrysostom, but it is worth noting both because of Chrysostom's practice of motivating by fear and because Chrysostom's denial of the fear of demons highlights, and is a result of, his emphasis on human προαιρεσίς, which is a theme in both *De diab. tent.* homilies and *De obs.* 3. In all three

\(^{101}\) *Ad Theod.* 1.10 (SC 117.128, NPNF 98).
\(^{102}\) *De eleem.* 7.7 (PG 49.336, FC 109).
homilies Chrysostom is concerned that his congregation understand the devil's powers are limited, and demons are not the cause of things that harm a person. Part of this endeavor is to stop the excuses of those who would blame their sin on the devil, and part is to urge the audience to resistance and virtue, but implicit in these claims is another: there is no need to fear the devil and his demons. If they cannot cause any true harm to a person, she need not fear.\textsuperscript{103}

After recounting the story of Job, Chrysostom preaches, “Fear not therefore the Devil, even if he be bodiless.”\textsuperscript{104} Incorporeal beings were understood to be ontologically superior, and their invisibility likely added some uncertainty about where they were or whom they were attacking at any given moment, not to mention that it is hard to know how to defend against invisible beings, since swords are unlikely to be effective. Chrysostom, however, offers an explicit imperative against fearing the devil. The rationale is what has just said in the homily: the description of Satan's asking God's permission to afflict Job. This is the reason one must not fear: Satan is subordinate to God. God's character, order, and rule are the foundations for a Christian's confidence against the devil and his demons. Therefore, the Christian ought have no fear of demons. God is governing the world, and the devil is subordinate to God. That God is governing the world rather than demons is the theme of De obs. 3, and both homilies of De diab. tent. are concerned with the limits of the devil's power.

Chrysostom's Cat. Or. also have a strong emphasis on not fearing the devil. When he describes the renunciation of Satan in the baptismal liturgy, Chrysostom explains that a catechumen's answer means, “I am bold and rebel. For I have a strong place of refuge.

\textsuperscript{103} What Chrysostom considers to be “true harm” is discussed in detail below.

\textsuperscript{104} De diab. tent. 1.4 (SC 142, NPNF 189).
This has made me superior to the demon, although heretofore I was trembling and afraid."  

Speaking of the catechumenate as a training school for wrestlers, he says, “Let us learn, during this time of training, the grips he uses, the source of his wickedness, and how he can easily hurt us. Then, when the contest comes, we will not be caught unaware nor be frightened.”

Chrysostom wants his congregation to have the proper object of fear, and his rhetoric is aimed at a correction of this object. Instead of fear mongering, Chrysostom's demonological discourse is empowering and encouraging. The congregation is able to win out over the devil.

**Demons in Chrysostom's Speech: A Preemptive Strike**

What begins as reactive preaching becomes preemptive. As he rids his congregation of their fear of demons, Chrysostom makes it clear what demons can and cannot do, as well as what they are trying to do. In this way, Chrysostom's speech about demons aims to strengthen his audience against the deceptions of the devil, giving his audience the knowledge they need to avoid being deceived and to resist the devil. In *De diab. tent.*, Chrysostom's motivation is to explain the “tactics of the enemy,” suggesting not a reaction but a preemptive strike. The enemy is the devil, the enemy of our salvation. Chrysostom tells his congregation that they need not fear physical harm or poverty from demons, but they should fear losing their salvation. The stakes are bigger than they thought. And in his constant attempts to bring his people to salvation, Chrysostom finds demons particularly useful.

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105 *Cat. Or.*, P-K 3.6, (SC 366.232, ACW 168).
106 *Cat. Or.*, P-K 1.16 (SC 366.144, ACW 141).
107 *De diab. tent.* 1.1 (SC 122, NPNF 187).
Chrysostom writes, “The devil, if you would understand, is even useful to us—if we use him correctly—and he helps us and we gain great things, not ordinary things. And this we demonstrated from Job.” 108 Again, Job is the exemplar of virtue in the face of the devil's work, showing the congregation that, employed properly, the devil can be “useful” (χρήσιμος) to them. If the congregation has a proper understanding of who the devil is and what his goal is, the congregation may “use” (χράω) the devil, or their knowledge of the devil, to gain advantages over him and benefits for themselves. The clause “if we use him correctly” (ἐὰν εἰς δὲν οὐτῶ ἄριστος) is significant. Chrysostom's aim is to teach his congregation the proper way to use the devil so that they may gain great benefits, salvation itself.

Chrysostom's other example of using the devil for one's own profit is Paul, who writes to the Corinthians to hand over the fornicator to the devil so that the flesh may be destroyed but the soul saved (1 Cor 5:5). Chrysostom tells his congregation to take from the devil whatever chastisement comes, for this will rid a person of his impurities and earthly desires, making it possible for the soul to be saved. The devil is only allowed to punish as much as God allows, so the devil cannot destroy a person completely. As an extreme example of the profitability of the devil, Chrysostom writes, “Behold even the Devil has become a cause of salvation, but not because of his own disposition, but because of the skill of the Apostle.” 109 It is possible, therefore, for the devil even to be an aid to salvation, if one is skillful enough to use him rightly.

Prior to this point in the homily, Chrysostom has been expounding the reasons why God allows the devil still to roam the earth and wreak havoc. People can only win

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108 De diab. tent. 1.4 (SC 140, NPNF 189), my own translation.
109 Ibid.
crowns if they can exhibit their power, so if there is no adversary against whom to struggle, the righteous person cannot win a crown.\textsuperscript{110} This is another way to use the devil. To struggle against the devil is to become stronger, better able to resist, to forge one's character out of stronger steel. Chrysostom seems to believe this is an intrinsic benefit of struggling. His illustration is that of a wrestler. Even if the wrestler's antagonist has been taken away at the last minute, the wrestler who has prepared well, who has done all his exercises, is better for his practice, whether in the end there is an antagonist or not.\textsuperscript{111}

One of Chrysostom's frequent rhetorical uses of demons is his practice of juxtaposing Christ and the devil in order to make his congregation's choice clear. Christ's goodness makes the devil's wickedness appear more wicked, and the devil's vileness makes Christ's goodness appear more pure. When juxtaposed for rhetorical effect, they provide a stark contrast. Many times Chrysostom offers his congregation two ways: they can follow Christ, or they can follow the devil. Each is traveling to his home, and the disciple chooses one to follow to his destination. Often when Chrysostom speaks of demons, he holds them as the alternative to following Christ. There is no gray area for Chrysostom: a person is always either following Christ or the devil.

Jesus' portrait of the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31-46) drives much of this rhetoric about demons and their relation to a person's virtue. For instance, in \textit{In Gen. hom.} 17, Chrysostom says, “Do you see the unquenchable fire prepared for the demon, on the

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{De diab. tent.} 1.1-2 (SC 126, NPNF 187).

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid. This is a very Stoic understanding of evil. Exemplified well in Seneca's \textit{On Providence}, which claims that things people refer to as evil—any kind of adversity—are not truly evil but only apparently so. Seneca argues that nothing evil can befall a good man and that adversities are only ever training. Similar to Chrysostom's reason for God's keeping Satan around, Seneca writes, “Without an adversary, prowess shrivels. We see how great and how efficient it really is, only when it shows by endurance what it is capable of. Be assured that good men ought to act likewise; they should not shrink from hardships and difficulties, nor complaint against fate; they should take in good part whatever happens, and should turn it to good” (\textit{On Providence} 1.4, Loeb 8-9). We will develop the Stoic influence on Chrysostom further in chapters four and five; here note only the resonance.
one hand, and for us, on the other hand, the kingdom, provided our resolve does not fail? Accordingly, let us keep these things in mind and give heed to our way of living, avoiding evil and never falling victim to the devil's wiles.”

Chrysostom notes verse 41's claim that hell was prepared for “the devil and his angels,” and verse 34's claim that the kingdom was prepared for humanity from the foundation of the world. Doing evil and falling prey to the devil's wiles leads to the devil's home, in contrast to the kingdom God has prepared for us. In a reflection of the Scriptural passage, Chrysostom offers no third way. There are but two options. And the way in which Chrysostom describes the evil option makes it clear that there is only one true choice for the faithful Christian.

Chrysostom states the choice another way: “To Christ, though He promises unnumbered blessings, not any one so much as gives any heed; whilst to the Devil, though promising nothing of the sort, but sending them on to hell, all yield themselves.” In statements like these the choice is meant to be plain: blessings or hell. What right-minded individual would choose hell? By setting the choice so starkly, Chrysostom implicitly encourages his congregation to choose virtue, to choose Christ. In his Cat. Or., the catechumens have made their choice. Chrysostom explains to them what their renunciation of Satan and choice for baptism and for Christ means. They have become willing slaves, pledging themselves to Christ, who won them from the devil, to whom they had formerly been enslaved. At every step, however, they were and are slaves of someone. Christ and the devil are juxtaposed for effect. Chrysostom's binary rhetoric makes it clear to his audience that if they are not doing good, they are doing evil,

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112 In Gen. hom. 17.6 (PG 53.141, FC 235).
113 In Eph. hom. 4.1 (PG 62.31, NPNF 66).
114 Cat. Or. 2.14-21 (SC 141-45, ACW 48-51).
and if they are not following Christ, they are following the devil. Describing sin as willingly following the devil makes virtue a more appealing decision.

I admit that this sounds as though Chrysostom is only making the devil the “face” of bad choices, and Christ the “face” of good choices, but Chrysostom means something stronger by his contrast. The juxtaposition is meant to highlight the Christian's choice: both that a choice exists and that it should be easy. A person can choose to do evil, thereby allying herself with the devil, or she can choose to do good, thereby allying herself with Christ. Christ and the devil are not mere faces or mere exemplars but real beings to whom a person pledges allegiance, and each of them is attempting to lead a person either to heaven or hell. This is not simply a “Christ as exemplar” model; we saw that Chrysostom understands Christ to have defeated the devil already, making the choice against the devil possible.

**Demonological Discourse Used to Motivate Virtue**

Strengthening his congregation and encouraging them to be virtuous is Chrysostom's central enterprise throughout his corpus.115 Among the many rhetorical

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115 Chrysostom writes in *De sac.* 4 that the role of a priest is to “train [Christ's body the church] to perfect health and unspeakable beauty, and look everywhere lest any spot or wrinkle or other blemishes of that sort mar its vigor and comeliness. In short, he must make it worthy, as far as lies within human power, of that incorruptible and ever blessed Head to which it is subjected” (*De sac.* 4.2 (SC 248, Neville 114)). Making worthy (ἀξιόω) is a term Chrysostom uses in soteriological discussions, as we will see in chapter six. There Chrysostom urges his congregation to be found worthy of the kingdom of heaven. Here he explains that the duty of a priest is to ensure that Christ's body is worthy of its head, Christ. What defines worthiness for Chrysostom is virtue. Therefore the priest's job is to bring about the virtue of his congregation. This goal of inspiring the audience to live virtuously has been noted by scholars in recent years. Jaclyn Maxwell writes, “Chrysostom envisioned a more intensely Christianized world, where the laity would be just as religious at home, at work, and in the streets as they were in the church. . . . If people could develop Christian habits, then a virtuous life would come naturally” (Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity,* 19, 21). Maxwell continues, explaining, “Chrysostom's goal was not social change (or control) as an end in itself, but to encourage a life-style conducive to collective salvation” (Ibid., 21). The reason for Chrysostom’s program of virtue-building is, at its core, a concern for the
techniques Chrysostom employs is language about demons. Chrysostom does not speak of demons merely to speculate about demons; his intent is to spur his audience on toward good deeds and lives. The stated goal of *De diab. tent.* reads, “We do this, not because our discourse about the devil is sweet to us, but because the doctrine about him is full of security for you. He is an enemy and a foe, and it is a great security to know clearly the tactics of your enemies.” Chrysostom goes on to say that the devil cannot force or use violence, for if he could, he would have destroyed all people already. The destruction of humanity, their eternal death and torment in hell, is the devil's goal. In

salvation of his congregation. We will see in chapter six the necessity of virtue for salvation. There is, however, also a present (as opposed to future) dimension. Margaret Mitchell argues that Chrysostom is aiming at a Christian πολιτεία: “He understands the Sermon on the Mount as the foundational speech—now become the charter document—of Christian πολιτεία that constitutes the life of all Christians, who are called to a philosophical life lived always within an eschatological horizon” (Margaret M. Mitchell, “John Chrysostom,” in *The Sermon on the Mount through the Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman, Timothy Larsen, and Stephen R. Spencer (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2007), 22–23). Chrysostom believes the earthly Christian community is meant to reflect the heavenly one, the most explicit example is the assertion that monks live angelic lives, on earth as in heaven. He does not argue for a Christian state, however. When Chrysostom denounces the empress for sin, it is because she calls herself a Christian. Admittedly most people in Constantinople at the time would have understood themselves to be Christians. Chrysostom wants Christians to live their heavenly citizenship on earth, but his urgings on this matter are restricted to Christians.

Demonic rhetoric is not Chrysostom's only tool for encouraging virtue, but it is a significant one. Other prominent methods include the “carrot and stick,” rebuke, and imitation. The “carrot/stick” method is one for which Chrysostom is well-known. As we saw in the last section, Chrysostom threatens his audience with hell for wrongdoing in hope of scaring them into doing good. On the other side of that is language that is meant to entice toward the kingdom. These are two sides of a punishment/reward motivation. Another form of rhetoric Chrysostom uses is to build up the courage of his congregation, as he does in the *Cat. Or.*, urging the catechumens not to be afraid but to fight valiantly against the devil. Also in the *Cat. Or.*, Chrysostom plays with the image of marriage, drawing on his catechumens' love for Christ as a bride for her husband. There Chrysostom argues the neophytes should be careful not to disappoint their beloved. Chrysostom is also not afraid to rebuke his congregation for sin that he knows about. The most famous example is his rhetoric against the Empress Eudoxia, which got him exiled, but he was never shy about telling people they needed to stop attending the theater instead of worship, that they were selfish and were not giving enough alms, or they were too preoccupied with earthly beauty. Chastising the audience is an important part of building virtue, for it is hard to improve what one does not realize one is doing wrong. Chrysostom also encourages the imitation of the saints. We have seen in this chapter Chrysostom's tendency to uphold Job as an example of virtue; he does the same with many other biblical saints, Paul foremost among them. Additionally, Chrysostom urges his audience to observe the monks outside Antioch as those who live like angels on earth and to return to imitate these monks in the cities. Chrysostom has a catalog of virtue-building rhetorical techniques, and he uses whichever rhetoric he believes will bring about a desired action from his congregation. Among these, speech about demons is prominent and usually linked to the reward and punishment of kingdom/hell language. Moreover, when Chrysostom speaks about demons, it is most often for this virtue-building purpose.

116 *De diab. tent.* 1.1 (SC 122, NPNF 187).
order to avoid their own destruction, Chrysostom wants his audience to know the devil's tactics so that they may be able to outsmart or otherwise overcome their enemy, and in doing so not only survive but even, through the cultivation of virtue, be found worthy of entrance to the kingdom of heaven.\textsuperscript{118}

Another example of this rhetorical aim comes from the \textit{Cat. Or.}, where Chrysostom argues that not even the devil can harm the soul of the faithful Christian, and nothing can hinder a Christian's virtue:

\begin{quote}
I wish, above all things, that you understand that no one has the power to do harm to the soul of the faithful Christian, not even the devil himself. Not only is it a wonderful thing that God has made us impervious to all treachery, but that He has fitted us for the practice of virtue. If we be willing (ἐὰν θέλομεν), there is nothing to stop us. . . . For neither poverty, nor weakness, nor bodily disability, nor slavery, nor any other such thing could be a hindrance to virtue.\textsuperscript{119}
\end{quote}

Poverty, weakness, disability, and slavery are all things Chrysostom has argued in \textit{De diab. tent.} that demons are not necessarily responsible for, in contrast to his audience's beliefs. Therefore, on the one hand, if the devil did not cause these ills, the devil cannot have hindered a person's virtue. On the other hand, even if the devil did cause them with God's permission, Chrysostom argues, these things, and thus the devil himself, are still no hindrance to a person's pursuit of virtue. As we saw, Chrysostom distinguishes between true and apparent harm, and all external sufferings like poverty and slavery are but apparent harm.\textsuperscript{120} Injury to virtue is true harm, which is where Chrysostom's primary concern lies, and where Chrysostom says the devil has no power. To understand how Chrysostom strengthens his congregation against the devil's attacks, we must look at

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{118} This phrase will be explained in detail in chapter six.
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Cat. Or.}, Montf. 2.26 (PG 49.235, ACW 181). Modified slightly with my own translation.
\textsuperscript{120} This is not to say that Chrysostom has no concern for his congregants' sufferings. He can be gentle and pastoral, as is particularly seen in his \textit{Letter to a Young Widow} and his letters to Olympias. Moreover, he himself suffered ill health most of his life and then two banishments so he does not make this distinction between true and apparent harm from some sort of safe distance. When he speaks of demons, however, his concern is to show that they can do no real harm.
\end{footnotesize}
Chrysostom’s anthropology. First, though, we will explore Greco-Roman ideas of προαιρεσις and virtue in order to provide context for Chrysostom’s thought on these topics.
CHAPTER 4: GRECO-ROMAN ACCOUNTS OF ΠΡΟΑΊΡΕΣΙΣ AND VIRTUE

Chrysostom's Philosophical Sources

The question of Chrysostom's philosophical sources is a difficult one. His classical rhetorical training indicates that he would have knowledge of philosophy, but whom exactly he knows, what concepts exactly he is choosing to use, what is merely common knowledge or images “in the water” of his culture are far more difficult matters to ascertain. On occasion, Chrysostom cites philosophers: Zeno, Socrates, Diagoras, Pythagoras, Aristotle, and above all, Plato, whom he mentions 30 times in his corpus. In this way we know that Chrysostom was familiar with classical philosophy. Further, many of his moral statements, as we will see, sound very much like Stoic teachings, but since he does not credit Stoic authors, and since these ideas would have been common among the intellectuals of Chrysostom's day, it is impossible to know with certainty whether he is using an idea because he read it in a Stoic author's work or a florilegium and found it useful or whether he is only drawing on a common Christian wisdom that was itself borrowed from Stoic thinkers.

Chrysostom's primary use for philosophy, and for Plato in particular, is as a foil for Paul or for Christ. According to Chrysostom and many of his predecessors, including Origen and the Cappadocians, the philosophers were intelligent, respectable teachers from whom Christians can learn, but their knowledge was incomplete. Christ has the full knowledge. Christ is the true philosopher and Christianity the true φιλοσοφία. Margaret

1 Adv. Iud. 5.3 (PG 48.886); In 1 Cor. hom. 7.7 (PG 61.63); and In Rom. hom. 3.2 (PG 60.414). The count of 30 references to Plato is from Chrysostomus Baur, John Chrysostom and His Time. Trans. Sr. M. Gonzaga, 2 vols. (Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1959), 1:306.
Mitchell notes Chrysostom's tendency to pit Paul against Plato, often using Plato as a metonym for all Greek philosophy, in a battle of philosophy in order to show Paul's supremacy. This victory is intended to be a victory of the “unlearned” Paul against the highest-educated philosophers, symbolic of the gospel's victory over all philosophy.² Chrysostom writes, “Do you not see that Paul put to flight the whole world, that he was more powerful than Plato and all the rest?”³ He states elsewhere:

This ‘barbarian’ [John the evangelist], then, by the writing of his gospel has taken possession of the whole world. With his body he has gained control of the middle of Asia, where of old all those of Greek persuasion used to teach philosophy, and there he is fearful to the demons. . . . He has blotted out and obliterated all the teachings of the pagans, while his become brighter day by day. From the time when both he and the other fishermen lived, the teachings of Pythagoras have fallen silent, as well as those of Plato.⁴

As with many of his predecessors, notably Basil in his Letter to Young Men, Chrysostom did not think Greek philosophers entirely useless because they were superseded by Christ. Instead, Chrysostom used philosophy as it aided his argument and pointed to Christ the true philosopher (and Christianity as the true φιλοσοφία). There are places where Chrysostom quotes from Plato's Apology, Republic, Crito, and Timaeus, among others.⁵ Aside from these specific quotations, there are also places in which Chrysostom alludes to Platonic ideas without a direct quotation, as when he uses the image of the soul as charioteer and horses: “When then we shall have disciplined these two faculties of the soul, ἐπιθυμία and θυμός, and have put them like well-broken horses

² Mitchell, The Heavenly Trumpet, 74–75. Often Chrysostom is trying to demonstrate that the ability to sound educated does not necessarily mean that a person is in possession of the truth. He does not think education unimportant but that it needs to be the right education and used toward proper ends (living in the Christian πολιτεία).
³ In Tit. hom. 2.2 (PG 62.673, NPNF 525).
⁴ In loh. hom. 2.2 (PG 59.31, FC 16).
⁵ Those listed are the most frequently cited, according to P. Ubaldi, “Di due citazioni di Platone in Giovanni Crisostomo,” Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica 28 (1900): 69–75. In Chrysostom, see Adv. opp. vit. mon. 2.4 (PG 47.336); Ibid. 3.11 (PG 47.367-68); and In loh. hom. 2.3 (PG 59.33) for a sampling.
under the yoke of reason, then let us set over them the mind as charioteer, that we may
“gain the prize of our high calling” [Phil. 3:14]; which God grant that we may all attain,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.”6 In another instance, Chrysostom uses the image to
describe the damage sin does to the soul: “It is your own soul that you have cut open; it is
there that you have inflicted a wound: you have flung your own charioteer from his
horses, you have got him dragging along the ground upon his back. And it is all one, as if
one driver being in a passion with another, should choose to be thus dragged along.”7
Chrysostom uses the Platonic image, but whether he gets it from the Phaedrus or whether
it is commonplace enough in the rhetorical world that it is a “stock image” of sorts is
impossible to know.8

Another example of a seeming borrowing from Plato is in Quod nem. laed., an
important treatise for understanding Chrysostom's anthropology and account of virtue.
Chrysostom appears to borrow his first argument from the tenth book of Plato's
Republic9: though Plato's argument is for the immortality of the soul, Chrysostom uses
the same beginning steps to prove that the only one who can harm a person is the person
himself. First Chrysostom discusses the definitions of good and evil, maintaining that

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6 In Eph. hom. 17.3 (PG 62.120-21, NPNF 132). For other examples, see In Gen. hom. 22.3 (PG
53.189); In 1 Cor. hom. 37.3 (PG 61.320); In Tit. hom. 5.2 (PG 62.689); and In Rom. hom. 14.2 (PG
60.525), where Chrysostom describes the Holy Spirit as the charioteer of the Christian soul. For an
insightful discussion of Chrysostom's use of Phaedrus imagery, see Bosinis, “Two Platonic Images in the
Rhetoric of John Chrysostom.”
7 In Act. apost. hom. 15.5 (PG 60.126, NPNF 99).
8 Chrysostom also uses the image of a winged soul that is lifted by love to heavenly realms.
Though the image originates in the Phaedrus, the winged soul is common in Chrysostom's time, a favorite
of the Cappadocians (see Nazianzen, Epigram 33; idem., Or. 2.22; Nyssa, In cant. cant. 5), making it even
harder to know where Chrysostom gets it. For a discussion of this image in Chrysostom, see Ibid., 433-36.
An excellent catalog of Chrysostom's references and allusions to Greek philosophers is found in P. R.
Coleman-Norton argues that Chrysostom's use of philosophers was primarily as a foil to demonstrate the
superiority of Christ and the gospel.
9 See the introduction to Quod nem. laed. in the NPNF for a detailed comparison, including a
translation of the relevant passage from Republic (NPNF 269-70).
things that are evil destroy, whereas good things preserve and benefit, just as Plato writes
(608e, Quod nem. laed. 2). Next Plato claims that everything has its own vice, something
that corrupts the thing alone, such as disease for the body, blight for corn, or rust for iron
(609a). Chrysostom, too, argues that everything has its particular evil, which he defines
more clearly as something destructive of a thing's virtue. Among many examples, he says
that rust corrupts iron, blight devastates corn, and disease destroys the body (Quod nem.
laed. 2).\(^{10}\)

The next step in Plato's logic is that only an object's vice is able to harm that
object: good things and neutral things cannot destroy; only the evil inherent to a thing can
destroy (609b). Here Plato will go on to argue for the immortality of the soul. Plato seeks
to demonstrate that the soul's particular evil cannot destroy the soul, only mar it (609b-c).
He begins his search with the admission that what harms the soul is “injustice,
licentiousness, cowardice, and ignorance” (609b).\(^ {11}\) Having established that these things
can harm but not completely destroy the soul, Plato argues that nothing else could destroy
the soul, either (609d-610a). Therefore, Plato concludes, since neither the soul's own
particular vice, nor anything else, can destroy a soul, the soul must be immortal (610e-
611a). Chrysostom begins in a similar way, looking for the vice peculiar to human
beings. Arguing against those who would claim poverty, disease, loss of property, or even
death are the evils that corrupt a person's virtue, Chrysostom claims that none of these
can harm a person's virtue, that a person herself is the only one capable of corroding her
virtue (Quod nem. laed. 2). Since vice attacks the virtue of a thing, Chrysostom begins
this section by defining the virtue of a human being. Through an examination of Job's

\(^{10}\) Though Chrysostom uses Plato's examples, and adds many more of his own, there are no
significant lexical echoes between the two authors. The echoes are in logic only.

\(^{11}\) ἀδικία τε καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ δειλία καὶ ἁμαθία
story Chrysostom concludes that a person's virtue does not lie in his wealth, health, or any other external thing, since Job was considered virtuous after the loss of all these (Quod nem. laed. 3). Chrysostom also inserts a secondary argument here, claiming that no being is able to harm a person's virtue either, just as Plato argues that nothing but a things particular vice can harm it. In the example of Job, the devil is unable to injure him; in the examples of Abel and Joseph, it is brothers who cannot harm (Quod nem. laed. 3-4). Chrysostom argues that it is not the one who suffers, but the one who causes suffering, whose virtue is injured, and that injury comes from within (Quod nem. laed. 5). Thus Chrysostom follows Plato as far as concluding that only the soul's particular vice can harm the soul, but where Plato goes on to argue for the immortality of the soul, Chrysostom moves to emphasizing the agency of the person herself in damaging her virtue.

Chrysostom refers as well to Plato's concept of the tripartite soul, once explicitly in De inani gloria et de educandis liberis, where Chrysostom preaches, “The seat and habitation of spirit, we are told, are the breast and the heart within the breast; of the appetitive part of the soul, the liver; of the reasoning part, the brain.”12 Chrysostom goes on to explain what each part does and how to train children to use the parts properly. This, however, is his only direct reference to a tripartite soul, though Chrysostom does use the charioteer image, as we have seen.

In most places, Chrysostom uses the more generic dualism of body and soul, which is more Stoic in nature.13 Certainly the argument that no one can harm a person

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12 Inan. glor. et ed. lib. 65 (SC162, Laistner 112). Τῷ μὲν οὖν θυμῷ φασιν εἰναλτότον καὶ οἰκίαν τὸ στήθος καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ στήθει καρδίαν · τῇ δὲ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τὸ ἡπαρ · τῷ λογιστικῷ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον.

13 Papageorgiou points out this emphasis in Chrysostom's In Rom. hom. (Panayiotis E Papageorgiou, “A Theological Analysis of Selected Themes in the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the
except himself, as well as his instructions to Olympias to remember that “insults, accusations, confiscation, exile, a sharpened sword, the sea, the warring of the whole world . . . are temporary and perishable, and happen in a mortal body without harming the vigilant soul” are redolent of Stoic influence.\textsuperscript{14} A case can also be made for Aristotelian elements in Chrysostom's account of the soul. Aristotle argues that the soul moves the body like a person plays an instrument or uses a tool, and we will see Chrysostom employ this same analogy in his \textit{In Rom. hom.} 13.\textsuperscript{15} Aristotle writes, “Each craft must employ its own tools, and each soul its own body.”\textsuperscript{16} Chrysostom has a similar opinion, writing in \textit{In Rom. hom.} 13.2, “As a lyre is subject to the musician and a ship to the helmsman, so the flesh is subject to the soul.”\textsuperscript{17} Wendy Mayer provides a helpful summary when she concludes, “John's conception of the soul is probably best described as eclectic.”\textsuperscript{18}

Chrysostom's emphasis in discussing the soul is, like his discussion of demons, not for the sake of speculation but for the practical edification of his audience. This is true of most treatises on the soul, which are similarly for edification of the audience. The

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Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans” (Ph.D., The Catholic University of America, 1995), 57–58.). The following chapter explores in more detail Chrysostom's understanding of the body-soul relationship. \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ep. ad Olymp.} 7.1 (SC 106). My translation. \textsuperscript{15} Raymond Laird also argues for the centrality of γνώμη to both Aristotle's and Chrysostom's understandings of soul, citing \textit{Nicomachean Ethics (NE)} 6.11 as an instance when Aristotle names γνώμη alongside νοῦς, φρόνησις, and σύνεσις as a δύναμις of the soul, as well as an ἐξεις: Εἰςὶ δὲ πᾶσαι αἱ ἐξεις εὑλόγως εἰς ταῦτα τίνεσθαι· λέγομεν γὰρ γνώμην καὶ σύνεσιν καὶ φρόνησιν καὶ νοῦν ἐπὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐπιφέροντες γνώμην ἔχειν καὶ νοῦν ἡδῆ, καὶ φρονίμους καὶ συνετοὺς. πᾶσαι γὰρ αἱ δυνάμεις αὕτη τῶν ἐσχῆτων εἰς καὶ τῶν καθ᾽ ἐκαστὸν. However, this is Laird's only cited instance of γνώμη in Aristotle, and Aristotle does not use the term at all in \textit{De anima}. It may play some role in Aristotle's account, but this instance is not enough to suggest that Chrysostom is thoroughly Aristotelian. If anything, the body as instrument metaphor is better evidence, and that would have been a commonplace image by Chrysostom's time. \textsuperscript{16} \textit{De anima} 1.3.407b26-27. δεῖ γὰρ τὴν μὲν τέχνην χρῆσθαι τοῖς όργάνοις, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν τῷ σώματι. The previous paragraph states, “The soul causes the body’s movement” (ἡ ψυχὴ μάλλον ἔκειν) (I.3.407b10). \textsuperscript{17} PG 60.509, Papageorgiou 254. ὡς κιθάραν κιθαριστῇ, καὶ ὡς ναὸν κυβερνήτῃ, οὕτως αὐτὴν ὑποκίσθαι τῇ ψυχῇ. \textsuperscript{18} Mayer, “The Persistence in Late Antiquity of Medico-Philosophical Psychic Therapy,” \textit{Journal of Late Antiquity} 8 (2015), author’s typescript.
difference in content is reflected in the difference of audience. In Chrysostom's case, the homilies focus on the relationship between the soul and body in the working of virtue and vice, or where responsibility for sin or virtue lies, since this is what he believes his audience to need. Plato, then, is useful for explaining that sin is a result of not allowing reason to bridle one's passions\(^{19}\) and for arguing that harm to virtue comes only from a person herself.\(^{20}\) Chrysostom uses what will fortify his argument and does not discuss the rest.

For all of this Platonic imagery and argumentation, however, it is interesting that his account of virtue appears to rely far more on Stoic concepts than on Platonic ones. This is more difficult to demonstrate in part because the scholarship on Stoicism itself is more complex. More of the sources are fragmentary, and Stoicism as a school comprises a range of ideas and authors. Nonetheless, Chrysostom's anthropology has significant similarities to Stoic accounts of virtue and vice, particularly his use of exemplars, his emphasis on detachment from earthly things, and his attention to human freedom and \(\piροαίρεσις\) in the classification of virtue and vice. Chrysostom does not mention Stoic authors by name the way he does Plato, but ideas and vocabulary are similar in places, as though they are a background which gives Chrysostom's ideas more texture and depth. Here we will examine the Stoic concept of virtue, how a person might become virtuous, and what role freedom plays in this account. The chapter ends with a discussion of ancient uses of \(\piροαίρεσις\). These investigations will set the context for our discussion of Chrysostom's own account of virtue which will both draw on, and diverge from, Stoic concepts.

\(^{19}\) See note 6 above.
\(^{20}\) *Quod nem. laed.* 2-6 (SC 62-95, NPNF 271-76).
Stoic Accounts of Virtue

Put simply, virtue according to the Stoics is living in harmony with Nature, or with the will of God. This is one commonality that spans various Stoic authors and eras. Nature, the will of God, is perfect reason and the order of the universe. Moreover, this reason is the same as that which human beings possess and, indeed, which makes them human and allows them to perceive the reason and order of the universe. Therefore, virtue is recognition of this order and acquiescence to it. Seneca's famous quip, “I do not obey God; rather, I agree with Him,” can be understood as the epitome of this view. There is also room, however, for a definition of virtue as a consistency of character. A virtuous person is one who will always act in accordance with nature.

Diogenes records a statement from Chrysippus (280-207 BCE) that offers a similar definition of virtue:

Living virtuously is equivalent to living in accordance with experience of the actual course of nature, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his De finibus; for our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe. And this is why the end may be defined as life in accordance with nature, or, in other words, in accordance with our own human nature as well as that of the universe, a life in which we refrain from every action forbidden by the law common to all things, that is to say, the right reason which pervades all things, and is identical with this Zeus, lord and ruler of all that is. And this very thing constitutes the virtue of the happy man and the smooth current of life, when all actions promote the harmony of the spirit dwelling in the individual man with the will of him who orders the universe.

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21 Ep. 96.2.
Right reason pervades the universe and is a law common to all things, and this is Zeus's will. The touchstone of virtue is harmony, the harmony of the individual's spirit with the will of Zeus, who orders the universe. When this harmony is achieved, a person is both virtuous and happy, and a person's actions affect this harmony. This paragraph also assumes that a person has access to the right reason of the universe and is able to know precisely what actions are in line with the will of Zeus. Because human nature is part of the nature of the universe, humans know the order by which they are to live as well as the actions forbidden to them. For Stoics, virtue is simple: perform the actions which line up with the will of God, the order of nature.

Yet a related question immediately arises, that of moral responsibility. If Stoics have a determinist understanding of the universe, and if virtue is living in accordance with Nature, which everyone should know how to do, then how can a person ever be responsible for his or her actions? How can a person be praised or blamed? This is a question under much investigation by scholars who see different Stoic authors attempting to address this issue, and one that must be dealt with here, since Chrysostom's argument for human freedom is founded on reward and punishment.

**Stoicism and Moral Responsibility**

The key to any Stoic's claim that a person can be responsible for his or her actions is to say that even within the determined order of the universe, there is some aspect of human action that is within our power (ἐφ' ἡµῖν). The debate concerns how to delineate and define what particularly is in a human being's power. A few scholars also question
whether any of the philosophers' solutions to this question of determinism and moral responsibility are adequate, though most contend that they are.\textsuperscript{23} Chrysippus (280-207 BCE) and Epictetus (55-135 CE) are the Stoic philosophers whose ideas are most examined in relation to this question. We have no extant writings from Chrysippus himself, but we do have quotations of Chrysippus by other writers such as Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch and Cicero, and scholars have agreed that these quotations are reliable and provide an accurate representation of Chrysippus's thought.\textsuperscript{24} Though we will examine both Chrysippus and Epictetus, we will focus on Epictetus because his understanding of things that are ἔφ’ ἣμιν and the centrality of προαίρεσις to his ethical theory will most help us understand Chrysostom's own account of virtue.

Those who want to understand Chrysippus as offering a possibility for moral responsibility within the context of Stoic determinism attempt to explain the theory by re-defining freedom. Rather than freedom as the “ability to do otherwise,” freedom is understood as the autonomy of the agent.\textsuperscript{25} Susanne Bobzien argues that Chrysippus claims fate works through human beings, through their dispositions and beliefs, and in

\textsuperscript{23} Susanne Bobzien approaches the question by exploring the Stoics' own questions, responses, and debates about determinism and purposeful action (Susanne Bobzien, \textit{Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)). Brad Inwood argues, “The question of moral responsibility is central to the Stoic treatment of action. They devised a psychology of action which enabled them to hold men responsible for all their actions. . . . The challenge to a belief in moral responsibility which stimulated interest in the problem came from a form of determinism” (Brad Inwood, \textit{Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)).

\textsuperscript{24} For an excellent overview of the scholarship on Chrysippus sources, see Bobzien, \textit{Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy}, 9-10.

\textsuperscript{25} This is Bobzien's phrasing of the issue (Ibid., 235), and other scholars discuss a similar idea. For instance, Dobbins argues, “According to Epictetus, freedom is secured by limiting oneself to τὰ προαιρετικά, or what he otherwise calls τὰ ἐφ’ ἣμιν” (Epictetus, \textit{Discourses and Selected Writings}, trans. Robert F Dobbin, New ed., Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 2008), 128). Frede defines freedom in Stoicism on the basis of what the agent is able to do without coercion, rather than what he is able to choose: “Freedom is the ability to act on one's own initiative, as opposed to being compelled to act the way one does, running after some things and avoiding others, because one has enslaved oneself to them” (Michael Frede, \textit{A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought}, ed. A. A. Long (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 68).
this way, since the human is still the agent of his action and fate is not forcing him but working through his character, he can be held responsible for his actions. This is true of Epictetus’s account as well. Both philosophers insist that fate does not act as some kind of external force compelling the agent to act in a given way. Gellius, one of the recorders of Chrysippus's ideas, titles one section of his *Attic Nights*, “How Chrysippus also maintained the power and inevitable nature of fate, but at the same time declared that we had control over our plans and decisions,” and quotes Chrysippus's response to the question of the compatibility of determinism, freedom, and responsibility. Chrysippus replies, “The order, the law, and the inevitable quality of fate set in motion the various classes of things and the beginnings of causes, but the carrying out of our designs and thoughts, and even our actions, are regulated by each individual's own will (voluntas) and the characteristics of his mind.” Both Epictetus and Chrysippus define freedom as the absence of compulsion, the absence of the necessary, and both claim that humans have this freedom even within a framework of determinism.

The free soul the Stoics believed in was a unified soul. The soul has different powers, but it is not composed of parts as in Plato's account. In this understanding of a

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28 *NA 7.2*. Gould points out that part of Chrysippus's commitment to moral responsibility is his understanding that wicked people must suffer punishment for their crimes. Such punishment, however, requires agency. Therefore, the crimes cannot be the work of fate alone. Just as we will see with Epictetus, Chrysippus assigned this responsibility to the moment of assent (Josiah B. Gould, *The Philosophy of Chrysippus* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 149).
29 The soul is said to be composed of eight “parts” (μέρη), but Stoic authors do not mean conflicting parts as does Plato. For Stoics, the soul is unified, and the “parts” are perhaps understood better as “functions” or ‘powers’ of the soul’ (Gould, *Philosophy of Chrysippus*, 129). Aetius offers a helpful summary: “The Stoics say that the commanding-faculty is the soul’s highest part, which produces impressions, assents, perceptions and impulses. They also call it the reasoning faculty. From the commanding-faculty there are seven parts of the soul which grow out and stretch out into the body like the tentacles of an octopus. Five of these are the senses, sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. . . . Of the remainder, one is called seed, and this is breath extending from the commanding-faculty to the genitals.
unified soul, Stoics held to a theory of human action wherein an impression or appearance (φάντασμα) occurs to the mind, the person must assent (συγκατάθεσις) to the impression, and then an impulse (ὁρμή) toward action occurs, causing the person to act on the impression. Assent is the aspect that is under human control. The mind can choose either to give or to withhold assent to a given impression, and it is this aspect to which responsibility can be attached. Assent separates humans from animals.

That there are things which are ἐφ’ ἡμῖν is the key to understanding the Stoic account of virtue and responsibility. It is also central to understanding Chrysostom's account of virtue and responsibility. In Chrysostom's account of virtue as highlighted by his demonology, προαιρεσίς is that which is ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, which means that it is the locus of moral responsibility. We will see in the next chapter how Chrysostom tells his congregation that the devil is powerless to make them sin because they have a προαιρεσίς that is free; they are responsible for their own actions. Therefore, he urges, the audience should remember this and be virtuous. Because προαιρεσίς is so significant to Chrysostom's work, it is important to explore further how the term has been used by authors prior to Chrysostom in order to provide context for understanding whether and

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30 This broad outline of human action can be found described in Inwood, Ethics and Human Action, 42-101; Gould, The Philosophy of Chrysippus, 33, 53-60; and Frede, A Free Will, 35-44.

31 Impulse is what separates animals from plants: “Animals have the additional faculty of impulse” (Diogenes 7.85). “A rational animal, however, in addition to its impressionistic nature, has reason which passes judgement on impressions, rejecting some of these and accepting others, in order that the animal may be guided accordingly” (Origen, De prin. 3.1.3, endorsing Stoic ideas). Both quotations are from Long and Sedley, The Hellenistic Philosophers, 346 and 313, respectively.

32 For a sampling of Epictetus's use of this phrase, see Disc. 1.1, 6, 18, 19, 22, 29; 2.2, 5, 13; 3.3, 24; 4.7, 10. How Epictetus intends the phrase is unpacked below.
how Chrysostom uses it differently. Among the philosophers, very few authors used the term προαιρεσις at all, and only Aristotle and Epictetus used it with any frequency or import.33 We will begin by looking at Epictetus's notion of responsibility and what he considers ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, which will be the προαίρεσις.

Epictetus does not speak directly of fate, but insists that the gods have given humans a realm of things in their own power which cannot be compelled by any external forces. He writes, “What has He [god] given me for my own and subject to my authority (αὐτεξούσιον), and what has He left for Himself? Everything within the sphere of the moral purpose (τὰ προαιρετικὰ) He has given me, subjected them to my control, unhampered and unhindered.”34 The gods themselves have decreed that humans be freed from compulsion, and this absence of compulsion is what allows for moral responsibility. Therefore, responsibility resides in the fact that a person is the agent of her actions and is able to act free of external constraint; freedom is the basis of responsibility. Since she is the one who acts, she is responsible. Epictetus writes, “the nature of the good as well as of the evil lies in a use of the impressions of the senses (ἐν χρήσει φαντασιῶν), but the things which lie outside the province of the moral purpose admit neither the nature of the

33 Robert Dobbin reports that the term is entirely absent from Xenophon, Lysias, Andocides, Isaeus, and Dinarchus, appears only once in Plato's works, four times in Isocrates's, and three times each in Aeschines's and Hyperides's corpuses. Demosthenes does use the term about twenty times, but this is still minuscule in comparison to both Aristotle and Epictetus. Even then, Epictetus is the one who uses the term such that it becomes a central aspect of his ethical theory; for Aristotle it is not central but only one aspect (Dobbin, “Proairesis in Epictetus,” 111).

evil, nor the nature of the good.”

In the Stoic account, this use of appearances, this assent, is the key moment of action and the locus of moral responsibility.

Epictetus discusses assent in different words but means that what a person can be held responsible for is not the appearance of impressions, but for what a person does with those impressions. He writes, “That which is best of all and supreme over all is the only thing which the gods have placed in our power, the right use of appearances; but all other things they have not placed in our power.” In this statement Epictetus claims that the only thing human beings have control over is the right use of the appearances they receive. They cannot control external circumstances or the appearance of impressions, but they may control what they do with the appearances. For Epictetus, a person decides whether she will act on the impression. In one place he defines this as the “faculty of choice and refusal, of desire and aversion, or, in a word, the faculty which makes use of external impressions.”

A second, more subtle, claim Epictetus makes is that only the human being has control over his use of appearances. The gods have given each human being this power, and they have given it to each individual human being alone, not to any other human. Since it is in her power, no other being may force her to use her appearances in a particular manner. The use of appearances is hers alone. Epictetus says this elsewhere also: “It is not possible that that which is by nature free should be disturbed or thwarted by anything but itself. But it is a man’s own judgements that disturb him,” and “Who is

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35 Disc. 2.1. ἡ οὐσία τοῦ ἁγαθοῦ ἔστιν ἐν χρήσει φαντασιῶν καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ ὑσαίτως, τά δ᾽ ἀπροαίρετα οὔτε τήν τοῦ κακοῦ δέχεται φύσιν οὔτε τήν τοῦ ἁγαθοῦ.
36 "τὸ κράτιστον ἀπάντον καὶ κυριεύον οἱ θεοὶ μόνον ἔρποτε ἡμῖν ἐποίησαν, τὴν χρῆσιν τὴν ὀρθῆν ταῖς φαντασίαις, τά δ᾽ άλλα οὐκ ἔρποτε ἡμῖν" (Disc. 1.1).
37 Disc. 1.1 (Loeb, 131:11). τὴν δύναμιν ταύτην τὴν ὀρθητικὴν τις καὶ ἀφορμητικὴν καὶ ὀρεκτικὴν τις καὶ ἐκκλητικὴν καὶ ἀπλῶς τὴν χρηστικὴν ταῖς φαντασίαις According to Epictetus this faculty comes directly from the gods as a part of themselves they gave to humanity.
there left, then, for me to fear? The man who is master of what? The things that are under my control? But there is no such man."\textsuperscript{38} This understanding that a person is alone able to use his appearances is the basis for Epictetus's claim that humans are responsible for their actions.

The way to become virtuous for Epictetus is to learn how to use one's appearances correctly. A person can learn to distinguish between what is and what is not within her power. So Epictetus writes:

What, then, does it mean to be getting an education? It means to be learning how to apply the natural preconceptions to particular cases, each to the other in conformity with nature, and, further, to make the distinction, that some things are under our control while others are not under our control. Under our control are moral purpose and all the acts of moral purpose; but not under our control are the body, the parts of the body, possessions, parents, brothers, children, country—in a word, all that with which we associate.\textsuperscript{39}

That a person can learn to use his appearances correctly also suggests that humans are not inherently able to make these distinctions, which explains why there are so few sages.

Though much of the Stoic theory of action and discussion of virtue can make it sound as though humans know what is the rational, right course of action and thus virtue is easy, Epictetus makes it clear that humans are not born with this knowledge. They must be educated in the correct use of their appearances in order to be virtuous.

In perhaps the strongest statement about what is required for a person to be virtuous, Epictetus writes:

What is by its very nature capable of hindering (τί ἐμποδίζειν πέφυκεν) the προαιρέσεις? Nothing that lies outside its sphere (ἄπροαιρέτον οὐδέν), but only itself [προαιρέσεις] when perverted. For this reason moral purpose [the προαιρέσεις] becomes the only vice, or the only virtue.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Disc. 1.19, 29 (Loeb 131:128-29, 184-85).
\textsuperscript{39} Disc. 1.22 (Loeb 131:142-43).
\textsuperscript{40} Disc. 2.23 (Loeb 131:400-403).
What constitutes vice or virtue is not the act performed but the προαίρεσις, the use of appearances which is in a person's power. No external circumstance, no god, no fate, can compel a person's προαίρεσις; it is free. Since it is free, it is the seat of virtue and vice, which are mental, consisting solely in how one uses or responds to one's appearances. The προαίρεσις is the locus of human freedom and thus moral responsibility.

Προαίρεσις in Aristotle and Epictetus

Before moving to a look at the importance of προαίρεσις in Epictetus's works, we need to take a moment to examine Aristotle's use of the term, since Aristotle is prior to Epictetus and is often assumed to be one of the foundational sources on which Stoic thought developed. After a brief look at Aristotle's use of προαίρεσις we will come back to an investigation of Epictetus's use. Aristotle's most in-depth analysis of προαίρεσις occurs in Nicomachean Ethics (NE) III.2-3, where he first says that προαίρεσις is “intimately connected with virtue” and affords “a surer test of character than do our actions.”41 He then further distinguishes προαίρεσις from desire, passion, wish, or some kind of opinion before suggesting, “Perhaps we may define it [προαίρεσις] as voluntary action preceded by deliberation, since choice involves reasoning and some process of thought. Indeed previous deliberation seems to be implied by the very term προαίρετον, which denotes something chosen before other things.”42 This definition makes προαίρεσις distinct from deliberation, another important aspect of Aristotle's ethics, but connects

42 NE 3.2.17. ἀλλὰ ἢρα γε τὸ προβεβουλευμένον: ἡ γὰρ προαίρεσις μετὰ λόγου καὶ διανοίας, ὑποσημαίνειν δ` ἐσοκε καὶ τούνομα ως ὁν πρὸ ἑπέρων αἴρετον.
προαιρεσις to deliberation by requiring deliberation prior to προαιρεσις. He further clarifies his thinking: “As then the object of προαιρεσις is something within our power (ἐφ’ ἡμῖν) which after deliberation we desire, προαιρεσις will be a deliberate desire of things in our power (ἐφ’ ἡμῖν); for we first deliberate, then select, and finally fix our desire according to the result of our deliberation.”43 Dobbin simplifies this definition to “reasoned desire.”44

Aristotle's definition also highlights the 'choice' aspect of προαιρεσις. Προαιρεσις is the reasoned choice of one action over another in a given situation, and it is this ability to choose that makes moral responsibility for actions, and thus virtue, possible. The other point to note is that προαιρεσις is concerned only with things in our power (ἐφ’ ἡμῖν), a theme Epictetus will emphasize as well. Aristotle writes, “It is manifest that προαιρεσις is not opinion either, nor something that one simply thinks; for we saw that a thing chosen is something in one's own power, but we have opinions as to many things that do not depend on us.”45 A bit later he asserts, “It is clear that προαιρεσις is deliberative apperception of things within one's power.”46 Virtue concerns only the things over which we have control. So according to Aristotle's definition, προαιρεσις, as the choice of action concerning what is within a person's power, is at the center of virtue. It is the locus of moral responsibility.

43 NE 3.3.19. ὁντος δή τοῦ προαιρετοῦ βουλευτοῦ ὑρεκτοῦ τῶν ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, καὶ ἡ προαιρεσις ἂν εἰη βουλευτηκή ὁρεξις τῶν ἐφ’ ἡμῖν· ἐκ τοῦ βουλεύσασθαι γάρ κρίναντες ὁρεγόμεθα κατὰ τὴν βουλεύσαν.
44 Robert Dobbin, “Proairesis in Epictetus,” 114.
46 EE 2.10.17 (1226b16-17, Loeb 294). δήλων ὅτι ἡ προαιρεσις μὲν ἐστὶν ὁρεξις τῶν ἐφ’ αὐτό βουλευτηκή.
I use the phrase “moral responsibility” to refer to that which is required for praise
or blame to be assigned to a person for a given action. I further mean that one is
responsible for an action—that is, he could be praised or blamed for an action—because
that person is himself the cause of that action, not someone or something else.\(^\text{47}\) The
autonomy of the agent is key here, and thus, too, the phrase ἐφ’ ἡμῖν. If an action is ἐφ’ ἡμῖν it is not up to someone else, but to us alone. Therefore, those for whom an action is ἐφ’ ἡμῖν are the ones causally responsible for the action and the ones to whom praise or blame can be assigned. Aristotle writes, “A man is the origin of his actions, and . . . the province of deliberation is to discover actions within one's own power to perform.”\(^\text{48}\) He also contends, “Virtue also depends on ourselves. And so also does vice. . . . If it is in our power to do and to refrain from doing right and wrong, and if, as we saw, being good or bad is doing right or wrong, it consequently depends on us whether we are virtuous or vicious.”\(^\text{49}\) Moral responsibility is the condition of humanity that allows for actions to be labelled virtue or vice. We will see that Epictetus has a similar understanding of moral responsibility, and for the remainder of this chapter, I use the phrase as just described.

Epictetus's use of προαιρέσις is also highly specific and also the central aspect of
his account of virtue, though he is not so kind as to offer an explicit definition. Epictetus

\(^{47}\) Bobzien provides a helpful and complex discussion of what is meant by “moral responsibility” and how responsibility relates to determinism in her Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy, 276-290. She suggests there are two primary understandings of “moral responsibility,” the first of which is the autonomy-based model explained here. The second is “the freedom to do otherwise.” According to this second conception, a person is responsible for an action and could incur praise or blame when he could have done something other than he did but did not. This second type is often related to feelings of guilt or regret. I focus on the first understanding here because it is that reflected in Aristotle and Epictetus. Among the Stoics, moral responsibility is a question, as we saw, that arises out of the commitment to determinism. Chrysostom, similarly, will be concerned with moral responsibility so as to ward off the possibility that someone other than the agent—whether God, the devil, or some other factor—is the cause of an action because Chrysostom is concerned that praise or blame be assigned correctly.

\(^{48}\) NE 3.3.15 (Loeb 139). ἰνθρωπός εἶναι ἀρχή τῶν πράξεων, ἡ δὲ βουλὴ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶ πρακτῶν

\(^{49}\) NE 3.5.2-4 (Loeb 143-45). ἐφ’ ἡμῖν δὴ καὶ ἡ ἀρετή. ὁμοίος δὲ καὶ ἡ κακία. . . . εἰ δ’ ἐφ' ἡμῖν τὰ καλὰ πράττειν καὶ τὰ αἰσχρὰ, ὁμοίος δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ πράττειν, τοῦτο δ’ ἦν τὸ ἀγαθὸς καὶ κακὸς εἶναι, ἐφ’ ἡμῖν ἢρα τὸ ἐπεικέσι καὶ φαύλοις εἶναι.
is the foremost Stoic to use the term, and uses προαίρεσις to mean a rational decision and something very like will, though void of any notion of will power, even as it is often translated into English as “will.”

It also appears primarily in discussions of the things that are “up to us” (ἐφ’ ἡµῖν). Epictetus seems to claim for προαίρεσις a position as a faculty or power (δύναµις) of the soul, but without suggesting it is its own part of the soul, since the soul is single and unified in Epictetus's Stoic thinking. The προαίρεσις is a person's using his appearances. It is, further, the faculty which tells a person whether a thing can be evil or good, since only what is within the control of the προαίρεσις can be either: “Appearances also propose questions to us. A certain person's son is dead. Answer; the thing is not within the power of the προαίρεσις: it is not an evil.”

The action of this προαίρεσις faculty would seem to be immediately prior to the moment of assent. A person decides how she will use her appearances, which ones she will accept as true and right to act upon, then she may assent or not, which leads to the impulse and the action. Yet that scheme divides the process too neatly. In fact, “process” is too neat a word. Προαίρεσις is part of assent. In this sense, the προαίρεσις is a rational decision, not a faculty distinct from reason, as though a person reasons first and then desires to do something based on her reasoning. Instead, προαίρεσις itself involves an act of reasoning; it is pervasive: “Reason is the faculty which analyses and perfects the rest.”

Still, προαίρεσις is the central aspect of assent, and assent is the central aspect of determining virtue or vice, which makes προαίρεσις an integral part of moral responsibility and virtue.

50 This is in contrast to translations of Aristotle's works, which prefer “choice.”
51 Disc. 3.8.
53 Disc. 1.17.
One other important aspect of Epictetus's understanding of προαίρεσις is that the προαίρεσις is the part of the person identifiable with the self. He makes statements such as “‘I will put you in chains.’ What are you saying, man? Me? My leg you will put in chains, but my προαίρεσις not even Zeus can conquer,” and “He may report that some person speaks ill of you. What then is that to you? Or that your father is planning something or other. Against whom? Against your προαίρεσις? How can he? But is it against your poor body, against your little property? You are quite safe: it is not against you.” Epictetus has here claimed that the part of a person which is central is the προαίρεσις. It is the part known to others as “you.” Whereas modern readers think of “you” or the “self” as the unified soul and body, Epictetus (and other Stoics) do not have this understanding. A. A. Long refers to the προαίρεσις as “the bearer of personal identity.” Even more strongly, Epictetus writes, “You are not flesh and hair, but προαίρεσις.” Elsewhere he makes a similar statement, “Are you then a utensil? No, but προαίρεσις.” The way a person uses his appearances or impressions is the only thing a person can control, and so it is the aspect of a person which can be identified with that person.

One final aspect of προαίρεσις implied in these assurances of Epictetus is that it is a faculty so intrinsic to the self that nothing can harm it but itself. Epictetus writes,

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54 Sorabji raises two important issues with the simple equation of the προαίρεσις with the self in Epictetus's works in “Epictetus on 'Proairesis' and Self.” The first issue is how a person can be his προαίρεσις if he can also destroy his προαίρεσις. The second issue is that Epictetus sometimes implies more than one “self,” which means that “you are your προαίρεσις” needs to be clarified. Sorabji does not resolve these issues but keeps them in mind as he describes what προαίρεσις is in Epictetus's usage and how it differs from Aristotle's before him (Sorabji, “Epictetus on ‘Proairesis’ and the Self,” 87).
55 Disc. 1.1.
56 Disc. 3.18.
58 Disc. 3.1.
59 Disc. 4.5
“Nothing which is independent of the προαιρέσις can hinder or damage the προαιρέσις, and the προαιρέσις can only hinder or damage itself,”60 and “Nothing has power to conquer προαιρέσις except itself.”61 The corollary to this is that the προαιρέσις is what determines moral responsibility, as we saw in the previous section, when Epictetus writes that the προαιρέσις alone is vice or virtue.62 Since it is what a person has power over, and since only the person himself, no outside force, has power over it, it is the locus of responsibility, what allows for praise or blame. This is the significant commonality in both Aristotle and Epictetus's thinking, which is important to remember when dealing with Chrysostom's thinking, as Chrysostom also argues for the inability of anything to hinder a person's προαιρέσις. Indeed, that is the core of his argument in Quod nem. laed. The προαιρέσις is the locus of moral responsibility and what determines virtue or vice in a person. It is to that discussion of responsibility and virtue that we now turn.

60 Disc. 3.19. προαιρέσιν γάρ οὐδὲν δύναται κολᾶσαι ἤ βλάψαι ἄπροαιρετον εἰ μὴ αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν.
61 Disc. 1.29. προαιρέσιν δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλο νικῆσαι δύναται, πλῆν αὐτὴν ἑαυτὴν.
62 Disc. 2.23. κακία μόνη αὐτὴ γίνεται ἢ ἀρετὴ μόνη.
CHAPTER 5: CHRYSTOS TOM'S ANTHROPOLOGY

In chapter three we explored Chrysostom's demonology and saw that, though he speaks occasionally about demons' origins and natures, Chrysostom's emphasis is on demonic activities and limits. The point Chrysostom emphasizes most to his audience is that the devil's power is limited and unable to harm a person's virtue. This statement has two implications for the congregation. First, the congregants ought not fear demons as they do because demons cannot cause any true harm. The congregation fears demons because it believes demons can hurt them with unemployment, disease, or death, but Chrysostom maintains that those things do not constitute true harm. True harm is harm to the soul, and that harm is sin, or injury to virtue. Therefore, second, since demons are limited and unable to harm a person's virtue, human beings are responsible for their own state of virtue. This understanding removes an excuse for sin, emboldens the audience with the real possibility of victory over the devil, and allows Chrysostom to exhort them to vigilant effort to defeat the devil by developing their virtue.

Having established that Chrysostom speaks about demons in order to encourage virtue in his congregants, we must now examine Chrysostom's exhortations more closely and discover what he means by virtue. This chapter will discuss how Chrysostom's demonology highlights his anthropology and helps us to understand what Chrysostom is exhorting his congregation to when he urges them to be virtuous. We will start with an investigation of the terms Chrysostom uses most often to speak about virtue: προαιρεσίς and γνώμη. Once we know what Chrysostom means by these terms and what kind of history they have, we will look at how Chrysostom uses them and see that his primary employment is in contrast with φύσις. After an investigation of what Chrysostom intends
by φύσις, we will explore the contrast of προαιρεσίς or γνώμη with φύσις, where we will discover that this contrast highlights human freedom and self-determination. In the next section of the chapter we will turn from the mechanics of virtue to a discussion of the definition of virtue. Chrysostom defines virtue as both “having true doctrine and living rightly,”¹ which he encourages by using Biblical exemplars. What will become apparent is that virtue, the proper exercise of one's προαιρεσίς, is dependent on one's having a heavenly orientation. A person must have a greater attachment to eternal things than she does to temporal things. With this disposition, a person is able to see circumstances as they truly are and to know what real harm looks like. The chapter will then close by drawing the discussion back to the significance of demons in Chrysostom's account of virtue, demonstrating that understanding Chrysostom's use of demons to highlight his anthropology helps us better understand his comments about virtue, which is important because virtue is an integral aspect of Chrysostom's soteriology, the subject of my sixth, and final, chapter.

Προαιρεσίς and γνώμη

In speaking of demonic interaction with human beings, Chrysostom's key term is προαιρεσίς. We saw in chapter four that this is word has particular significance as the locus of moral responsibility in both Aristotle and Epictetus's ethics. Chrysostom also makes προαιρεσίς the seat of morality. In one instance, speaking about the parable of the sheep and goats and the reason each group went to a different end, Chrysostom puts the matter starkly, stating that προαιρεσίς is the cause:

¹ Quod nem. laed. 3 (SC 70, NPNF 273).
How then was the end not the same? Because the προαιρεσις did not permit it. For this alone made the difference. On this account the one set went to Gehenna, but the other to the Kingdom. But if the Devil were the cause of their sins, they would not be destined to be chastened, when another sinned and drove them on. Do you see here both those who sin, and those who do good works? . . . Do you see again that the προαιρεσις is the cause of the end, not the devil?2

Προαιρεσις “alone made the difference” (αὐτὴ γὰρ μόνη τὴν διαίρεσιν ἐστήσετο); it is the locus of moral responsibility, that which makes both praise and blame possible.3

Chrysostom tells his congregation, “Take knowledge of the cause of the sin, and you will find that it is none other than yourself who has sinned. Everywhere there is a need of a good προαιρεσις.”4 Προαιρεσις alone is the cause of sin.

When in the final homily of De diab. tent. Chrysostom speaks to his congregation about those who had been attending the theater instead of worship, he emphasizes προαιρεσις as the cause:

The day before yesterday we set on foot our sermon concerning the Devil, out of our love for you. But others, the day before yesterday while these matters were being set on foot here, took their places in the theater, and were looking on at the Devil's show. . . . They were eating of the Devil's garbage: you were feeding on spiritual unguents. . . . Did the Devil deceive them? How did he not deceive you? You and they are men alike; I mean as regards your nature. You and they have the same soul, you have the same desires, so far as nature is concerned. How is it then

2 De diab. tent. 2.3 (SC 174, NPNF 193).

3 In the previous chapter I defined moral responsibility for the Stoics as that which allows for praise and blame of a person regarding a given action. I further defined responsibility as agency or causality. A person is responsible for things she herself—and no one else—causes. I am responsible for typing these words because I and I alone pressed the keys. With Chrysostom it is much the same. First, moral responsibility is still that which allows for praise and blame. With regard to morality, Chrysostom is especially concerned with reward and punishment. What enables a person to earn a reward or to deserve punishment is, then, the seat of moral responsibility. Second, agency and cause are again central. Chrysostom's primary move is to say that a person is responsible for her sin because she—and no one or no thing else—is the one who caused it. We will see that self-determination and the absence of compulsion are central to this concept. All of this is what should be understood by “moral responsibility” in this chapter.

4 Ibid. 2.2 (SC 168, NPNF 192). Ἐπιγνόθη τὸν αὐτὸν τῆς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ οὐδένα ἄλλον εὑρόσεις, ἢ τὸν ἡμαρτηκότα σέ. Πανταχοὶ προαιρέσεως χρεία γὰρ ἀγάθης. Chrysostom says this in response to those who claim the devil is the cause of their sin, a problem in his congregation: “[The devil] wishes extremely to attribute the cause of our sins to himself in order that we, being nourished by these hopes, and entering on all kinds of evil, may increase the chastening in our own case, and may meet with no pardon from having transferred the cause to him” (De diab. tent. 1.5 (SC 144, NPNF 189)).
that you and they were not in the same place? Because you and they have not the
same προαίρεσις.\textsuperscript{5}

Chrysostom reframes the choice so that it is not merely about attending the theater or
worship, but a choice between Satan or Christ in order to urge his audience against
specific sins. Put so starkly, how could they but follow Christ? The sermon continues to
say that the choice to attend worship is the strongest proof that “in every case, the
προαίρεσις is lord.”\textsuperscript{6}

For a few decades now, scholars have noted Chrysostom's emphasis on
προαίρεσις. In 1964, Demetrius Trakatellis argues in an article on Chrysostom's
anthropology, “This word [προαίρεσις] describes the only, yet so decisive, possibility of
man, all that is asked from him in order to make possible his renovation and rebirth in
Christ. This important and most significant word is proairesis, i.e. man's intention, man's
will to do the will of God, man's choice of God.”\textsuperscript{7} In an article on Chrysostom's
interpretation of Romans in 1991, Trakatellis again supports the centrality of προαίρεσις.\textsuperscript{8}
Edward Nowak was another of the early scholars to explore this term in Chrysostom's
thought in his Le chrétien devant la souffrance: Étude sur la pensée de Jean Chrysostome
in 1973.\textsuperscript{9} He finds that Chrysostom uses προαίρεσις to explain the origin of evil, often
contrasting προαίρεσις with φύσις. The locus of moral responsibility is the προαίρεσις, and it is also therefore what will lead a person to heaven or hell. Christopher A. Hall, in
his 1991 dissertation, a translation and interpretation of Chrysostom's On Providence (Ad
eos qui scand.), also explores Chrysostom's use and understanding of προαίρεσις. Hall

\textsuperscript{5} De diab. tent. 2.1 (SC 154-56, NPNF 191).
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{7} Trakatellis, “Man Fallen and Restored, in the Teaching of St. John Chrysostom,” 573.
\textsuperscript{8} Trakatellis, “Being Transformed,” 216.
\textsuperscript{9} Nowak, Le chrétien devant la souffrance, 57–69.
concludes that προαιρεσις is a key term and concept in Chrysostom's anthropology and that it signifies the responsible faculty in humans.10 A few years later, Panayiotis E. Papageorgiou also finds προαιρεσις to be a central aspect of Chrysostom's anthropology and essential for understanding Chrysostom's *In Rom. hom.* 11 Most recently, Adina Peleanu discusses the import of προαιρεσις for Chrysostom in her introduction to the critical edition of *De diab. tent.* 12 She argues, “The notion of προαιρεσις runs like a red thread through all the corpus of John Chrysostom,” and she notes that the discussions of προαιρεσις, a term that occurs nearly 800 times in Chrysostom’s corpus, and are always practical, never theoretical.13 In contrast to Methodius or the Cappadocians, who are inclined on occasion to engage in theoretical explorations of freedom and will, Chrysostom speaks practically of the ways in which his congregation ought to attend to their προαιρεσις.

In a recent monograph, *Mindset, Moral Choice and Sin in the Anthropology of John Chrysostom,* Raymond Laird argues that those scholars who have found the key to Chrysostom's anthropology in προαιρεσις—in particular, Nowak, Hall, and Traktellis—have missed something vital. Laird argues that γνώμη is in fact the key term for Chrysostom, and that “mindset,” as he translates it, is the final locus of moral responsibility. For Laird, γνώμη controls προαιρεσις: “What this study does do is move the concentration away from the προαιρεσις (moral choice) to the controlling and motivating faculty behind it, the γνώμη.”14 Following Nowak, Hall does grant a place for γνώμη in addition to προαιρεσις. He translates γνώμη as “judgment” and says that the

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13 Ibid., 34.
judgment a person makes about a matter is a primary factor in the way a person will choose to respond or to act, which requires that the γνώμη and προαίρεσις be connected.\(^\text{15}\) This would sound like support for Laird’s argument, but Laird sees Hall and Nowak as incomplete because they, among others, noticed this link and still gave priority to προαίρεσις in Chrysostom’s thought.

Laird argues that this passage from Chrysostom’s In Rom. hom. 13, on Rom 7:19-20, indicates the relationship between προαίρεσις and γνώμη:

Do you see how Paul acquits both the οὐσία of the soul and the οὐσία of the flesh and transfers the blame entirely to the evil action? For if he did not wish to do it, the soul is freed from blame. If he himself did not accomplish it, the body is also acquitted. And the entire blame belongs to the πονήρα προαίρεσις. For the οὐσία of the soul and the οὐσία of the body are not the same as the οὐσία of the προαίρεσις. The first two οὐσίαι are ἔργα of God; the third οὐσία is a κίνησις that comes from ourselves and is directed toward whatever object to which we may wish to lead it. Βούλησις is a natural thing and comes from God. But such a use of the will belongs to us and comes from our own γνώμη.\(^\text{16}\)

According to Laird, this passage defines προαίρεσις as “a form of chosen desire that has its source in the γνώμη.”\(^\text{17}\) Laird also notes a statement where Chrysostom speaks of “the προαίρεσις of our γνώμη” as the origin of virtue and vice, and the phrasing does suggest that the προαίρεσις is some kind of function or movement of the γνώμη.\(^\text{18}\) This is the only section where Laird discusses the relationship between προαίρεσις and γνώμη; the rest of

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\(^{16}\) In Rom. hom. 13.2 (PG 60.510, Papageorgiou 255). Εἰδος pος καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν τῆς σαρκὸς ἀπαλλάξας ἐγκλήματος, τὸ πᾶν ἐπὶ τὴν πονηρὰν πράξαν μετέστησεν: Εἰ γὰρ οὐ θέλει τὸ κακόν, ἀπῆλλακτι ἡ ψυχή, καὶ εἰ αὐτὸς αὐτὸ μὴ κατεργάζεται, ἡλευθέρωται καὶ τὸ σώμα, καὶ μόνης τῆς πονηρᾶς προαιρέσεως ἐστὶ τὸ πᾶν. Οὐ γὰρ ταυτὸν ψυχῆς οὐσία καὶ σώματος καὶ προαιρέσεως, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἐστὶν ἔργα Θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ ἔξω ἡμῶν αὐτὸν γνωμενή κίνησις, πρὸς θεόν ἄν αὐτὴν βούληθημεν ἀγαπεῖν. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ βούλησις, ἐμφυτοῦ καὶ παρὰ Θεοῦ· ἡ δὲ τοιαύτη βούλησις, ἡμετέρου καὶ τῆς γνώμης ἡμῶν.

\(^{17}\) Laird, Mindset, Moral Choice and Sin, 107.

\(^{18}\) In Gen. hom. 31.6 (PG 53.290): Εἰδος πὸς οὐκ ἐν τῇ φύσει, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῇ προαιρέσει τῆς γνώμης τῆς ἡμετέρας κεῖται καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς, καὶ τὰ τῆς κακίας;
the book is an argument for the γνώμη as the locus of moral responsibility in Chrysostom's anthropology.¹⁹

As part of his argument, Laird traces the use of γνώμη in Greek literature prior and contemporaneous to Chrysostom, with a brief glance at the term's use among Christian authors who succeed Chrysostom.²⁰ Laird first notes Libanius's use of γνώμη, which Laird calls “extensive” and claims is the same use found in Chrysostom's works, concluding that Chrysostom's training under Libanius led to Chrysostom's replicating Libanius's use of γνώμη.²¹ This similar use includes γνώμη as the mindset, as “the locus for persistence in the face of adverse circumstances” and as “an arbiter of good and evil.”²² Γνώμη, then, is the core of a person in Libanius just as in Chrysostom. Laird then looks at the history of γνώμη in Greek παιδεία, noting that much of the early use of γνώμη was among historians, the most significant of whom was Thucydides.²³ In Thucydides's works, γνώμη is the “intellectual principle” contrasted both with fate and with impulse or anger (ὁργή); γνώμη also has an emotional element. Laird claims

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¹⁹ In fact, Laird offers only four quotations as evidence. The two not here quoted are from In Gen. hom. 18.5 (PG 53.155) and In Gen. hom. 18.4 (PG 53.154). The first, ἀλλ' ἡ διαφορὰ τῆς γνώμης λοιπὸν καὶ τῆς προαιρέσεως ἡ ἀρετὴ τοῦ μὲν εὐπρόσδεκτον ἐποίησε τὴν προσαγωγὴν, τοῦ δὲ ἀπόβλητον, ὑστερῶσις and γνώμη more synonymously than Laird allows. The second, ὅτι διαφοράν προσώπων οὐκ οἶδεν ὁ Δεσπότης ὁ ἡμέτερος, ἀλλὰ ἐκ προαιρέσεως ἐξετάζει τὴν γνώμην στεφανοῖ, refers to the crowning of the γνώμη. Laird notes that later in the same homily it is the προαιρέσεις which is crowned and the γνώμη applauded, but does not allow that this could be a synonymous usage. The only two passages which are convincing, then, are those quoted in my text above.


²² Laird, Mindset, Moral Choice and Sin, 140-42.

²³ Ibid., 159-64. Laird argues that Libanius had an affinity for Thucydides and rhetorical students universally studied the historian in their training, which suggests that Chrysostom would have known his work and use of γνώμη. Scholars have written extensively on γνώμη in Thucydides. For a sample, see the list provided by Laird: ibid., 165 n. 26.
Thucydides’s work is a significant source of Chrysostom's own use of γνώμη. Laird notes that Aristotle gives a brief account of γνώμη in his *NE*. For Aristotle, γνώμη is a faculty of the soul alongside νοῦς, σύνεσις, and φρόνησις; it is also described as a ἔξις and is natural to human beings. Laird further concludes that Chrysostom's use of γνώμη is similar to Aristotle's, just as he does for Demosthenes's use in the next section. Demosthenes is said to be even more similar to Chrysostom in that his rhetorical tendency is toward the practical, and γνώμη as “deliberated mindset” becomes the driving force in his political works. The final chapter of Laird's history concerns the Christian appropriation of γνώμη. Though Laird cites Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and the Cappadocians as early theologians who use γνώμη, his focus in the chapter is on Chrysostom's Antiochene contemporaries Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theodoret of Cyrus. Here again Laird finds Chrysostom using γνώμη in the same way as his fellow Antiochene, though not nearly with the same frequency. According to Laird, Chrysostom’s usage is even the same as those of his Christian predecessors whom Laird mentions.

Laird's work adds important nuance to our understanding of Chrysostom's anthropology, but it does not alter my argument here. Even if the γνώμη is the source of the προαιρεσίς, they together serve as the locus of moral responsibility, for if προαιρεσίς is the expression of the γνώμη, they are still bound together. In the above example, virtue and vice originate in the “the προαιρεσίς of our γνώμη,” which suggests that though the

\[24\] Ibid., 166-72.
\[25\] Ibid., 173-77. In Aristotle, see *NE* 1143a.25-b14.
\[26\] Ibid., 190.
\[27\] Ibid., 193-220. Laird includes a chart of the number of occurrences of γνώμη in each author's works, and according to the chart, Diodore, Theodore, and Theodoret use γνώμη six times more often per work than Chrysostom. In contrast, the Cappadocians use it about half as often as Chrysostom.
προαίρεσις is a sort of faculty of the γνώμη, it is where we define virtue or vice. It could be said that a virtuous person's γνώμη is her orientation toward eternal things, her scorn for temporal realities which is the disposition or “mindset” Chrysostom sees as a key indicator of a virtuous person. From this orientation, a person exercises her προαίρεσις and chooses virtue or vice. Moreover, even if the γνώμη is somehow “behind” the προαίρεσις, Chrysostom does speak of the προαίρεσις as a factor determining one’s virtue or vice. In the quotation about the sheep and the goats laid out above, Chrysostom says they do not go to the same end because the προαίρεσις of each is different. Γνώμη does not appear in this instance.\(^{28}\) Thus, whether γνώμη leads the προαίρεσις or not, the προαίρεσις is here the determining factor in where a person spends eternity. In some sense, each one chooses his end by προαίρεσις.

Laird successfully argues that γνώμη was an important psychological word in Greek tradition and that Chrysostom follows this tradition. What Laird does not do is explore the use of γνώμη and προαίρεσις together in these authors.\(^{29}\) Had he done so, he would have discovered that all of the authors mentioned sometimes use both terms together just as Chrysostom will do, and with similar frequency. For instance, Aristotle writes, “Other people, seeing an earnest person, judge him by his actions, because they are not able to see the προαίρεσις he has. But if they could see this person's γνώμη and its attitude toward the good, he would seem to be earnest even apart from his activities.”\(^{30}\)

Elsewhere Demosthenes writes, “Therefore, I do not do these things out of my

\(^{28}\) In fact, as Laird notes, both terms appear far more on their own than together.

\(^{29}\) To be fair, Laird's argument that γνώμη is more central than προαίρεσις in Chrysostom's anthropology is only a secondary argument.

circumstances, but I do them from this same earnestness and προαιρέσις and that single γνώμη.\textsuperscript{31} In both cases, both γνώμη and προαιρέσις are the “inner person,” that by which a person ought to be judged. They appear to be nearly synonymous. More importantly for our discussion of Chrysostom, Christian writers use γνώμη and προαιρέσις together as well. Gregory of Nyssa writes:

Being the image and the likeness, as has been said, of the Power which rules all things, humanity kept also in the matter of αὐτεξουσία τῆς προαιρέσεως this likeness to Him whose Will is over all. He was enslaved to no outward necessity whatever; his feeling towards that which pleased him depended only on his own γνώμη; he was free to choose whatever he liked.\textsuperscript{32}

Here again γνώμη and προαιρέσις are linked; both are used to describe the responsible faculty of the person. Here they are further linked with αὐτεξουσίας, part of the anthropological and theodicy language of the fourth century.\textsuperscript{33} Chrysostom's usage is much the same as that of his predecessors’ and contemporaries’ discussions of anthropology. Chrysostom sets himself in a tradition.

Functionally, Chrysostom uses προαιρέσις and γνώμη more or less synonymously. It does not appear that he has any system for using one over the other, and often in his homilies he uses both together as synonyms. Since Chrysostom is so fond of precision, his lack of concern is telling. Such a lack of precision would be arbitrary or haphazard if he understood a significant distinction between the terms.\textsuperscript{34} As it is, his apparent

\textsuperscript{31} Demosthenes, Epistulae 3.36 (Loeb, 248-49, my translation). οὕτων ἐκ τοῦ περιόντος ταῦτα ποιῶ, ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς σπουδῆς καὶ προαιρέσεως καὶ ταῦτα κάκεινα μὴ γνώμη πραγματεύωμαι.

\textsuperscript{32} Gregory of Nyssa, De virginitate 12.2 (SC 402, NPNF 357). εἰκόν ἑν καὶ ὁμοίωμα, καθὼς εἰρήνηται, τῆς πάντων τῶν ὄντων βασιλεύουσης δυνάμεως καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐν τῷ αὐτεξουσίῳ τῆς προαιρέσεως πρὸς τὸν ἐξουσιαζόντα πάντων εἶχε τὴν ὁμοίωτητα, οὐδὲμι τίνι τῶν ἐξωθεν ἀνάγκῃ δεδουλεμένου, ἀλλὰ τῇ γνώμῃ τῇ ἱδίᾳ πρὸς τὸ δοκόν διοικούμενος καὶ τὸ ἀρέσκον αὐτῷ κατ᾽ ἐξουσίαν αἱροῦμενος.

\textsuperscript{33} A fuller discussion of the vocabulary of fourth-century theodicies and Chrysostom's relation to that tradition is found at the end of this chapter.

\textsuperscript{34} On the other hand, Chrysostom is preaching, and it is dangerous to assign too much weight to any word choice since preaching may mean he grabbed the closest word, or his scribe was less than careful
arbitrariness indicates some degree of synonymous understanding. Both προαίρεσις and γνώµη are terms for the part of the person which is responsible for sin and virtue.

For instance, Chrysostom speaks of the difference between good and evil men, saying, “Everywhere the προαίρεσις is the cause, everywhere the γνώµη is master.” The structure of the sentence—word placement identical in both phrases—suggests apposition. Chrysostom is preaching, reaching the height of the sermon, and his language becomes more poetic. If parallel, since both describe the reason one person is injured when the other is not, προαίρεσις and γνώµη are, if not synonyms, then only shades different in meaning. Functionally, however, they are identical here. Both designate the faculty responsible for the difference between good and evil human beings, just as in the example of the sheep and goats. Though αἰτία and κυρία are not synonyms, and κυρία indicates a more important role, Chrysostom uses κυρία as a predicate of προαίρεσις as well. In the very next homily, Chrysostom preaches that the difference between those who had attended the theater and those who worshipped the previous day is each person's προαίρεσις. They are all human beings and so all share the same nature. The only difference, Chrysostom argues, is προαίρεσις. He says, “In every case, the προαίρεσις is κυρία.” This is essentially the same statement he made above, suggesting that προαίρεσις and γνώµη, at the very least, perform the same function in Chrysostom's anthropology and preaching.

in his transcription. Yet the frequency of these words in Chrysostom's corpus indicates their importance, and he may have been intentional about them. He may have had definitions in mind. It is impossible to be certain, but it is unlikely Chrysostom would be careless, so I will argue for significance in Chrysostom's using both words similarly.

35 De diab. tent. 1.4 (SC 140, NPNF 189). Πανταχοῦ γὰρ ἡ προαίρεσις αἰτία, πανταχοῦ ἡ γνώµη κυρία.
37 De diab. tent. 2.1 (SC 158, NPNF 191). τοῦ πανταχοῦ τὴν προαίρεσιν εἶναι κυρίαν.
In Chrysostom's discussion of the origin of evil in *In Matt. hom.* 59, he preaches, “Whence then this change [from wickedness to the virtuous life]? Is it not quite plain it is from the γνώμης καὶ προαιρέσεως?”⁴⁸ Here the use is either synonymous or implying that προαιρέσεις and γνώμη are two different faculties which together result in action or change. The use of καὶ to connect προαιρέσεις and γνώμη is not uncommon in Chrysostom's work. In *De diab. tent.*, Chrysostom says that the devil has both προαιρέσεις and γνώμη and that those are the source of his wickedness: “He [the devil] is wicked διὰ τὴν τοιαύτην γνώμην καὶ τὴν προαιρέσιν.”⁴⁹ Again the καὶ could mean that γνώμη and προαιρέσεις are synonymous, but it is also possible that they are two different faculties in the devil's possession.⁵⁰ In this example, however, the previous sentence speaks of the devil's having a wicked προαιρέσεις alone. One final example of this use together is from Chrysostom's *In Rom. hom.* 12, where the ἡ ῥᾴθυμος προαιρέσεις and the ἡ διεφθαρμένη γνώμη are listed with ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ὀρμή καὶ αὐτῇ ἡ πράξεις as the cause of all evils (τοῦτο γὰρ πάντων αἴτιον τὸν κακὸν).⁵¹ Given the format of the list, προαιρέσεις and γνώμη seem to have at least a nuanced difference, one perhaps explained by Laird's analysis.

As discussed in the previous section, Chrysostom contrasts φύσις with both γνώμη and προαιρέσεις in different places, but in each instance γνώμη and προαιρέσεις function the same way. Both are set against necessity; both are the faculty to which

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³⁸ *In Matt. hom.* 59.3 (PG 58.577, NPNF 366). Πόθεν οὖν αὐτῇ ἡ μεταβολὴ; οὐκ εἰσῆλθον δὲ ἀπὸ γνώμης καὶ προαιρέσεως;
³⁹ *De diab. tent.* 2.2 (SC 164, NPNF 192).
⁴⁰ A further possibility is that this phrase is a hendiadys, two different words working together to describe one complex idea (Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, Rev (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), §3025). In this case, the idea being described is “that in the human being which is responsible for morality.”
⁴¹ *In Rom. hom.* 12.6 (PG 60.502, Papageorgiou 238). ἡ ῥᾴθυμος προαιρέσεις καὶ ἡ ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ὀρμή, καὶ αὐτῇ δὲ ἡ πράξεις καὶ ἡ διεφθαρμένη γνώμη· τοῦτο γὰρ πάντων αἴτιον τὸν κακὸν.
Chrysostom ascribes moral responsibility after he says that evil is not part of human nature. He preaches, “Good and evil are not according to φύσις, but are of γνώμη and of προαιρέσεις alone.”\(^{42}\) In a discussion of human sin in *In Matt. hom.* 59, Chrysostom says, “Therefore when you accuse, you show that the sin is not of φύσις but of προαιρέσεις. For if in those things which we do not accuse, we testify that the whole is of φύσις, it is clear that in those things we reprove, we make clear that the offense is of the προαιρέσεις.”\(^{43}\) In the next paragraph he juxtaposes γνώμη with φύσις instead: “For if these things do not require any γνώμη, but are of φύσις, how are [some good], the others [bad ]?”\(^{44}\) Both because punishment and blame fall upon humans for their wickedness and because not all humans are wicked, wickedness cannot be an intrinsic property of human nature. There must be some other responsible faculty, and both προαιρέσεις and γνώμη are mentioned as filling this role.

One further distinction is clear from the passage from *In Rom. hom.* 13 quoted above, where προαιρέσεις is contrasted with the οὐσία of the soul and body. Chrysostom seems to say that the soul is also not responsible for evil, in contrast to what he says elsewhere in this same homily, where the soul rather than the body is morally accountable. Chrysostom is clear here, though, that the οὐσία of the soul is not responsible. Since it is clear that the soul is responsible for the body and that virtue is located in the soul, there must be some aspect of the soul which is responsible for evil. It is likely that by the soul's οὐσία Chrysostom means something similar to his statements.

\(^{42}\) *In Rom. hom.* 19.5 (PG 60.591, NPNF 492). My translation. Ὁ γὰρ φυσικὰ τὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ μὴ τουαύτα, ἀλλὰ γνώμης καὶ προαιρέσεως μόνης.

\(^{43}\) *In Matt. hom.* 59.2 (PG 58.576, NPNF 367) Ὅταν οὖν ἐγκαλής, δεικνύεις ὅτι οὐ τῆς φύσεως τὸ ἀμάρτημα, ἀλλὰ τῆς προαιρέσεως. Εἰ γὰρ ἐν οἷς οὐκ ἐγκαλοῦμεν, μαρτυροῦμεν τῆς φύσεως εἶναι τὸ πάν, δῆλον ὅτι ἐν οἷς ἐπιτιμῶμεν, δηλοῦμεν ὅτι προαιρετικὸς ἢστι τὸ πλημμέλημα.

\(^{44}\) *In Matt. hom.* 59.2 (PG 58.576, NPNF 367).
about human nature not being evil. The soul in itself is not evil, that is, it is not evil by nature, intrinsically. This is because it is a work of God, just like the body, and therefore cannot be intrinsically evil, for then God would have both made something evil (an impossibility) and blamed the soul for something it had no control over (an injustice, which is an impossibility for God). Therefore, the soul as soul is not responsible for evil, but the προαιρεσις is responsible. It is a dimension of a human being which is free and makes a person self-determining.

**Understanding Human Nature from Creation**

In order to demonstrate that a person is free and self-determining, Chrysostom frequently contrasts προαιρεσις with φυσις. If a person acts a certain way by nature, then he has no choice in the matter, and he is therefore not self-determining. Chrysostom considers the nature of a thing to be a necessity or compulsion, something a person cannot change. Choice is the opposite of necessity. Before we explore this contrast Chrysostom draws and the way it serves as evidence for humanity's self-determination, we must first understand what Chrysostom means by φυσις. What is the nature Chrysostom contrasts with προαιρεσις?

As with most of his predecessors, Chrysostom finds his understanding of human nature in the creation account: “Tell me not of man, fallen, degraded and condemned. But if thou wouldest learn what manner of body God formed us with at the first, let us go to

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Paradise, and survey the Man that was created at the beginning.” Chrysostom understands human nature to be that which God created. In that homily from De stat. that I have just quoted, Chrysostom describes the body God gave Adam: “That body was not thus corruptible and mortal. . . . Labor did not trouble it, nor sweat deface it. Cares did not conspire against it; nor sorrows besiege it.” In his In Gen. hom., Chrysostom describes the same thing, adding that Adam and Eve lived an angelic life before the fall: “Like some angel, in fact, man lived this way on earth, wearing a body, yet being fortunately rid of any bodily needs; like a king adorned with scepter and crown and wearing his purple robe, he reveled in this life of freedom and great affluence in the garden.” He also says they “lived on earth as if they were in heaven.” By this Chrysostom means that Adam and Eve had no concern for bodily things. They had bodies, but they “did not feel the limitations of their bodies.”

It is also from the Genesis creation account that Chrysostom understands humans to have been created with the knowledge to distinguish good from evil. This is the reason the soul has a “greater wisdom” than the body; it was designed for virtue. When preaching to his catechumens, Chrysostom asks, “Do you see why faith in Christ and the return to virtue are called a new creation?” Their baptism is a “return” (ἐπάνοδος) to virtue, which suggests that at one time people were virtuous. So baptism must be a return to some other time or state of humanity, their prelapsarian existence. Before the fall, according to Chrysostom, Adam and Eve were indeed choosing virtue, as is implied by

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46 De stat. 11.2 (PG 49.121, NPNF 413).
47 Ibid.
48 In Gen. hom. 13.3 (PG 53.109, FC 1:177).
49 In Gen. hom. 16.1 (PG 53.126, FC 1:207).
50 Ibid.
51 Cat. Or. 4.16 (SC 191, Harkins 72).
Chrysostom’s statements regarding Adam and Eve’s angelic life noted above. That is the state to which Chrysostom urges his catechumens to return. Christ's work makes it possible for them to be virtuous again. Chrysostom does believe that humans were created with the knowledge of good and evil, preaching in his In Rom. hom. that the ability to distinguish good and evil is innate to humans. He asks, “Do you see how Paul shows that the knowledge of things that are good and of those that are not has been laid as a foundation in us from the beginning?”

According to Chrysostom, this ability is demonstrated in Adam's naming of the animals. That God asks Adam to name them and that Adam gets them all correct show with what great wisdom (σοφία) God has endowed Adam. If he had the kind of wisdom to name the animals properly, his wisdom was so great that it must have included the ability to know right from wrong.

The problem came when Adam sinned. After explaining the body Adam had in De stat. 11, Chrysostom explains that when Adam sinned, God decided “to humble him by decisive acts, made him mortal, as well as corruptible; and fettered him with such varied necessities.”

Human nature, changed by God, is now mortal. The reason for the change is that Adam deemed “a deceiving demon more worthy of credit than God who cared for him,” and, at this demon's instigation, Adam believed he could be as a god. According to Chrysostom, God wanted to “eradicate this idea” and thus made the human

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52 In Rom. hom. 13.2 (PG 60.510, Papageorgiou 255). (Ὅρης πῶς δείκνυσι τὴν μὲν τῶν καλῶν καὶ τῶν μὴ τουτούν γνώσιν εἰς ἄρχης ἡμῖν καταβεβλημένης.)
54 When describing this wisdom, Chrysostom says the reason God made sure we knew Adam was given this intelligence was so we would also know his sin did not come out of ignorance. Had he transgressed God's commandment out of ignorance, there could have been no punishment. Since he had wisdom, however, the sin was due to sloth and thus Adam is responsible (In Gen. hom. 14.5).
55 De stat. 11.2 (PG 49.121, NPNF 413).
56 It is significant that Chrysostom argues for God's changing of nature, for we will see that it is essential to his arguments about self-determination that nature does not change. Here nature only changes because God, who created it in the first place, changes (or re-creates) it.
body subject to suffering and disease “to instruct him by its very nature that he must never again entertain such a thought.”⁵⁷ What God changes about the nature of humans is their immortality and awareness of the body, not, as we will see, their freedom or self-determination.

Along with an awareness of the body, Chrysostom discusses in *In Rom. hom.* 11 how the passions entered human beings when Adam sinned. Chrysostom writes:

Before the coming of Christ, our body was easily overcome by sin. For after Adam's sin brought death, a great swarm of passions entered into man. And for this reason he was not very nimble in the race for virtue. Neither was the Spirit yet present to help, nor was baptism, which could deaden these passions. Man was like a resistant and ill-bridled horse that ran but often went astray.⁵⁸

The faculty of wisdom was not corrupted by the fall of Adam; the soul still knows good from evil, but in the fall the body became incorrigible. A prime example of this is Paul's anguish in Romans 7, trying to understand why he does what he hates. About that passage Chrysostom writes, “You see that the power of understanding (ἡ διάνοια) has not been corrupted. It preserves its own noble character while it is acting.”⁵⁹ Paul still understands right from wrong, even if he does not always do right. Though knowledge was not corrupted, the soul was now not strong enough to control the body that pulled against the reins, as argued in the quotation above.

Christ, however, made the body obedient to those reins again. Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection restored the soul's control over the body. In the *Cat. Or.*, Chrysostom makes a similar point using different language. In the first homily following

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⁵⁷ *De stat.* 11.2 (PG 49.121, NPNF 413). Note how important it is for Chrysostom that Adam have the right understanding, or the right frame of mind, in order to live the way God intends. This is a theme we will explore below.

⁵⁸ *In Rom. hom.* 11.3 (PG 60.487-88, Parageorgiou 207). Τὸ σῶμα ἡμῶν πρὸ μὲν τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας εὐχείρωτον ἦν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ. Μετὰ γὰρ τὸν θάνατον καὶ πολὺς παθῶν ἐπεισήλθεν ἐμός· διόπερ οὐδὲ σφόδρα κούφων ἦν πρὸς τὸν ὑπέρ τῆς ἀρετῆς δρόμον. Οὔτε γὰρ Πνεῦμα παρῆ γε βοηθοῦν, οὔτε βάπτισμα τὸ νεκρόσασα δυνάμενον, ἀλλ' ἀσπέρ τε τῶν ἅπαν δυσήνιος, ἔτρεχε μὲν, διημάρτανε δὲ πολλάκις

⁵⁹ *In Rom. hom.* 13.2 (PG 60.509, Parageorgiou 253).
the baptisms, Chrysostom tells his congregants about the change that has taken place in the new Christians, saying:

Did you see how a new creation has truly taken place? The grace of God has entered these souls and molded them anew, reformed them, and made them different from what they were. It did not change their ὄμοσία, but made over (μετασκευάσασα) their προαίρεσις, no longer permitting the tribunal of the mind's eyes to entertain an erroneous notion, but . . . God's grace made them see the ugly deformity of evil and virtue's shining beauty as they truly are.\(^{60}\)

The important feature here is that since God did not change human beings' understanding of good and evil when he made them mortal, they are still responsible for their actions, and even more so because Christ enabled their obedience again. Chrysostom says here it is the grace of God that transforms the προαίρεσις.\(^{61}\)

Since humans experienced the fall and no longer live in the same state as Adam, Adam's original way of life is now for Chrysostom the orientation toward which Christians strive. According to Chrysostom, Adam shows humanity the life God intended for human beings, that angelic life which has no thought or concern for bodily things: “Consider . . . how [Adam and Eve] were superior to all bodily concerns, how they lived on earth as if they were in heaven, and though in fact possessing a body they did not feel the limitations of their bodies. After all, they had no need of shelter or habitation, clothing or anything of that kind.”\(^{62}\) In De stat. 11, Chrysostom says that God changed the nature of humans so that they would be mortal and subject to suffering, aware of their bodies. Therefore, humans cannot of their own accord regain the prelapsarian nature, but Chrysostom does encourage the audience to strive for the same orientation, or mindset, of

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\(^{60}\) *Cat. Or.*, Stav. 4.14 (SC 190, ACW 72).

\(^{61}\) Chrysostom does not elaborate on the mechanics of this change. He says only that God’s grace, in the event of baptism, works a change in people, which explains how “he who yesterday and the day before spent his time in luxurious and gluttonous living suddenly embraces a life of self-control and simplicity” (*Cat. or.*, Stav. 4.13, SC 190, ACW 72). Chrysostom is more concerned to explain *that* a “new creation” happens in baptism than *how* the new creation takes place.

\(^{62}\) *In Gen. hom.* 16.1 (PG 53.126, FC 207).
the prelapsarian Adam. They ought to live as Adam lived, that is, as an angel on earth. In

_In Rom. hom._ 13, Chrysostom describes the angelic life this way:

The man who lives his life aright will not even be in the body. Because it was surely clear to everyone that the spiritual man was not in the state of sin, Paul speaks of the greater fact that man is spiritual not only in the matter of sin, but, from now on, not even in the matter of flesh. Why? Because from that very moment he became an angel, was borne up to heaven, and was merely carrying his body around with him.⁶³

Chrysostom tells the catechumens that the baptized live this angelic life, preaching,

“Even if this man [newly baptized] will continue to walk the earth, he will have the same disposition as one who lives in heaven... and will no longer fear the plots of the wicked demon.”⁶⁴ Shortly after this in the same homily, Chrysostom tells his congregation that their “return to virtue” is the new creation to which Paul refers.⁶⁵ Chrysostom's contemporary exemplars of the spiritual man are the monks outside Antioch. He urges his congregation to emulate them, and for them he claims lives lived in the same paradisiacal state as Adam had before the fall.⁶⁶ In his _Comparatio_, Chrysostom says that the monk needs little sleep and so he spends the night “living with the angels, conversing with God, enjoying the goods of heaven.”⁶⁷ In _Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae (Adv. opp. vit. mon.)_, Chrysostom says that the monks' way of life “befits heaven,” and that “they have attained a state inferior in no way to that of angels.”⁶⁸ The paradisiacal life of virtue,

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⁶³ _In Rom. hom._ 13.7 (PG 60.517-18, Papageorgiou 268-69).
⁶⁴ _Cat. Or._, Stav. 4.5 (SC 50.185; Harkins, 67-68).
⁶⁵ _Cat. Or._ 4.16 (SC 191, ACW 72): “Do you see why faith in Christ and the return to virtue are called a new creation?”
⁶⁶ “Their work is what was Adam's also at the beginning and before his sin, when he was clothed with the glory, and conversed freely with God, and dwelt in that place that was full of great blessedness. For in what respect are they in a worse state than he, when before his disobedience he was set to till the garden? Had he no worldly care? But neither have these. Did he talk to God with a pure conscience? This also do these; or rather they have a greater confidence than he, inasmuch as they enjoy even greater grace by the supply of the Spirit” (_In Matt. hom._ 68.3 (PG 58.643-44, NPNF 417-18)).
⁶⁷ _Comp. reg. et mon._ 3 (PG 47.389, Hunter 72).
⁶⁸ _Adv. opp. vit. mon._ 3.11 (PG 47.366, Hunter 147).
of concern only with heavenly realities, is possible for Christians, and monks are Chrysostom's prime examples.

**Body and Soul Relationship**

The ideal state toward which Christians strive, for Chrysostom, is that which Adam enjoyed before the fall and which monks enjoy now, a state where bodily limitations are not felt, or at least require only minimal attention. Chrysostom also places an emphasis on προαιρεσις and γνώμη as the location of sin and virtue. These aspects of Chrysostom's thought raise the question of how the body and soul relate. Does virtue exist only in the soul, or does bodily action matter as well? Chrysostom writes in *Quod nem. laed.* , “Since neither wealth nor freedom, nor life in our native land nor the other things which I have mentioned, but only right actions of the soul constitute the virtue of man, naturally when the harm is directed against these things, human virtue is no wise harmed.”

“Right actions of the soul” (τῆς ψυχῆς τὰ κατορθώματα) is an intriguing phrase, the soul is where the movement originates. The soul is in control of the action. One might see the contrast and think that if Christians aim not to feel bodily limitations and that virtue is in the soul, virtue is about thought only; the use of τὰ κατορθώματα suggests something more active.

Chrysostom's *In Rom. hom.* 13 is useful for understanding this passage. There he preaches that the soul's duty with regard to the body is like the duty of a harpist toward a harp or of a helmsman toward a ship; the soul guides and operates the body. He also

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69 *Quod nem. laed.* 5 (SC 82, NPNF 274).
70 *In Rom. hom.* 13.2 (PG 60.509, Papageorgiou 254).
refers to the body as “a work of God that is very useful for the life of virtue if we are watchful and sober.” Therefore, a right action of the soul would be manifested in a person's life as the soul directs the body to act, just as a ship's pilot moves the rudder which turns the ship. Right movement of soul also sounds similar to Stoic ideas of movement of soul. There is not an overlap in vocabulary regarding ὀρμή, but the concept is similar. We noted that for Stoics, there are movements of the soul which lead to action in the body. For Epictetus, what determines virtue or vice is the use of impressions, and this is all in the soul. Intent is what matters since the completion of an intended act (raising one's arm) may be hindered by some outside force (a restraint, for instance). For Chrysostom, this intent is important, but the intent will, barring some restraint, manifest itself in action. The body can only do what the soul has decided, though the body may for some reason be prevented.

The claim above that the body is a work of God useful for virtue is part of a refutation of the claim that the body is inherently evil. Chrysostom is saying that it is not evil but neutral; the soul plays the instrument of the body. Chrysostom finds support for this in Christ's own taking on of flesh, among other places: “Because Paul had said ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh,' the word ‘sinful' was his reason for saying ‘in the likeness.' For Christ did not have sinful flesh, but flesh like our sinful flesh, except that Christ's flesh was sinless. But in nature Christ's flesh was the same as ours. And so from this it is clear that the nature of the flesh is not evil.” Even when discussing the act of creation,

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71 In Rom. hom. 13.3 (PG 60.511, Papageorgiou 257). οὐδὲ γὰρ τὴν σάρκα ἁμαρτιαν ἐἶναι, ἀλλ' ἔργον Θεοῦ σφόδρα, καὶ πρὸς ἁρετὴν ἡμῶν ἐπιτήδειον, έὰν νῆφωμεν.
72 See above, p. 157.
73 In Rom. hom. 13.3 (PG 60.511, Papageorgiou 257).
74 In Rom. hom. 13.5 (PG 60.514-15, Papageorgiou 263). (ἐπειδὴ γὰρ εἶπεν ἁμαρτίας, διὰ τούτο καὶ τὸ ὁμοίωμα τέθεικεν. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἁμαρτωλὸν σάρκα εἶχεν ὁ Χριστὸς, ἀλλ' ὁμοίαν μὲν τῇ ἠμετέρᾳ τῇ
Chrysostom argues that the body exists to serve the soul. So Chrysostom preaches that just as the animals were made before humans in order to be ready to serve humans when finally they were created, “So, too, the body is created before the soul, so that when the soul is produced according to God's ineffable wisdom, it will be able to display its own vital forces through the movement of its body.” 75 This is because the soul has wisdom God did not grant the body: “The soul possesses greater wisdom and can distinguish between what should be done and what should not be done. However, it lacks the strength to control the horse, namely, the body, as it wishes.” 76 Later Chrysostom clarifies that Christians have the ability to control their bodies, saying, “It is Christ who has saved the soul and who has also made the flesh obedient to its rein.” 77 Those baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ and so sharing his life have bodies that are obedient to the soul.

Nature vs. Choice

The reason it is important to understand what Chrysostom means by nature (φύσις) is that Chrysostom frequently contrasts φύσις with προαίρεσις and γνώμη. In fact, this contrast is the most frequent way Chrysostom discusses human freedom, arguing that

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75 In Gen. hom. 13.3 (PG 53.108, FC 174).
76 In Rom. hom. 13.2 (PG 60.509, Papageorgiou 254). It is tempting to make this an echo of Plato's horse and chariot image, but Chrysostom here refers to the soul as a rider (or possibly charioteer; the text is unclear), and the body as the horse. Plato refers to the charioteer and two horses as the three parts of the souls (λογός, θυμός, and ἐπιθυμία). In the passage, Chrysostom has been using metaphors of music and instruments, pilots and ships, and this is the only mention of a horse until the mention of rein at the end of the homily (see next quotation). Chrysostom does use Plato's charioteer image elsewhere in his corpus, so he is aware of the metaphor, but in those instances the body is not part of the metaphor. See above, p. 147. Here it is more likely that Chrysostom sought another example of controlling something unwieldy, and horse came to mind. He does speak often about the horse races, after all.
77 In Rom. hom. 13.5 (PG 60.514, Papageorgiou 261).
humans are not evil by nature but by choice. The dichotomy between nature and choice appears over and over again in Chrysostom's homilies as he argues that not only are humans not evil by nature, but that nothing is evil by nature: “There is no such thing as evil by nature.” If something were evil by nature, that would imply it was created evil, and Chrysostom is adamant that God does not create evil. Rather than argue that God would not create something evil, however, Chrysostom argues that God created everything good. Scripture says that God created everything and pronounced it all “good” and “very good,” so everything God creates is good in its very nature, even those things that appear not to be, such as thorns, scorpions, storms, and sea monsters. Chrysostom says that God looked at all of these things, “Not only light, but darkness. . . . Not only human beings, but poisonous reptiles. Not only fish, but also sea monsters. . . . Not only sun, moon, and stars, but also thunderbolts and hurricanes.” What is more, Chrysostom writes, “He declares his judgment concerning all created things in one word, saying, ‘God saw everything which he made, and behold, it was very good.’” When his audience suggests that a given experience is evil, Chrysostom responds that the thing is not truly evil but is in fact good, for God created everything good. By demonstrating that God

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78 Chrysostom spends significantly less time saying that humans are not virtuous by nature but by choice. In fact, an occasional comment from Chrysostom may sound as though humans were created virtuous, such as, “Whence it is evident, that virtue is according to our nature; that we all, of ourselves, know our duties; and that it is not possible for us ever to find refuge in ignorance” (In Matt. hom. 23.5 (PG 57.314, NPNF 162)). This statement could also be read as humans' having been gifted with the ability to be virtuous and the knowledge to do so. At any rate, these comments are considerably more rare than Chrysostom's rhetoric about humans' not being evil by nature. Perhaps his audience did not assume people are virtuous by nature but, in looking around at the chaos and suffering in the world, did assume that evil was part of human nature.

79 In Act. apost. hom. 2.4 (PG 60.31, NPNF 15). φύσει γάρ οὐδὲν ἔστι κακόν. This section of the homily is an argument against the Manichees, who claim that evil is uncreated. Chrysostom argues that arguing the uncreated-ness of evil is blasphemy against God, and in a parenthetical comment he makes this statement about nothing's being evil by nature. That it is parenthetical here shows that Chrysostom assumes this to be true.

80 Ad eos qui scand. 4.2-3 (SC 79, Hall 186).

81 Ad eos qui scand. 4.5 (SC 79, Hall 187).
created everything good, Chrysostom has disallowed the possibility that God created something evil.

Chrysostom also adds an empirical argument. Humans cannot be evil by nature because humans are not all equal in virtue and vice. If good or evil were part of their nature, than all would be either good or bad, since anything that is part of "human nature" is common to all humans. If people were bad by nature, good people would be an impossibility. Chrysostom preaches, "Did God make all men? . . . For if by nature all were bad, it were not possible for any one to be good, but if good by nature, then no one bad. For if there were one nature of all men, they must needs in this respect be all one, whether they were to be this, or whether they were to be that."\(^{82}\) Therefore humans were not created evil but chose it, which further implies that God created them with the ability to choose between good and evil.

Chrysostom further notes that nature is unchangeable, so that if goodness or wickedness were matters of nature, people would always be either good or bad without possibility of change. Chrysostom's belief in the immutability of nature is clear from his own statement: "The things of nature are not changed."\(^{83}\) This belief is one that he assumes and from which he builds his argument rather than one he explains, which suggests that he has inherited this idea from elsewhere. Though it is impossible to ascribe with certainty a source for Chrysotom’s claim, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* book 5 explains many of these ideas and Alexander of Aphrodisias makes an argument not unlike Chrysostom’s in *De Fato* 27.\(^{84}\) It was not an uncommon idea in philosophy.

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\(^{82}\) *In Matt. hom.* 59.2 (PG 58.576, NPNF 347).
\(^{83}\) *In Matt. hom.* 59.2 (PG 58.576, NPNF 348).
\(^{84}\) Alexander argues that no one is virtuous by nature, even as the capacity for virtue comes from nature, because nature does not change.
It is important to note that the fall is not an instance of changing nature that contradicts Chrysostom's claim that nature is immutable. As we saw, God made human nature mortal because of Adam's sin; human nature did not change of its own accord or by some inevitable process. Moreover, the immutability of nature is a principle in service of Chrysostom's argument about the possibility of moral change, whereas the change in nature God made after the fall is one of mortality, not morality. God did not make either the body or nature evil when it had been good.\(^{85}\) On the contrary, that Adam sinned in his prelapsarian body indicates that something other than Adam's nature is the locus of evil.\(^{86}\) Even when Christ made the body obedient to the soul again, it is not a change in the intrinsic goodness or wickedness of humanity. Chrysostom's point that people are neither always good nor always bad and therefore neither goodness nor wickedness is a matter of nature remains true, even as God effected a change of nature at the fall.

Though nature cannot change, Chrysostom is committed to the possibility that humans can change. It is, in fact, central to how he speaks about conversion. Especially in his *Cat. Or.*, Chrysostom tells his congregation that becoming a Christian requires a significant change of life. He exhorts them to be like Paul, who converted “from evil to virtue and . . . from the side of error to that of truth.”\(^{87}\) Paul is Chrysostom's exemplar for the magnitude of the change of life required by conversion. Christians must cease doing evil and begin doing good. He also preaches:

> Have you ever been bad, and have you ever also been good? What I mean, is this: Did you at one time prevail over passion, and were you at another time conquered.

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\(^{85}\) In fact, it is possible to understand this as an act of re-creation of sorts, in which case, since God does not create evil, the postlapsarian nature also is not evil.

\(^{86}\) We will see below that this is similar to Methodius's theodicy, where he argues that nothing is evil by nature, which is part of his argument that evil finds its origin neither in God nor in the “leftover” ὑλή but in the creature's choice.

\(^{87}\) *Cat. Or.*, Stav. 4.12 (SC 189, Harkins 71).
by passion? . . . Did you at one time plunder things that didn't belong to you; and after that, overcome by pity, did you give of yourself to someone in need? Then where did this change come from? Is it not clear that it is from the γνώµη, and the προαιρεσις?88

That Chrysostom is certain about the necessity of changed ways of life for conversion implies that he believes it is possible for people to change to being virtuous when before they participated in evil, and this is why evil is not a matter of nature but of choice.

This is Chrysostom's overriding concern: that without agency there can be no responsibility. As all the preceding arguments have assumed, “nature,” in Chrysostom’s characterization of human goodness and badness, indicates that a person who is evil by nature cannot do otherwise than evil, which precludes punishment. Above we saw that an act must be free in order to be punishable and that Chrysostom understands punishments as evidence of human freedom. If evil or good were part of nature, a person would not be free to do evil or good, and thus punishment or praise would be unjust, something God is not. Chrysostom preaches, “They [fictitious adversaries] make other objections again, asking, ‘And why did God make him [evil man] such?’ God did not make him such, far from it, since then neither would He have punished him.”89 In his homily on the parable of the sheep and goats, Chrysostom says that the sheep are fruitful and of much profit by nature, but the goats are unfruitful by nature. In contrast, he says, the humans whom Jesus has compared to sheep and goats, are fruitful or not by choice rather than by nature, and this is the cause of their reward or punishment. So Chrysostom preaches, “But while the brutes have from nature their unfruitfulness, and fruitfulness, these have it from

88 In Matt. hom. 59.3 (PG 58.577, my translation). Γέγονάς ποτε κακός, γέγονας δέ ποτε καὶ ἁγάθος; Ὁ δὲ λέγω, τουῷόν ἔστιν: Ἐκράτησας ποτε πάθους, καὶ ἐάλος πάλιν ὑπὸ πάθους; . . . Ἑρπασάς ποτε μὲν τὰ μὴ προσήκοντα· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα κατακλασθεὶς ὑπὸ ἐλέους, καὶ τῶν σαυτοῦ μετάδοκας τῷ δεομένῳ; Πόθεν οὖν αὐτὴ ἡ μεταβολὴ; οὐκ εὐδήλον ὃτι ἀπὸ γνώμης καὶ προαιρέσεως: Εὐδήλον.
89 In Matt. hom. 59.2 (PG 58.575, NPNF 365).
choice, wherefore some are punished, and the others crowned.” The quotation above from a discussion in homily 59 on Matthew 18:7 concerning the origin of evil also makes this point clear. Chrysostom's immediate goal in this passage is to protect God from accusations that God created humans evil, and his final goal is to remove any question of God's having had anything to do with the creation of evil at all. Since it is not God, it must be humans.

This is the project of De diab. tent., where Chrysostom was concerned that his congregation know the devil was not created evil but good. Because of this, the devil's wickedness cannot belong to his nature but must belong to his choice. In those passages, Chrysostom argues that if not even the devil, that most wicked of creatures, is evil by nature, than neither can human beings, who are less wicked, be evil by nature: “Although many men are wicked, he [the devil] alone is called wicked by pre-eminence. . . . What therefore could be worse than this wickedness?”

This argument serves Chrysostom's larger purpose in those homilies, which is to remove demons as an excuse for humans' sin. In the Matthean homily, Chrysostom's purpose is to correct those who would use God as an excuse for sin since God created human nature. The two enterprises are similar, and in both cases Chrysostom shifts the emphasis back to the human's responsibility for himself and his own choices.

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90 In Matt. hom. 79.1 (PG 58.717, NPNF 475).
91 De diab. tent. 1.2 (SC 130-32, NPNF 188).
Human Freedom

When Chrysostom contrasts φύσις with προαίρεσις, he allows the terms to act as synonyms of “necessity” (ἀνάγκη) and “freedom” (ἐλευθερία). For Chrysostom, φύσις is a matter of ἀνάγκη; if something is part of a thing's or a person's nature, then it is compulsory. A person cannot not do that which is in his nature. A person's προαίρεσις, on the other hand, is ἐλευθερία; there is no compulsion. The προαίρεσις is self-determining (αὐτεξούσιος), making human beings self-determining, and this self-determination and freedom are what allows for virtue and vice, praise and blame. Human freedom and self-determination are what make human beings responsible. Just as the fact that people are punished for sins indicates for Chrysostom that evil cannot be part of human nature but must belong to each individual's choice, that people are punished for sins also indicates to Chrysostom that people must be free to choose not to sin. If they were compelled, they could not be responsible and therefore not be punished, since it is only fair and just to punish for things for which a person is responsible, and Chrysostom knows that God is fair and just. Therefore, God would not punish for sin if sin were compelled. We saw Chrysostom preach in In Matt. hom. 59 that God's punishment of human wickedness is evidence that God did not create humans wicked by nature. He makes a similar statement about God's justice in a homily on Jeremiah 10:23: “What could be more unjust than punishing those who have no say in what has to be done, and for people to suffer retribution whose way and life are not subject to their own independence?”

Furthermore, if there were no punishment, no praise nor blame, there would also be no

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93 Dom., non est in hom. 5 (PG 56.160, Hill 16). Τί γὰρ ἦν ἀδικότερον τοῦ κολάζεσθαι τοῦς οίκ όντας κυρίους τῶν πρακτέων, καὶ τιμωρίαν ὑπέχειν ἀνθρώπους, ὃν ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ὁ βίος οὐκ ἐπὶ τῇ αὐτῶν ἐξουσίᾳ κεῖται;
grounds for calling a person virtuous or sinful. So using words fundamental to his account of freedom, Chrysostom tells his audience, “Neither are these things of necessity (ἀνάγκη). For if they were of necessity, He would not have said, ‘Woe to the man through whom the offense comes.’ For those alone does he call unhappy, who are wicked by their προαιρεσις.” 94

Ἀνάγκη is one of the words Chrysostom uses frequently to discuss the ideas of compulsion and freedom. Anything that is ἀνάγκη is not free and thus not something for which one can be responsible, so Chrysostom contrasts ἀνάγκη with αὐτεξούσιον, ἐλεύθερος, and προαιρεσις, which Chrysostom understands to be intrinsically free. Indeed, Chrysostom sets προαιρεσις over against ἀνάγκη, as when he says, “Let us make what is a matter of ἀνάγκη a matter of our προαιρεσις.” 95 He thus indicates the autonomous nature of one's προαιρεσις. Chrysostom is discussing things that happen to a person, such as a loss of fortune or the death of a child. These external circumstances are matters of ἀνάγκη, forced on a person. Chrysostom urges the congregation to focus on their reactions to such events, which are within a person's control, so he exhorts them to make things a matter of προαιρεσις. Lack of compulsion is also, as we saw, how Platonists, Stoics, and Aristotle spoke about such issues. Virtue is a matter of voluntary action, at the center of which is προαιρεσις, or reasoned desire. In his comments on Rom 7, Chrysostom uses this language again: “From this it is clear that Paul did not say ‘not what I wish' because he was denying αὐτεξούσιον, nor because he was bringing in some

94 In Matt. hom. 59.3 (PG 58.577-78, NPNF 367).
95 In Rom. hom. 9.4 (PG 60.473, Papageorgiou 177). Ἑνδεικνυόμεν τῆς προαιρέσεως εἶναι τῆς ἠμετέρας.
overpowering ἀνάγκην. For if we sin because we are forced to do so, there would be no reason for the punishments that were inflicted in former times.’

In *Quod nem. laed.*, as the title suggests, Chrysostom emphasizes the inability of anyone or anything to harm a person except the person herself. The loss of virtue is the only true harm a person can undergo, and since the devil cannot rob a person of her virtue, since every person is responsible for maintaining her own virtue, true harm befalls only the person who brings it upon herself. Again, the human cannot be forced. Chrysostom is explicit about this: “[The devil] does not overcome us by force, or by compulsion.” He is also clear about the role of a person's προαίρεσις: “In all circumstances, the προαίρεσις is the cause [of harm].” A person can be deceived, but the responsibility for sin still lies with her, as in the case of Eve, since her προαίρεσις remains in her own control. Moreover, the devil tries everything in his power to destroy human beings, a point Chrysostom makes clear when discussing how he knows demons do not govern the affairs of the world. He says, “If God had entrusted the whole of this world to [the demons’] authority, they would have confused and disturbed everything, and would have assigned to us their treatment of the swine,” referring to the healing of the Gerasene demoniacs (Matt 8:28-34). If the demons do all they can to destroy a human's salvation, but in every case, responsibility for sin remains with the human who makes a choice, and if the προαίρεσις is the locus of responsibility, then the thing the devil cannot coerce is the προαίρεσις.

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96 *In Rom. hom.* 13.1 (PG 60.508, Papageorgiou 252). Ὅθεν δῆλον, δι’ ὑπάρχει, οὐ δὴ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον ἀναιροῦν, οὔτε ἀνάγκην τινὰ εἰσάγων βεβαισμένην. Εἰ γὰρ οὐχ ἐκόντες, ἀλλ’ ἀναγκαζόμενοι ἐμαρτάνομεν, πάλιν τὰ τῶν κολάσεων τῶν ἐμπροσθὲν γεγενημένων οὐκ ἄν ἔχοι λόγον.
97 *De diab. tent.* 1.1 (SC 122, NPNF 187).
98 Ibid. 1.4 (SC 140, my translation).
99 *De proph. obsc.* 3.6 (PG 49.252, NPNF 184).
Not only is the devil not able to force, but God does not compel either.

Chrysostom writes, “Since God is merciful, beloved, and disposed to do good, He does and plans everything so that we may be bright with virtue. And since he wishes us to be virtuous, He tries to persuade us to this, but does not constrain or force anyone.”

Instead, God will draw and attract, and, when necessary, threaten. God “discounted the idea of force, and stressed αὐθαίρετον καὶ αὐτεξούσιον.”

In his Cat. Or., Chrysostom says something similar: God's very way of acting toward us reveals that humans are free, and the choice between good and evil is ours. Chrysostom preaches, “For the greatest proof of His wisdom and ineffable kindness is the fact that He entrusts to us the care of what is more important to us—I mean the soul. He teaches us by the very way He does things that He has made us αὐτεξούσιος and has left in our power (ἐφ᾽ ἡµῖν) and in our γνώµη either to choose virtue or to go of our own accord over to the side of evil.”

“Going over to the side of evil” (τὸ πρὸς τὴν κακίαν αὐτοµολῆσαι) evokes warlike images, not unlike the famous phrasing of George Lucas in our own day (“going over to the dark side”). Especially in his Cat. Or., Chrysostom is fond of battle imagery. He believes there is a war raging all the time between God and the devil, between angels and demons, and humans must choose a side because they are caught in the crossfire on earth. There is neither a neutral stance nor a “no man's land.” There is also, however, no conscription. All is choice.

100 In Ioh. hom. 10.1 (PG 59.73, FC 95).
101 Ibid.
102 In Ioh. hom. 10.3 (PG 59.76, FC 101). Πανταχοῦ τοίνυν τὸ μὲν κατηναγκασµένον ἐκβαλὼν, τὸ δὲ αὐθαίρετον καὶ αὐτεξούσιον δεικνύς
103 Cat. Or., Stav. 8.22 (SC 258-59, ACW 128-29).
What is Virtue?

Thus far we have explored the centrality of προαιρέσις in Chrysostom's anthropology, the contrast Chrysostom draws between προαιρέσις and φύσις in order to demonstrate the freedom of the προαιρέσις, and the significance of freedom in Chrysostom's account of virtue. Thus, we have discussed the mechanics of virtue. Now, keeping in mind the freedom and προαιρέσις which make virtue possible, we will turn our attention to how Chrysostom defines virtue for his congregation.

A broad definition of human virtue as Chrysostom understands it is living the way God calls a person to live. Or, more simply, virtue is obedience to God. This is, on the surface, not unlike the Stoic idea of living in accordance with God's will, except that the Stoic understanding of the character and person of God differs from that of Chrysostom are different things, and this difference results in a difference of interpretation. The Stoics believe “the will of God” to be the order of nature, the way the world works. Therefore, living in harmony with this natural order is virtuous living. Stoics do not believe in a personal God who commands or makes specific requests of humans. Chrysostom does.

For Chrysostom, virtue is not about “agreeing” with God and living in harmony with the natural order, but about obeying God and living the way God intends humans to live. Chrysostom preaches, “Evil is nothing else than disobedience to God.” As noted above, the origin of evil lies in the creature's choice. The converse of this is that good is

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104 This is the opposite of Seneca’s off-quoted quip, “I do not obey God; rather, I agree with him” (Ep. 96.2). However, Chrysostom would have agreed with Cicero, who writes, “Anyone who speaks of the worst of evils in terms of pain has no business talking about virtue” (Tusculan Disputations 3.49; trans., Graver (2002), 23).

105 In Matt. hom. 59.3 (PG 58.577, NPNF366). Τὸ γὰρ κακὸν οὐδὲν ἔτερον ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ ἢ τὸ παρακώσια Θεοῦ. Note again how similar this is to Methodius’s definition of evil: τὸ δὲ κακὸν ἢ παρακοή (Autex. 85.10, PO 809). The human, rather than God, is responsible for the evil in the world.
found in obedience to God, and that obedience to God is a choice, a complex matter at the center of which is human freedom and responsibility.

In *Quod nem. laed.* Chrysostom discusses the nature of suffering, distinguishing between true and apparent harm. True harm is harm to the soul, to one's virtue, and Chrysostom therefore discusses the nature of virtue (ἁρετή), defining it as “carefulness in holding true doctrine, and rectitude in life.”

For Chrysostom there are two aspects of virtue; if a person is missing one of the two, she cannot be considered virtuous. Right thinking and right living are both imperative. Of the two, Chrysostom's preaching emphasis falls upon the right living component.

However, Chrysostom in no way neglects the importance of right thinking; a person must have correct content in his beliefs. For instance, early in his career, Chrysostom preached a series of homilies against the Anomeans, titled *De incomprehensibili dei natura*, in which he responded to the heretical Anomeans who had been attending his homilies and arguing with Chrysostom about the nature of God and human understanding of the Trinity. Aside from what must have been extreme annoyance at such interruptions of his sermons, Chrysostom's concern was that these Anomeans were leading the faithful astray into heresy. It should be noted that Chrysostom was also concerned about the Anomeans themselves, whose dogmatic errors would lead them away from God. Chrysostom preaches, “I did not take up these weapons to strike my adversaries down but to lift them up as they lie prostrate. . . . These weapons

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106 *Quod nem. laed.* 3 (SC 70, NPNF 273). ἢ τὸν ἄληθὸν δογμάτων ἰκρίβεια καὶ ἢ κατὰ τὸν βίον ὀρθότητες.

107 “Anomean” is a general term of opprobrium for the extremist branch of Arians, in other places known as heteroousians. Eunomians and Aetians followed particular anomean writers (Eunomius and Aetius); Chrysostom is addressing the extreme Arians broadly and without reference to any particular leader. Those against whom Chrysostom argues in these homilies believed it was possible to grasp fully the essence, or nature, of God, not only his works. Like the Cappadocians opposing the Eunomians, Chrysostom argued for the incomprehensibility of God’s nature.
do not inflict wounds; rather they cure those who are sick.” He adds, “the chief purpose of my efforts and desire was not only to stitch shut the mouths of my Anomoean opponents but also to provide more and more instruction to your loving assembly.”

Chrysostom’s insistence that his congregation understand the inaccuracy of accounts which claim demons are angels who fell from lusting after human women is another example of his concern for right belief. Everywhere Chrysostom desires his congregation to have correct knowledge.

As important as good doctrine was to Chrysostom, though, most of Chrysostom's homiletical effort was spent not on instilling orthodox belief in his congregation but on encouraging his congregation to live in obedience to God. Chrysostom's sermons are full of exhortations to specific virtuous acts, for example, reading the Bible, being chaste, and his favorite, giving alms and caring for the poor, and against specific sins, for example, frequenting the theaters and horse races, especially in place of attending worship. These exhortations are the primary reason Chrysostom has been labelled “just” a moralist.

The impression of his homilies is that he is more concerned with the morality and virtue

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108 De incompr. hom. 1.39 (SC 132, FC 67) and 4.1 (SC 228, FC 115), respectively. The past tense is a result of Chrysostom's recalling what led him to take up the issue of divine incomprehensibility. In the first quotation Chrysostom explains that it was when the Anomeans challenged him directly that he thought it necessary to engage them. The second quotation is from the first paragraph of a homily in which Chrysostom is recalling what he has accomplished in the previous homilies in the series.

109 See discussion above on page 112. Another example comes from In Gen. hom. 8.3 (PG 53.71-72, FC 109), where Chrysostom warns his congregation against heretics who would use the sentence, “Let us make human beings in our image” to “speak of the divine in human terms.” He also uses this passage to declare the Jews' rejection of the Trinity to be heresy, reading “Let us” as the Father speaking to the Son and Holy Spirit, per the common Christian reading of his time.

110 The reason for this is that if a person misunderstands true doctrine—in the case of the Anomeans, the doctrine of the Trinity—then she has an incorrect understanding of God. This could lead to blasphemy, and it could also lead to poor actions. If a person misunderstands who God is, she might misunderstand that God does not compel a person to act, that each person has a choice, and thus exercise her προαιρεσις poorly. Chrysostom also seems in many places to argue that it is important to have right doctrine without telling his congregation why this is important. It simply is, as though having the correct content of doctrine is an essential aspect of being a Christian. We will see in chapter six that Chrysostom includes “faith” as part of the human’s contribution to salvation.

111 See the introduction for a discussion of the scholarly tradition of dismissing Chrysostom as “just” a moralist.
of his congregation than anything else. Chrysostom is not shy about speaking of any sin he sees. In fact, his decision to note the sin of Empress Eudoxia was not an insignificant factor in his being exiled twice.\footnote{Eudoxia’s sin, according to Chrysostom, was her inexcusable wealth (In Col. hom. 10.4 (PG 62.371, NPNF 307)). For a description of Chrysostom’s interactions with Eudoxia, see Kelly, \textit{Golden Mouth}, 238–40. To be fair, Eudoxia recalled Chrysostom from his first exile because of a miscarriage she thought to be the result of God's anger. It is also important to note that various political situations and controversies, not only his accusations of her sin, played a role in Eudoxia's clashes with Chrysostom.} Often he lists things he considers to be virtues like “virginity, contempt for death, and other sufferings.”\footnote{\textit{In Rom. hom.} 13.7 (PG 60.517, Papageorgiou 267).} It was, however, just as common for Chrysostom to exhort his audience to virtuous lives and good deeds generally and to allow the congregation to decide how that would translate into the exigencies of their lives, as when he preaches, “Let your virtue . . . and your well-disciplined conduct, and the uprightness of your deeds move those who behold you to praise the common Master of us all.”\footnote{\textit{Cat. Or.}, Stav. 4.21 (SC 193, ACW 74).} In another place, he says, “Therefore, I beseech you . . . strive earnestly for virtue. The pleasure derived from vice is short-lived, while the pain of punishment is everlasting; contrariwise, the joy derived from virtue is timeless, while the toil it entails is but temporary.”\footnote{\textit{In Ioh. hom.} 36.2 (PG 59.206, FC 358).}

Chrysostom further breaks virtue into the absence of evil and the accomplishment of good. Referring to Paul's statement in Rom 13:10, Chrysostom preaches that love “has both virtues, abstinence from evils (for it ‘does no evil,’ he says), and doing good deeds.”\footnote{\textit{In Rom. hom.} 23.4 (PG 60.619, NPNF 514, my translation).} It is not enough to keep oneself from sin; one must actively pursue good.
Another way in which we can come to understand what Chrysostom means by the kind of virtue he urges his congregation to seek is to look at the exemplars he uses. There was a long tradition in the rhetorical world of using exemplars to portray specific virtues, and Chrysostom does this as well.\footnote{For pagan examples, see Virgil’s \textit{Aeneid}, where Aeneas is the example of Roman virtue, and Seneca’s \textit{On Firmness} 2.2: “In Cato the immortal gods had given to us a truer exemplar of the wise man than earlier ages had in Ulysses and Hercules,” and he goes on to explain why Cato is the truly wise man. For other Christian authors who appropriate this pagan rhetorical technique and use Biblical exemplars, see 1 Clement 9-12; Methodius’s \textit{Symposium} 11; Athanasius’s Life of Antony; and Gregory of Nyssa’s \textit{Life of Moses} and \textit{Life of Macrina}. Having studied rhetoric under Libanius, Chrysostom would have been familiar with the technique.} His examples, however, are primarily biblical rather than those drawn from Greco-Roman myths. Job is one of Chrysostom’s chief exemplars, particularly so in discussions of demons, sin, and virtue. Since much of Chrysostom’s discussion of demons and virtue is lodged within a narrative of theodicy, the choice to use Job makes sense. He is the paradigmatic sufferer, and the narrative offers Chrysostom everything he seeks in explaining why the world appears to be as evil as it is.\footnote{It is also likely that in asking the questions of God’s justice, Chrysostom receives answers from Job, and he does not only find Job to offer the ideas he wants to present. It is a fusion of exegesis and evidence.} Chrysostom’s use of Job as an exemplar often focuses on Job’s resistance to the devil. Regardless of the disasters or temptations the devil tries in order to provoke Job to curse God, Job resists. Job never loses sight of God or God’s goodness and thus defeats the devil. Furthermore, Chrysostom often juxtaposes Job with Adam and Eve. The latter are Chrysostom’s negative example or antitype of a virtuous human, especially with regard to interactions with the devil. Chrysostom criticizes Eve for allowing herself to be deceived by the devil and scolds Adam for his failure to follow the commandment God gave him. After comparing the two stories, Chrysostom preaches:

For other Christian authors who appropriate this pagan rhetorical technique and use Biblical exemplars, see 1 Clement 9-12; Methodius’s \textit{Symposium} 11; Athanasius’s Life of Antony; and Gregory of Nyssa’s \textit{Life of Moses} and \textit{Life of Macrina}. Having studied rhetoric under Libanius, Chrysostom would have been familiar with the technique.
Nowhere [for Adam] was there labor or pain, or despair and cares, or reproaches, and insults, or the countless ills which assailed Job: but nevertheless, when nothing of this kind existed, he fell and was overthrown. Is it not evident that it was on account of sloth? Even so therefore as [Job], when all these things beset him, and weighed upon him, stood nobly and did not fall, is it not evident that his steadfastness was owing to his vigilance of soul (νηψυχής)?

Continual resistance of the devil and obedience to God, a negative and a positive aspect of the same action, are key components of virtue.

A paragon of resistance is Chrysostom’s representation of Job in De diab. tent. and in most homilies in Chrysostom's corpus that mention Job. But in his Comm. in Job, the focus shifts slightly. The Comm. in Job is not primarily about Job's resistance to the devil, even as that narrative takes up one-quarter of the commentary, but the commentary is rather primarily about how to suffer. The focus is not on Job's innocence but on Job's persistence in looking to eternal, rather than earthly, things and on his seeing God's care and pedagogy in his suffering. Both of these emphases provide another key aspect of Chrysostom's understanding of virtue: keeping one's mind on eternal things rather than on temporary, earthly things. This is the virtue of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the story of the fiery furnace in Daniel 3. Chrysostom tells his congregation that they refused to sin regardless of their external circumstances. They held fast to the truth of invisible realities and put no stock in the temporal. He preaches:

Again, I ask, ‘was the virtue of the “three children” corrupted by the troubles which beset them? . . . They did not consider that this strait or the absolute power of him who possessed the state sufficed to justify their compliance; but they employed every device and expedient to enable them to avoid the sin, although they were abandoned on every side.

119 De diab. tent. 2.4 (SC 188, NPNF 195).
120 De diab. tent. 2.1, 3.2; Quod nem. laed. 3-5; In 1 Cor. hom. 28.6, to name a few examples.
121 Quod nem. laed. 15 (SC 130-34, NPNF 281-82).
Chrysostom's use of monks as paragons of virtue inculcates the same heavenly orientation praised in Job and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and Chrysostom urges his audience to emulate this lifestyle in the cities:

However, if you did not know the dead through the Scriptures, you should have seen these living men. But is there no one to lead you? Come to me, and I will show you the dwellings of these holy ones; come and learn something useful from them. . . . For this reason they lived in solitude, that they might teach you to despise the clamor in the midst of the world.122

In both his *Comparatio regis et monachi* and his *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* Chrysostom argues that what makes the monk's way of life superior to others' ways of life is their detachment from worldly, temporal things and their correlative focus on heavenly, eternal things.123 More explicitly, Chrysostom exhorts his own congregation by defining virtue as the ability to see the invisible realities: “Virtue it is to scorn all human affairs, to keep the mind on future realities at each hour of the day, to see no present good but to know that everything human is a shadow and a dream or even worse.”124 This attention to eternal realities is what enabled Job to suffer well because Job knew that his suffering was not true harm but was even for his good. The heavenly orientation, which requires holding loosely temporal things, if not scorning them altogether, is what enables a person to be virtuous.

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122 *Hom Matt.* 72.4 (PG 58.672, my translation).
123 *Comp. reg. et mon.* is a comparison of the monk's poverty and the king's wealth that demonstrates the superiority of the monk's poverty because wealth ensnares one in the cares of the world, whereas poverty frees one to “converse with the angels” (PG 47.387-92). *Adv. opp. vit. mon.* is a series of three homilies designed to demonstrate the superiority of the monastic way of life, and again, the key is the monks' poverty, which facilitates the angelic life on earth.
124 *In Gen. hom.* 8. 6 (PG 53.75, FC 115). One might argue that Chrysostom's own life does not exemplify a “scorning of human affairs,” since as a prominent preacher and later bishop he was constantly entangled in political affairs and controversies. Chrysostom might answer that these entanglements were his duty as bishop and that it is his vision of the heavenly πολιτεία that drove his actions. Chrysostom's understanding of detachment for a heavenly orientation is not about throwing away all earthly things but about establishing God's heavenly πολιτεία on earth. A transformation of the human things, if you will. This is seen in Chrysostom's call to emulate the monks. They are to live on earth as if in heaven. But they still live on earth.
The ability to keep one's mind on eternal things is also one of the ways Chrysostom tells his congregation to avoid sin and to resist the devil's temptations. He preaches:

If [a person] ponder . . . the transitoriness of things which seem beautiful here, but are just like grass and die more readily than the flowers of spring—if we continually revolve these reflections within ourselves and keep remembering those who lived the most virtuously, the Devil will not be able to overcome us easily, though he make a thousand attempts, nor will he be able even to begin to prevail over us.125

To his catechumens Chrysostom says to follow the example of the martyrs, who “abandoned all the things upon earth and gazed with the eyes of faith on the King of heaven. . . . They transported their thoughts to heaven and paid no heed thereafter to anything they could see with their bodily eyes. . . . They sketched for themselves a picture of the fires of Gehenna and thus strengthened their reason.”126 When contending with temptation, be it from passions or from demons, Chrysostom tells his audience to “adopt the attitude of a corpse in regard to the affairs of this life and like a corpse take no active interest in what threatens the soul's salvation, but only in regard to spiritual things to be alive and take active interest.”127 A virtuous person keeps her mind on eternal things, which facilitates resistance to the devil and obedience to God.

This insistence on seeing the larger picture and keeping external circumstances and suffering in perspective sounds very Stoic.128 For Epictetus, we saw, virtue consists in attending to the things which are ἐφ' ἴμμίν, which come down to only the use of one's impressions. One has no control over life circumstances, but one can control one's

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125 In Ioh. hom. 9.2 (PG 59.72-73, FC 95).
126 Cat. Or., Stav 7.18-19 (SC 238, ACW 111).
127 In Gen. hom. 8.6 (PG 53.75, FC 115).
128 There are, of course, significant differences between Chrysostom and the Stoics. The point here is that there are resonances and that these resonances help us understand better what Chrysostom is doing.
reaction to them. Chrysostom, too, uses ἐφ’ ἡµῖν this way, saying that life is full of hardship, but that ἐφ’ ἡµῖν κεῖται τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τὰ τῆς κακίας. Making one’s life worthy (ἀξία) of the baptismal gifts, that is, keeping oneself pure, is what God has made ἐφ’ ἡµῖν. In fact, in *In Eph. hom.* 23, what is ἐφ’ ἡµῖν is the ability to see one’s struggles on earth as temporary and therefore to store up treasures in heaven. The goal of such a perspective is different for Chrysostom, however. For Stoics, controlling what is ἐφ’ ἡµῖν is virtue and leads to human flourishing in this life by being in accord with Nature. For Chrysostom, though, the heavenly perspective facilitates virtue, is the mark of a virtuous person, and leads to salvation.

Chrysostom places a distinct emphasis on contrasting virtue with external circumstances or earthly things, such as wealth or health, which Chrysostom says people are prone to associate with virtue. When people see a healthy, successful person, Chrysostom says, people tend to assume that person is virtuous. Chrysostom argues instead that virtue is located within a human being in a way not unlike Paul’s discussion of the “inner man.” Chrysostom explains that Judas had every external circumstance in his favor and yet was not virtuous: “Neither his being of the twelve nor his call profited him, because he had not a mind disposed to virtue.” Chrysostom also writes that wealth does not “make any one wiser, or more self-controlled, or more gentle, or more intelligent, or kind, or benevolent, or superior to anger, or gluttony or pleasure: it does not

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129 *In Act. apost. hom.* 47.3 (PG 60.331, NPNF 286).
130 *In Ioh. hom.* 10.3 (PG 59.76, FC 101). This idea will be discussed at length in chapter 6.
131 *In Eph. hom.* 23.3 (PG 62.168, NPNF 166).
132 Stoics are also concerned with providing a basis for the virtuous state, and Chrysostom is not concerned with civic virtue, even as he seeks the heavenly πολιτεία on earth. Chrysostom’s vision of the heavenly πολιτεία is not a state controlled by the church but a church that lives in the world in accord with their heavenly citizenship.
133 *Quod nem. laed.* 11 (SC 114, NPNF 297). Ἀλλ’ οὕτε τὸ εἶναι τὸν δώδεκα, οὕτε ἡ κλήσις αὐτῶν ὁνησιν, ἐπειδὴ γνώσην οὐκ ἔχει πρὸς ἀρετὴν παρεσκευασμένην
train anyone to be moderate, or teach him how to be humble, nor introduce and implant any other piece of virtue in his soul.”

Virtue is not about a person's situation but about something in her soul, a disposition or orientation toward eternity.

The phrase “piece of virtue” (μέρος τῆς ἀρετῆς) in the above quotation suggests that virtue is somehow composite, made up of pieces. We see a similar idea elsewhere, as in Chrysostom’s In Ioh. hom. 16: “For, through [pride], it is possible for all the virtue of the soul to be corrupted, even if it discovers there almsgiving, prayer, fasting, any virtue whatsoever.” Various individual virtues reside in a person's soul and together make a person virtuous by composing the virtue of that soul. In another of the In Ioh. hom., Chrysostom says that chastity or abstention from stealing do not of themselves make a person virtuous. The whole life must be upright. So a person who is chaste but is so only for vainglory or his reputation is not truly virtuous. In this way it sounds as though Chrysostom believes virtue to be an all-or-nothing state. A person either is virtuous or she is not. Given Chrysostom's intensity and moral certitude in the pulpit, it is easy to hear his words this way. Yet the phrase is “piece of virtue.” It is possible for people to have part of virtue, or, given Chrysostom's lists, for people to have specific virtues.

Chrysostom also spends a lot of time exhorting his congregants to virtue, chastising them for specific sins, and showing the monks to be exemplars of virtue, those who live angelic lives now. These practices indicate that, though virtue is possible for all, 

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134 Quod nem. laed. 7 (SC 94-96, NPNF 276). Οὕτω γὰρ σοφώτερον, οὕτω σωφρονέστερον, οὕτω ἐπιεικέστερον, οὕτω συνετότερον πάντες ποιεῖν εἶδον, οὐ χρηστὸν, οὐ φιλάθρωπον, οὐκ ὄργῆς κρείττονα, οὐ γαστρὸς ἁμένοι, οὐκ ἡδονὸν ἀνότερον· οὐ μετριᾶζειν παιδεύει, οὐκ συνεστάλθαι διδάσκει, οὐκ ἄλλο τι μέρος τῆς ἀρετῆς εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν εἰσάγει καὶ καταφυτεύει.
135 In Ioh. hom. 16.4 (PG 59.106, FC 158-59).
136 In Ioh. hom. 28.2 (PG 59.164, FC 273-74).
137 One thinks of his own asceticism and continual quest to find the most stringent forms, eventually damaging his own health, or of his moral certitude in denouncing sins, including the Empress's, from the pulpit.
Chrysostom does not see many who are yet virtuous. Most of Chrysostom's rhetoric is about the struggle for virtue which defines the Christian life, which suggests that Christians are on the way to virtue, that they have “pieces” of virtue and attempt to gain more.

**Virtue and Demons**

At this point we have explored Chrysostom's use of προαίρεσις and γνώμη as the key terms to understanding his anthropology. We saw in particular the way Chrysostom contrasts both προαίρεσις and γνώμη with φύσις in order to highlight human freedom, which is necessary for his account of virtue. What is particularly interesting about Chrysostom's use of προαίρεσις and γνώμη is in which context Chrysostom uses which term and with what frequency. In his whole corpus προαίρεσις appears about 800 times, whereas γνώμη appears 1400, though because γνώμη has a broader range of meaning, this is not surprising. They appear together in the same sentence 60 times. Chrysostom employs αὐτεξούσιος only 50 times. Though Chrysostom uses προαίρεσις frequently in all his works, with a special fondness for it in his homilies on the Pauline epistles, it is

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138 This is also similar to the Stoic ideal of the sage. Though it is possible for anyone to be a sage, there are in reality very few.

139 Louis Meyer describes Chrysostom's understanding of spiritual growth as that of a plant from a seed or the building of a house on a foundation, where the seed or the foundation is baptism (Meyer, *Saint Jean Chrysostome*, 130–32).

140 Laird argues convincingly that γνώμη is the core of a person. Chrysostom uses γνώμη to describe the part of a person involved in real love and friendship, as in “That [love] which is sincere is not merely in words, but arises from the disposition, the γνώμη, and fellow-feeling” (*In 1 Tim. hom. 2.1* (PG 62.509; Laird's translation, p. 32-33)).

141 This is particularly noteworthy because where most other ancient writers used αὐτεξούσιος, Chrysostom used προαιρέσις or γνώμη. For instance, Justin claims an αὐτεξούσιος for angels, and Tatian argues that demons want to cause the αὐτεξούσιος of humans to choose evil. For an excellent survey of the use of αὐτεξούσιος up through Maximus the Confessor's works, see William Telfer, “Autexousia,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 8 (1957): 123–29.
his word of choice when discussing why humans ought not fear the devil. A person's προαίρεσις is the reason for her boldness; she knows that if she safeguards her προαίρεσις and exercises it well, not even the devil can keep her from the kingdom of heaven. Most often Chrysostom wants the congregation to protect and use their προαίρεσις rather than their γνώμη. In the parable of the sheep and goats, Chrysostom claims προαίρεσις is the cause of a person's end, be it heaven or hell. When scolding the theater-goers who are absent from worship, Chrysostom says the reason they are gone and others are present is that they have a different προαίρεσις. Those absent allowed themselves to be deceived by the devil. To those who would blame demons for their sin, Chrysostom preaches, “Take knowledge of the cause of the sin, and you will find that it is none other than yourself who has sinned. Everywhere there is a need of a good προαίρεσις.”

That προαίρεσις is Chrysostom's choice for discussing demons and their relation to a person's virtue means that it is the word which links Chrysostom's demonology and anthropology. The “chosen-ness” of an action makes it either vice or virtue, and Chrysostom often employs demonological rhetoric to remind his audience of this. Reminding his congregation that they are in a wrestling match with the devil is often, though not always, Chrysostom's method for encouraging his people to remember that they are self-determining and can choose virtue over vice, Christ over the devil. Looking at these passages of rhetoric about demons, De diab. tent. in particular, highlights

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142 Though it is Chrysostom's most frequent choice for speaking about resistance to the devil, προαίρεσις is not Chrysostom's exclusive choice. He does use γνώμη on occasion.
143 See above, p. 178. De diab. tent. 2.3 (SC 174, NPNF 193).
144 See above, p. 178. De diab. tent. 2.1 (SC 154-56, NPNF 191).
145 Ibid. 2.2 (SC 168, NPNF 192). Ἐπίγνοσθι τὸν ἀπόν τῆς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ οὐδένα ἄλλον εὑρήσεις, ἢ τὸν ἡμαρτηκότα σέ. Πανταχοῦ προαιρέσεως χρεία ἁγαθῆς.
Chrysostom's anthropology. Where the theodicies of his predecessors and contemporaries, like Methodius and Gregory of Nyssa, mention only human responsibility for sin and Satan's role in the fall, Chrysostom brings the devil to the forefront of his argument.

Chrysostom's demonology is key to understanding his anthropology precisely because, in contrast to other theologians, he explicitly speaks about demons in his anthropology. In arguing that neither demons, nor human nature, nor God himself is the cause of sin and evil in the world, but a human's προαιρεσις, Chrysostom situates himself in a long tradition of theodicy that finds the origin of evil in the creature's self-determination. Chrysostom writes, “For if the sum of all, death itself, has its root and foundation from sin, much more the majority of our diseases also: since our very capability of suffering did itself originate there.” In fact, Chrysostom claims the devil has προαιρεσις also, the poor exercise of which caused his own fall: “Let the Devil be allowed to be exceeding wicked, not by nature (φύσις), but by choice (προαιρεσις).” This argument is part of the project to explain the origins of evil without implicating God that is common in the fourth century. We will examine the accounts of Methodius (d. 311 CE) and Gregory of Nyssa (334-395 CE) as representative of the tradition Chrysostom joins. Methodius is one of the first figures to systematize the language of self-determination, and Nyssa demonstrates the assumption of that language in theodicies of the mid-fourth century.

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146 Most notably for our purposes here, Methodius and Gregory of Nyssa, though neither do Irenaeus nor Origen speak of demons in their discourses on anthropology as much as Chrysostom does.

147 In Matt. hom. 27.2 (PG 57.346-47, NPNF 185).

148 De diab. tent. 1.2 (SC 128-32, NPNF 187-88).
Methodius's *Peri tou autexousiou* (*Autex*.), often translated *On Free Will* and better translated as *On Self-Determination*, is a dialogue about the origin of evil which concludes that evil begins with God's gift of self-determination (*αὐτεξούσιος*) and Adam and Eve's choice to exercise their *αὐτεξούσιοι* in disobedience to God's command. In a statement that sounds like something we have heard Chrysostom preach, Methodius writes, “There is nothing evil by nature.” He further claims, “It is in designing his hatred against man that he became the devil by his own *προαίρεσις*. Because God has created all things, nothing is evil by its very nature, not even the devil. Therefore, all evil comes only from the freedom of the creature, who can choose to disobey God. He also argues that *προαίρεσις*, given to humans by God, is the locus of their moral responsibility. Methodius claims, “The first human was made *αὐτεξούσιον*, that is, free (*ἐλεύθερον*), from whom his descendants have inherited the same freedom (*ἐλευθερίαν*).” To have been created free is for the good of the human; it is what allows for praise and blame, for if God had created humanity to serve him of necessity (*ἀνάγκη*), they would only be instruments of God, doing what God wished. Were that true, “no

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149 As noted in the introduction, I am avoiding use of “free will” because of the connotations and baggage the term picked up after the Augustine-Pelagius debates.

150 Methodius, *Autex*. 65.5 (PO 22.789, NPNF 362). Translations of Methodius's *Autex*. are my own unless otherwise noted.

151 Methodius, *Autex*. 91.5-6 (PO 22.815). The comment about the devil is part of Methodius's explanation about how humans knew to disobey God in the first place. Methodius claims that they had to be taught evil (because of Jer 13:23), and the one who taught humans evil was the serpent, who was the devil. Still evil must come from somewhere. How did the devil know evil unless it was preexistent or the devil was created evil? Methodius answers that evil was not preexistent, nor was the devil created evil. On the contrary, the devil was created as a δύναμις to serve the good, but the devil was envious of humans because they alone of created beings were made “in the image and likeness of God.” In his envy, and seeing that disobedience to God was evil, the devil taught humans to disobey so as to keep them from attaining the higher goods. Evil, therefore, is not some pre-existent matter, left over from creation or, worse, something God created, but the result of envy and disobedience to God. It is the result of poor choice.

152 "If [humanity] were made as any of the elements, or those things which render a similar service to God, he would cease to receive a reward befitting *προαίρεσις*, and would be like an instrument of the maker; and it would be unreasonable for him to suffer blame for his wrong-doings, for the real author of them is the one by whom he is used" (Methodius, *Autex*. 73.7-10 (PO 22.797, NPNF 362)).

longer would they receive recompense worthy of their προαιρέσις." There is no responsibility if there is no freedom, and so God has given freedom, created humans self-determining (αὐτεξούσιον) in order that they may choose to obey God and receive reward for their obedience. They may also choose to disobey God.  

Discussing the origin of evil by having recourse to humanity's self-determination is not new with Methodius, but Methodius is the first person to systematize the vocabulary. By the time Gregory of Nyssa writes his Oratio catechetica (Or. cat.), Methodius's vocabulary is standard. Gregory assumes this language and uses it in his own arguments about theodicy as he, too, argues that the creature's choice is the cause of evil in the world. Gregory argues that God created human beings with independence and self-determination (ἀδεσπωτον καὶ αὐτεξούσιον), which is the mark of having been made in God's image. Similar to Chrysostom, Gregory further argues that God cannot be the author of evil because if he were, it would be impossible to blame or punish vice since vice would then be God's fault. Therefore, Gregory argues, evil must be the result of the human's choice, made freely: "No kind of evil had its beginning in the Divine will (βουλήµατος), for vice (κακία) would be outside blame if God were claimed as its creator and father, but somehow evil, having been united with it, is rooted within the προαιρέσις, whenever there is some withdrawal of the soul from the good."  

Humanity's self-determination is key in both accounts. Nyssa, writing a couple of decades before

154 Methodius, Autex. 73.7-9 (PO 22.797).  
155 Obedience or disobedience was the only choice. There was not some pre-existent evil they were to resist, “but obeying God or not obeying was the only cause; for this [God] wished τὸ αὐτεξούσιον” (Methodius, Autex. 77.5 (PO 22.801)).  
156 As an early example, Irenaeus describes the creature's role in the origin of evil in Adv. haer. 5.37, 39.  
157 Nyssa, Or. Cat. 5 (SC 168, NPNF 479).  
158 Nyssa, Or. Cat. 5 (SC 168, my translation).
Chrysostom, demonstrates the prominence of such thought and vocabulary in the late fourth century.

Not only Chrysostom's ideas, but also his vocabulary echoes Methodius's and Nyssa's. Methodius and Nyssa both use αὐτεξούσιος much more than Chrysostom, though Chrysostom does use it in the same way, that is, to indicate humanity's God-given self-determination. Chrysostom primarily uses it in his Biblical homilies with a particular concentration in his *In Gen. hom.*, where he refers to to God's having created humans with αὐτεξούσιος. As noted, προαιρεσίς is one of the primary words Chrysostom uses when discussing virtue and moral responsibility. Methodius's *Autex.* and Nyssa's *Or. Cat.* use the word as well, and in similar ways, especially regarding the devil's becoming the devil. Another similarity is that both Nyssa and Chrysostom choose to describe one's προαιρεσίς as κύριος. Nyssa writes that God has “left something in our authority, of which each of us is κύριος. This is the προαιρεσίς.” Similarily, Chrysostom tells his congregation, “In every case, the προαιρεσίς is κυρίαν.”

What is more significant, however, is to note where Chrysostom diverges from his predecessors. The noteworthy difference in vocabulary between Chrysostom and Methodius is Chrysostom's preference for προαιρεσίς when speaking about human interaction with demons. Chrysostom does not tell his congregation to remember that they are self-determining but that sin is a result of a poor exercise of their προαιρεσίς. In *De diab. tent.*, *De obs. 3*, *Quod nem. laed.*, and *Comm. Job*—the four works are the locus of much of his theodicy—αὐτεξούσιος does not appear even once. Chrysostom's focus in those works is the human's προαιρεσίς and, occasionally, γνώμη. In both cases, the

159 ἀφήκε τι καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐξουσίαν εἶναι, οὐ μόνος ἐκαστὸς ἔστι κύριος· τότε δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ προαιρεσίς (Nyssa, *Or. Cat.* 30 (SC 280, my translation).
160 *De diab. tent.* 2.1 (SC 158, NPNF 191). τὸν πανταχοῦ τὴν προαιρεσίν εἶναι κυρίαν
faculty is assumed to be self-determining, as it is clear that the key attribute of both προαιρεσις and γνώμη is a lack of compulsion from outside forces. Whereas Methodius concludes that the origin of evil is the creature's choice to disobey God resulting from its being gifted with αὐτεξούσιος, which allows it to exercise its προαιρεσις poorly, Chrysostom speaks only of the προαιρεσις and assumes that its primary attribute is self-determination. Gregory of Nyssa's vocabulary is similar to Methodius's in breadth, using ἐξουσίας, αὐτεξούσιος, and προαιρεσις often. He describes the προαιρεσις as “something that has never been enslaved and is self-determining, lying in the freedom of the mind.”¹⁶¹ Here, too, the προαιρεσις is the seat of the human's αὐτεξούσιος.

The most significant difference Chrysostom introduces, however, is the addition of so much demonic rhetoric. Methodius and Nyssa may have touched on demons in their theodicies, but Chrysostom brings them to the fore.¹⁶² Chrysostom's De obs. 3 argues that evil is neither the fault of demons nor of God, but of humans. He does so by defining true evil, circumscribing the devil's powers, and calling his audience to understand their own role in evil. De diab. tent. repeats these ideas. Chrysostom here argues that demons are powerless and cannot cause sin and that humans are alone responsible for their actions. He encourages his audience to be virtuous by saying that the devil and his demons cannot prevent people from exercising their προαιρεσις for virtue. Quod nem. laed., perhaps Chrysostom's most explicit theodicy, speaks of demons less than in other places, but they are still present as Chrysostom writes that true harm is harm to the soul, injury of a

¹⁶¹ Nyssa, Or. Cat. 30 (SC 280, my translation). Nyssa also uses γνώμη (according to Laird about half as often as Chrysostom does), and even uses it together with προαιρεσις in the same way Chrysostom does, as noted above in section 5.1.

¹⁶² Even in Augustine's De lib. arb., a work of similar genre to Methodius's Autex., Augustine does not talk about the devil until the end. Scholars date De lib. arb. with a beginning composition date of 387-388 and an ending date between 391-395, all of which is during Chrysostom's tenure at Antioch.
person's virtue, and not even the devil is able to injure a person's virtue. Whereas Methodius includes the devil to say that the devil's envy of humanity led to his tempting Adam and Eve to disobey God, which is the origin of evil in the world, Chrysostom refers to the devil to show there is nothing that can keep a Christian from a virtuous life if she is inclined to live it. The devil is the worst-case example, a way to say that if the devil cannot injure a person's virtue, nothing else can.

Where his predecessors spoke primarily of human responsibility for the presence of sin and evil in the world—as well as the devil's role in the fall—Chrysostom speaks primarily of a human's continued responsibility for her sins. The evil his congregation sees and suffers is not true evil. Sin is true evil, and sin is compelled neither by demons, nor by God, nor by human nature but is chosen by a person, usually because of his negligence regarding the devil's temptations and deceptions. Demons are an integral part of Chrysostom's anthropology because he defines a Christian as a person living in struggle against the devil and his demons. In one of his letters to Olympias, Chrysostom praises her for being an example to others in her “struggles for virtue” (τὰ παλαίσματα τῆς ἀρετῆς), saying that she demonstrates gender and lack of bodily strength to be no hindrance to virtue.\footnote{Ep. ad Olymp. 12 (SC 189, NPNF 298).} Chrysostom defines these wrestlings further: “Whilst ceaselessly contending with demons, you have won countless victories, yet have not received a single blow, but stand unwounded in the midst of a storm of darts.”\footnote{Ep. ad Olymp. 12 (SC 188, NPNF 298).} In a more explicit example, Chrysostom's Cat. Or. provide catechumens with what they must know about the Christian life they are poised to enter, and he uses two images to do this: marriage to

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163 Ep. ad Olymp. 12 (SC 189, NPNF 298).
164 Ep. ad Olymp. 12 (SC 188, NPNF 298).
Christ and combat with the devil.\textsuperscript{165} Of this combat Chrysostom writes, “These thirty days are like the practice and bodily exercises in some wrestling school. Let us learn during these days how we may gain the advantage over that wicked demon. After baptism we are going to strip for the combat against him,” and:

Up to now you have been in a school for training and exercise; there falls were forgiven. But from today on, the arena stands open, the contest is at hand, the spectators have taken their seats. Not only are men watching the combats but the host of angels as well. . . . The Lord of angels presides over the contest as judge.\textsuperscript{166}

In his first homily on John, Chrysostom tells his congregation to remember that those who are baptized made promises to Christ about avoiding the devil's pomps. They renounced Satan and must not look in his direction again.\textsuperscript{167}

The connection Chrysostom has made between demonology and anthropology—his use of demonological discourse to highlight human self-determination—is something the monastic tradition does.\textsuperscript{168} We saw in chapter two the similarity between Chrysostom's demonology and the demonology put forth by both Egyptian and Syriac asceticism. Both have a distinct emphasis on the demons' powerlessness, defined as an inability either to cause true (that is, moral) harm or to cause physical damage without permission from God. Both the monks and Chrysostom warn their audiences to be vigilant at all times so that they may resist the devil's attacks; both argue that a demon can only incite sin if a person cooperates with it. Both emphasize the inability of demons

\textsuperscript{165} That Chrysostom introduces both images together in his first catechetical homily implies that he does not see the images as mutually exclusive. Rather, they together define the Christian life.

\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Cat. Or.}, P-K 1.29 (1.16 in SC), (SC 366.144; Harkins, 140-41), and \textit{Cat. Or.}, Stav. 3.8-9 (SC 50.155-56; Harkins, 58), respectively.

\textsuperscript{167} In this instance, Satan is found particularly at the theater. \textit{In Ioh. hom.} 1.4 (PG 59.29-30, FC 11).

\textsuperscript{168} Any of the following similarities on its own is not enough to demonstrate Chrysostom's awareness of ascetic demonologies, but in aggregate the likelihood increases that Chrysostom knows and uses the monastic tradition.
to cause moral harm over the audience's fear of the demons' ability to cause physical harm. Finally, and most importantly, both the authors of monastic literature and Chrysostom define the Christian life as a struggle against the devil in constant pursuit of virtue.

Chrysostom, then, is creating a synthesis. Because he is using the vocabulary of theological anthropology established by theologians, we know that Chrysostom is situating himself within their tradition. He is not merely using the language his congregation is using, but that which has been established and assumed by the writers of his own time. To his congregation's concerns about the suffering they see, their fear of demons, their excuses for their lack of virtue, Chrysostom answers as his traditional theologian forebears would have, by saying that humans are morally responsible. His method, however, and his manner of highlighting this responsibility, is to draw on the demonologically-cast anthropology of the monks.

Understanding that Chrysostom is synthesizing a theological tradition with an ascetic tradition is vital to understanding his (abundant) talk of virtue. For instance, in some places where Chrysostom speaks of virtue, he does so assuming that virtue is easy, or is a simple matter of choice, as when he preaches, “If we are willing, [virtue's] way is very easy.”\(^\text{169}\) We understand the depth of that choice by looking at those passages where Chrysostom exhorts his congregation to stop making the devil an excuse and to take control of their own virtue, to choose Christ over the devil. The details of these arguments reveal some of the foundational assumptions with which Chrysostom builds his arguments in other homilies. For instance, Chrysostom writes, “It is easy for a man to

\(^{169}\) *In 1 Cor. hom.* 14.4 (PG 61.118, NPNF 81).
change his ways and to become good and subject to God." Chrysostom has argued, even in this very homily, that no one is evil by nature. Therefore, it is possible to become good, that is, to do good consistently. But Chrysostom also says here that it is easy, which many might consider a false statement. It can be very hard to do good and to be subject to God when evil is so enticing. Yet Chrysostom has spoken on this, too. The devil does tempt and even deceive, but Chrysostom maintains that the devil cannot compel. It is the person's choice whether he will allow himself to be deceived and act on his temptation or whether he will choose virtue instead. It is “just” a matter of choice, or decision, and that is easy enough. Moreover, Chrysostom continues in his homily, “The wrestling matches are made easy so that you may win the contest, not so that you may fall asleep or abuse the greatness of this grace by taking the opportunity to be sluggish and indifferent, to wallow again in the mire in which you wallowed before.” He argues the same thing in the Cat. Or.: “In our combat with the devil, Christ does not stand aloof but is wholly on our side. . . . He anointed us with the oil of gladness, but He bound the devil with fetters that cannot be broken to keep him shackled hand and foot for the combat.” We noted above that Chrysostom believes God has transformed—through God's own mysterious working in the soul—a Christian's προαίρεσις to make it able to choose the good and has made the body subject to the soul's reins again. Knowing that virtue is a matter of choice and that the choice is between following Christ or giving in to the devil helps us understand more fully and more faithfully what Chrysostom means when he says, “It is

170 In Rom. hom. 13.6 (PG 60.516, Papageorgiou 266). μεταβαλλόμενον μέντοι, καλὸν γενέσθαι καὶ ὑποταγήναι, ῥάδιον.
171 Hom Rom. 13.7 (PG 60.517, Papageorgiou 268).
172 Cat. Or., Stav. 3.8-9 (SC 50.155-56; Harkins, 58).
easy for a man to change his ways,” or, “Virtue is . . . easy and readily known of all.”¹⁷³

Though one may find discussions of anthropology and virtue in Chrysostom's corpus that
do not refer to demons, he does so frequently and in key places. These homilies and
passages are essential for understanding Chrysostom's anthropology. In particular, they
highlight a larger narrative from which Chrysostom works, one of angels and demons
battling for humans' salvation. It is to this vision and the centrality of virtue for salvation
that we now turn.

¹⁷³ *In Matt. hom.* 23.5 (PG 57.314, NPNF 161).
CHAPTER 6: CHRYSOSTOM’S SOTERIOLOGY

We have explored Chrysostom’s use of discourse about demons to highlight his anthropology. In contrast to the fears and excuses of his congregation, Chrysostom preaches that demons and the devil himself cannot truly harm a human being. Human beings are free and self-determining and thus responsible for their actions and choices, their sin and virtue. At the heart of this is Chrysostom's emphasis on a person's προαιρεσις or γνώμη as the locus of moral responsibility. The προαιρεσις is that which Chrysostom urges his audience to use when they are tempted by the devil and that which determines whether a person sins or acts virtuously. The προαιρεσις is free, and only because it is free can a person be virtuous. That it is free, as Chrysostom argues, means that a person can be virtuous.

This chapter follows Chrysostom’s argument to its end. Because a person can be virtuous, God requires her to be virtuous. Virtue is what makes a person worthy of the kingdom at the final judgment. God judges us on our virtue and decides whether we are worthy. We will see that we are not alone in our endeavor to be virtuous. Christ helps us, but the responsibility finally lies with us.

Chrysostom believes and preaches that salvation requires our participation and we are judged on the basis of that participation because we are free, but he never preaches this message so succinctly as I have put it here. For this reason I must, as with other areas of Chrysostom’s theology, weave together the strands of Chrysostom’s thought here. A passage from Chrysostom’s In Gen. hom. 8.6 highlights especially well the elements of this argument: the freedom to be virtuous, God’s expectation that one will be virtuous, and virtue as the basis of God’s judgment. For this reason, I structure this chapter as an
exegesis of Chrysostom’s *In Gen. hom.* 8.6, though I will at times need to step away from the passage and treat larger themes from the text, since 8.6 reflects ideas and themes Chrysostom articulates in many other works. The key issue that will remain before us is that our self-determination needs to result in virtuous lives. God does not exempt us from virtue; he requires it. We have thus far seen that Chrysostom’s speech about demons insists that demons cannot harm or damn a person and that a person can resist them because her προαίρεσις is free. This chapter examines Chrysostom’s further belief that God does not save a person unilaterally, also because she is free. We will see that for Chrysostom, a person is responsible for her own salvation.

*In Gen. hom.* 8.6:

Accordingly, let us not neglect our own salvation. You see, dearly beloved, nothing is as important as virtue; virtue it is, after all, that snatches us from Gehenna in the world to come and bestows on us the enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven, and in this world renders us superior to all those spending their efforts in idle and vain schemes—not simply human beings, but the very demons as well—and makes us stronger than the enemy of our salvation (I mean the devil). So what could be more important than virtue when it makes those striving for it superior not only to scheming human beings but also to the demons? Virtue it is to scorn all human affairs, to keep the mind on future realities at each hour of the day, to seek no present good but to know that everything human is a shadow and a dream or even worse. Virtue it is to adopt the attitude of a corpse in regard to the affairs of this life and like a corpse take no active interest in what threatens the soul's salvation, but only in regard to spiritual things to be alive and take active interest, as Paul also said. ‘I am alive, though it is no longer me but Christ alive in me.’

Accordingly, dearly beloved, let us do everything as people who have put on Christ, and not grieve the Holy Spirit. So whenever we are disquieted by passion, or untimely desire, or anger, or rage, or envy, let us think of him who dwells within us, let us drive far away every such inclination. Let our regard be for the pre-eminence of grace showered on us by God and let us curb all the passions of the flesh, so that after we have striven lawfully in this brief and transient existence we may be rewarded with that marvelous crown in the time to come—a fearful time for sinners but a time to be longed for by those clad in virtue—and that we
may be found worthy of those unspeakable goods, thanks to the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.¹

This passage is the final section of Chrysostom’s eighth homily on Genesis. The first seven homilies have been reflections on Gen 1:1-25, the days of creation. Homily 8 begins as a reflection on Gen 1:26-27, and Chrysostom’s focus throughout the homily is on the place of the human being in creation. According to Chrysostom, the fact that God created humans last and with the purpose of ruling over the rest of creation indicates that humans have the highest place in creation. Chrysostom further argues that being made in God’s image refers to the control humans have over created things, rather than being made in the form of God, as some would say. Then, after discussing the importance of teaching and correcting those who think wrongly, Chrysostom says that those who teach and correct must themselves be virtuous. It is at this point, then, that he concludes the homily with this passage on the importance of virtue.

¹ In Gen. hom. 8.6 (PG 53.75-76, FC 115-16). Μὴ τοίνυν καταφρονῶμεν τὴς ἐαυτῶν σωτηρίας. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄρετὸς ἢσος, ἀγαπητεῖ: ἀφίη γὰρ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι τῆς γενενίς ἐξαρπάξει, καὶ τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν ἢ μὴν ἀπόλαυσιν χαρίζεται, καὶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι βιοί πάντων ἀνοτέρους καθίστησι τὸν μάτην καὶ εἰκῆ ἐπιβουλεύειν ἐπιχειρούντων, καὶ σῶκ αὐθρόπῳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν τῶν δαμόνων, καὶ τοῦ ἐξήρου τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς ἡμετέρας, τοῦ διαβόλου λέγω, ἵσυγχροτέρους ἀπεργάζεται. Τὴν οὖν ἢν εἰς ταύτης ἢσος, ὅταν μὴ μόνον τῶν αὐθρόπων τῶν ἐπιβουλεύοντων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν δαμόνων ἀνοτέρους ποιητοῖς αὐτὴν μετίκατα. Αρετὴ δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ πάντων τῶν αὐθροπίνων ὑπερορᾶν, τὸ τὰ μέλλοντα ἐφ’ ἐκάστης ὥρας φαντάζονται, τὸ πρὸς μὴ δὲν τῶν παρόντων ἐποιηθήσατο, ἀλλ’ εἰδέναι, ὅτι πάντα τὰ αὐθρόπινα σκία ἐστὶ καὶ ἄναρ, καὶ εἴ τι τούτων εὐπλέστερον. Αρετὴ ἐστὶ τὸ καθάπερ νεκρὸν οὕτω διακεῖται πρὸς τὰ τοῦ βίου τοῦτο τράγματα, καὶ πρὸς μὲν τὰ λοιμαίομενα τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς σωτηρίαν, ὡσπερ νεκρὸν ὑπηκούεσθαι, οὕτως εἶναι ἀνενέγητον-τον, πρὸς δὲ τὰ πνευματικὰ μόνον ζῆν καὶ ἐνεργεῖν, καθάπερ καὶ Παύλου ἔλεγε: Ζῶ δὲ, οὐκέτα ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ Χριστός.

Καὶ ἡμεῖς τοίνυν, ἀγαπητοί, ὡς τὸν Χριστὸν ἐνδεδυμένοι, οὕτως ἀπαντᾷ πράττομεν, καὶ μὴ λυπῶμεν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἄγιον. Ὑπὸ τὸν ἐνοχληθῶμεν ὑπὸ πάθους, ἢ ἐπιθυμίας ἀτόπου, ἢ ὑργῆς, ἢ θυμοῦ, ἢ βασκανίας, ἐννοῶμεν τὸν ἐν μὴν εὐνοοῦντα, καὶ φυγαδεύομεν πολὺ πᾶσαν τὴν τοιαύτην ἐνθύμησιν. Αἰδευθῶμεν τῆς παρὰ τὸν Θεοῦ παρασχεθήσεως ἢμῖν χάριτος τὴν ὑπερβολήν, καὶ χαλινώσωμεν πάντα τῆς σαρκὸς τὰ πάθη, ἵνα, νομίμως αɵθησάντες εἰς τὸ βραχεῖ τούτῳ καὶ ἐπικήρυ βίῳ, τῶν μεγάλων ἐκείνων στεφανῶν αἰξιωθῶμεν ἐν τῇ μελλόνῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκκή, τῇ φοβερᾷ μὲν ἢμῖν τοῖς ἀμαρτωλοῖς, ποιεῖν δὲ τοῖς τῇ ἀρετῇ ἐνδεδυμένοις, καὶ καταβοθῶμεν τῶν ἀπορρήτων ἐκείνων ἁγάθως, χάριτι καὶ φυλανθρωπίᾳ τὸν Κυρίου ἢμον Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ, μεθ’ οὗ τῷ Πατρὶ, ἡμῖν τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, δόξα, κράτος, τιμή, νῦν καὶ ἀεί, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων. Αμήν.
Let us not neglect our salvation.

The first sentence tells Chrysostom’s congregation that we have some measure of responsibility for our salvation. The question, which we will unpack throughout this chapter, is what a person can (or must) do for her salvation. Not to neglect salvation could mean that a person must do everything within her power to gain salvation as something to be attained only in the future.\(^2\) Certainly, this is an aspect of Chrysostom’s thought, but his thought is more complex. This phrase “not neglect” (µὴ καταφρονῶµεν) can also suggest that salvation is something which has already occurred, something human beings have and must attend to continually in order that they not lose it.\(^3\) We saw in chapter three that Chrysostom sometimes says that the devil is attempting to “cast us out of heaven,” suggesting that we are already in heaven, have already been saved.\(^4\) Μὴ καταφρονῶµεν is clearly a verb of present action; the object, the intent, what a person can do, and what salvation is, are all things we will explore through the rest of the passage as Chrysostom describes them. What is important here is that the onus of action is on the audience.\(^5\) *We* must not neglect salvation. From the beginning of the passage there is something a person can (or must) do to be saved.

\(^2\) I use the phrase “within her power” to evoke the echoes of ἐφ’ ἡµῖν we have explored in the previous two chapters. Further, ἐφ’ ἡµῖν is one of the phrases Chrysostom uses to speak about the human contribution to salvation (see below, p. 250).

\(^3\) Μὴ καταφρονῶµεν need not have salvation as its object, and it is not a technical term. A search of the TLG reveals that Chrysostom uses the phrase and the word (καταφρονῶµεν) more frequently than any of his predecessors (54 times as opposed to Basil’s 2, Origen’s 2, and Nazianzus’s 2). Chrysostom occasionally uses it to exhort his congregants to attend to their salvation, as in this passage, but he uses καταφρονῶµεν just as often to exhort the audience to despise earthly pleasures, as in *Adv. opp. vit. mon.* 2.3 (ὅταν µὴ σώµατος αὐτοίς µόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπόλλυµένης καταφρονῶµεν). Καταφρονῶµεν is one of Chrysostom’s verbs of exhortation. The verb καταφρονέω appears ten times in the New Testament and twenty-four times in the LXX, but never in any technical sense.

\(^4\) In *Eph. hom.* 22.3 (PG 62.159, NPNF 160).

\(^5\) The onus is also on the speaker, since he says “we,” not “you.”
Nothing is as important as virtue.

This is a strong statement. The first thing we need to understand about this claim is what Chrysostom means by virtue, and to do this we look first at the passage. Several clauses down in the passage Chrysostom gives a definition of virtue: “Virtue it is to scorn all human affairs . . . Virtue it is to adopt the attitude of a corpse in regard to the affairs of this life.” We saw these ideas in the preceding chapter, so we can read  *In Gen. hom.* 8.6 in light of our preceding work on virtue in Chrysostom’s thought. We saw that virtue is living in obedience to God and that the key to being virtuous is a heavenly orientation that leads to the proper exercise of one’s προαιρεσις. This heavenly orientation is precisely the scorning of the temporal in preference of the eternal that Chrysostom defines as virtue in 8.6. We also saw in the last chapter that the life of virtue is one of struggle against the devil, another element brought up in 8.6 (“[Virtue] makes us stronger than the enemy of our salvation”). Therefore, when Chrysostom says, “nothing is as important as virtue,” he means that nothing is as important as the heavenly orientation that leads to a successful struggle to be obedient to God. Similarly, when later in the passage Chrysostom preaches that the time to come is “longed for by those clad in virtue,” he means that the obedient who have exercised their προαιρεσις well and won against the devil have reason to look forward to the judgment in the time to come.

The second question about this statement is what Chrysostom wants his audience to understand by “nothing.” The context is salvation: the initial γάρ of the second sentence links it to the first about not neglecting salvation, and the succeeding γάρ explains the relationship between virtue, hell, and the kingdom. Therefore the statement means, “Nothing is as important as virtue [for salvation].” But this is a bold claim, and it
must face two challenges. First, we will discuss later in our interpretation of this passage Chrysostom’s insistence on the necessity of Christ’s work for salvation, which implies that “nothing [a human can do] is as important as virtue [for salvation]” is the proper way to understand the statement. Second, in other homilies in which Chrysostom speaks about the human’s necessary contribution to salvation, virtue is not the only contribution. Often Chrysostom insists on faith as well.

In *In Rom. hom. 9*, Chrysostom preaches:

Consider how everywhere Paul sets down these two points: both what Christ does, and what we do. The things that Christ does are varied, numerous, and different. For surely he died for us, he freed us from sin, he led us near to himself, and he gave us grace beyond description, whereas we contributed our faith alone.⁶

An investigation of Chrysostom's use of “faith” (πίστις) will show that by πίστις Chrysostom means an active response to God's work that believes and trusts the work as true and significant for one's life. By πίστις Chrysostom often means that the person believes that God has done what the Church says God has done and is who the Church says God is. For instance, in the *Cat. Or.*, faith is a confession and understanding of orthodoxy: “Therefore, you contribute your fair share and make a strong confession of faith in Him, not only with your lips but also with your understanding.”⁷ Chrysostom goes on to say, “Faith, then, is the foundation of piety,” and he spends several paragraphs summarizing the articles of faith as outlined in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.⁸

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⁶ *In Rom. hom. 9.2* (PG 60.468, Papageorgiou 168).
⁷ *Cat. Or.*, Stav. 1.19 (SC 118, ACW 30).
⁸ Chrysostom even names Arius and Sabellius as those who “desire to destroy sound doctrines” (*Cat. Or.*, Stav. 1.22 (SC 119, ACW31)), leaving no doubt regarding Chrysostom's own commitment to orthodoxy.
When commenting on Eph 2:8-9 (“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast”), which seems to exclude human action as a way to salvation,

Chrysostom preaches:

In order then that the greatness of the benefits bestowed may not raise you too high, observe how he brings you down: ‘By grace you have been saved,’ he says, ‘Through faith.’ Then, that, on the other hand, our αὐτεξούσιος be not impaired, he adds also our part in the work.⁹

In this instance, grace is God's work, but faith belongs to the human as protection of human αὐτεξούσιος. God's commitment to human freedom is the foundation for Chrysostom's insistence on a human portion of salvation. However, Chrysostom continues in the homily to explain that faith, human contribution though it is, is also a gift of God:

The work of faith itself is not our own. ‘It is the gift,’ said he, ‘of God,’ it is ‘not of works.’ Was faith then, you will say, enough to save us? No; but God, he says, has required this, lest he should save us, barren and without work at all. His expression is that faith saves, but it is because God so wills, that faith saves.¹⁰

This again is the tension Chrysostom articulates as he attempts to preserve both the necessity of God's action and the importance of human freedom.

The prevalence of Chrysostom's insistence on faith in his corpus establishes it as a significant part of Chrysostom's thought. Yet in many places Chrysostom says that God requires virtue in addition to faith, that faith is not enough. Chrysostom tells his audience:

Even if we should have faith in its entirety and a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, if we should be empty and destitute of the protection derived from a

⁹ In Eph. hom. 4.2 (PG 62.33, NPNF 67).
¹⁰ In Eph. hom. 4.2 (PG 62.33, NPNF 67).
good life, there would be nothing preventing us from being cast into the fire of
hell and being consumed forever by the inextinguishable flame.11

This is similar to Chrysostom's declaration in 8.6 that “Nothing is as important as virtue;
virtue it is, after all, that snatches us from Gehenna in the world to come and bestows on
us the enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven.”12 Though Chrysostom often speaks of faith
as the human's contribution to salvation without reference to virtue, and though a person
must have orthodox faith to be saved, these further statements indicate that faith alone is
not enough for salvation. A person must add her virtue. When Chrysostom says, “Nothing
is as important as virtue [for salvation],” he means no other human contribution is as
important as virtue. Faith is essential, but virtue is as well, and virtue is even more
important or more decisive for salvation than is faith because virtue snatches us from hell
and bestows on us the kingdom.

*Virtue it is, after all, that snatches us from Gehenna in the world to come and bestows
on us the enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven.*

 Whereas the previous chapter discussed what virtue is and how one becomes
virtuous, here we glimpse what virtue *does*, and the first function of virtue regards the
“world to come.” One’s virtue determines one’s place in the age to come. Chrysostom
uses the verb “snatches” (ἐξαρπάζει) here, as though one is not in heaven but in hell, and
virtue is able to snatch a person out of the clutches of hell that cling and drag a person
down. Elsewhere, however, Chrysostom says that the devil is attempting to cast us out of
heaven.13 He also preaches that laziness (φθορία) throws a person down from heaven,

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11 In *Ioh. hom.* 6 (PG 59.62, FC 74). Καὶ γὰρ ἀπασαν τὴν πίστιν ἔχομεν καὶ τὴν τῶν Γραφῶν
κατανόησιν, τῆς δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ βίου προστασίας ὅμεν ἐρήμοι καὶ γυμνοὶ, οὐδὲν τὸ κολύδον εἰς τὸ τῆς γεέννης
ἀπενεχθήναι πῦρ, καὶ εἰς ἄπειρον ύπὸ τῆς ἀσβέστου κατακαίεσθαι φιλογός.
12 In *Gen. hom.* 8.6 (PG 53.75, FC 115).
13 In *Eph. hom.* 22.3 (PG 62.159, NPNF 160).
and Chrysostom tells the newly baptized that they are now citizens of heaven and need to show they are worthy of it. Given Chrysostom’s commitment to the Christian’s heavenly residence, the best understanding of this statement is that Gehenna—or the residents of Gehenna, since it was made for the devil and his demons and Chrysostom refers to the devil as the enemy of salvation—makes attempts to bring humans to it. The devil and his demons tempt and deceive, as we saw in chapter three, but they are unable to cause true injury to a person because true injury, sin, occurs only by choice. If a person chooses virtue, that virtue will keep a person out of Gehenna, however much the devil attempts to deliver him to hell.

This future function of virtue also reveals that salvation is about heaven and hell. We saw the link between virtue and salvation in the previous section, and here Chrysostom continues the thought. In In Gen. hom. 7 Chrysostom makes a statement that adds depth to the one in 8.6: “Let us . . . not neglect our own salvation; let us give careful attention to living a life of God's wanting, in the knowledge that on the basis of this most of all will we be either condemned or judged worthy of loving kindness at his hands.”

Here again the congregation is encouraged to attend to salvation, and we saw in the previous chapter that one way Chrysostom defines virtue is as obedience to God, or “living a life of God’s wanting.” Thus, here again virtue is the way a person attends to her salvation. What In Gen. hom. 7 adds is that our virtue is the basis of God's judgment. We have seen Chrysostom’s preoccupation with recompense and know that God’s judgment

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14 De paen. hom. 1.2 (PG 49.279, FC 5-6); Cat. or., Stav. 7.12 (SC 235, ACW 108): “Hasten, he says, to bring your whole mind to that country where you are enrolled as citizens, and resolve to do the things which can show that you [are worthy of] your citizenship in heaven” (Ἐνθα ὁν ἀπεγράφητε, φησίν, ἐκεῖ τὸν νοῦν ὑμῶν ἀπαντα μεταγαγεῖν σπουδάσατε κάκεινα βουλεύσασθε καὶ πράττειν ἂ τῆς ἐκεῖ πολιτείας ὑμᾶς ἄξιος ἀποφήναι δυνήσεται).

15 In Gen. hom. 7.7 (PG 53.69, FC 103).
sends either to hell or to heaven and Chrysostom makes it clear that virtue is the determining factor. Therefore, virtue snatches from Gehenna and bestows the kingdom because at the judgment God deems the virtuous worthy of the kingdom.

One question this statement leaves open is how much virtue one needs in order to be worthy or to be snatched from Gehenna. Chrysostom does not say. Nor does Chrysostom talk about gradations of virtue. One either is virtuous or one is not. However, Chrysostom also encourages his congregation to be virtuous and recognizes that people change, which suggests that virtue is dynamic rather than static; it is something one pursues, even when one is virtuous. Chrysostom’s understanding of virtue, as we saw in the previous chapter, sees it as a continuous choice because virtue is choice rather than nature, which is immutable. It is a choice to be obedient to God and to resist the devil. This understanding leaves no room for the question “How much virtue is enough virtue to stay in heaven?” There is no “enough”; one must continue to choose virtue over vice until the judgment, especially if the devil is still attacking with temptations and deceptions.

Can everyone be saved? The answer appears to be yes.\textsuperscript{16} Chrysostom goes so far as to claim, “If we are willing, [virtue's] way is very easy.”\textsuperscript{17} In every sermon Chrysostom exhorts his audience to be virtuous, whether he uses ἀρετή or tells people to give alms or to stop going to the races; he encourages his congregants to live a life of obedience to God. Chrysostom also gives his congregation examples. Job exemplifies resistance to the devil; Paul displays conversion and faithfulness in everything. Like Gregory of Nyssa in

\textsuperscript{16} By “everyone” I mean only humans. We saw in chapter three that Chrysostom rejects the idea that Satan can be saved, and we will discuss this particular point later in the chapter in relation to the Origenist controversies.

\textsuperscript{17} In 1 Cor. hom. 14.4 (PG 61.118, NPNF 81). For what Chrysostom understands by this, see above, p. 226. I also refer the reader back to p. 215 for the discussion of Chrysostom’s phrase “piece of virtue” and what this might imply about his understanding about the dynamism of virtue.
the Life of Macrina, which makes Macrina the example of a true philosophical, Christian life, Chrysostom tells his congregation to be like the monks in the mountains outside Syria. They are living the angelic life, and Christians need to live the same angelic life in the cities. The difference is that whereas Gregory wants the true Christian to become a monk removed from society, Chrysostom tells his congregants to become like the monks where they are. They are to have the same heavenly orientation as the monks but do not need to go to the mountains to do it; they need to have that orientation in the cities. 18

Chrysostom urges his people to be virtuous because virtue is possible. He also urges them so often because virtue is a choice, and it is not a one-time choice. Finally, Chrysostom preaches virtue because it is the basis of God’s judgment. The stakes are high, so Chrysostom must tell his congregation. They can only choose well if they understand the choice and the consequences. 19

[Virtue] in this world renders us superior to all those spending their efforts in idle and vain schemes—not simply human beings, but the very demons as well—and makes us stronger than the enemy of our salvation (I mean the devil). So what could be more important than virtue when it makes those striving for it superior not only to scheming human beings but also to the demons?

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18 The one difference Chrysostom concedes is that non-monks can marry. Chrysostom also explains that the angelic life is easier for monks than non-monks because monks have many fewer distractions in the mountains than Christians do in the city: “Avarice will be conquered more easily, not by the person who is caught in the midst of worldly activity, but by the one who lives in the mountains” (Adv. opp. vit. mon. 3.15, PG 47.375, Hunter 160–1).

19 This is a significant point of contrast between Chrysostom and his Stoic sources. We saw in both chapters four and five that Chrysostom uses Stoic moral psychology, but Chrysostom comes to a different conclusion about the way it plays out in life. The Stoics thought sages to be rare, and though they taught often about the path to virtue, they did not expect their audiences to be fully virtuous. Even so, Stoic philosophers urged their audiences to pursue virtue because even if they did not become virtuous, this way of life would make them happier. In contrast, Chrysostom expects that his congregants can indeed become virtuous. That he spends so much exhorting to virtue may imply that he does not see enough of his audience virtuous yet, but he preaches so that they may become so. For Chrysostom there is no consolation in attempting to be virtuous; one must be virtuous to be saved.
Being virtuous does not have benefit only in the future but also “in this world,” in
the present life (ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ). Virtue gives superiority over “those spending their
efforts in idle and vain schemes,” either humans or demons. Idle and vain schemes are
plots to harm that are futile.\textsuperscript{20} The tenor of this passage suggests an antagonism by using
words like “superior” (ἀνωτέρος) and “stronger” (ἰσχυρότερος). At the very least these
superlatives imply ranking, if not competition. Beyond these words, though, Chrysostom
mentions demons as well as human beings as those who scheme futilely, and his
congregation knows that demons seek to harm. Pairing humans with demons here
indicates that the humans who scheme do so maliciously. And virtue makes a person
superior to both. No one who attempts to cause injury can do so; the schemes are futile
because humans and demons are unable to harm human beings. A person can only harm
himself. Again, this is Chrysostom’s point that the demons cannot damn; the προαιρέσεις
is free to resist them effectively.

Chrysostom does not only mention humans and demons, though. He also
maintains that virtue renders a person stronger than the devil, the enemy of salvation. We
have seen how the devil attempts to thwart salvation at every turn. In the context of this
passage it becomes clear what kinds of attacks on salvation he makes. We saw that both
faith and virtue are essential for salvation, though Chrysostom only discusses virtue

\textsuperscript{20} It is also fair to say that for Chrysostom they are things with which a person busies her life that
have no eternal significance. Often Chrysostom hints that having a heavenly perspective is part of being
vigilant against the devil’s schemes, and that “laziness” (ῥαθυμία) is the prime cause of sin, as in the
discussion of Adam’s expulsion from paradise. Chrysostom’s interlocutors ask, “What then? . . . Didn’t [the
devil] injure Adam and trip him up and cast him out of paradise?” Chrysostom answers, “Not the devil, but
the laziness (ῥαθυμία) of the one who was injured, and his lack of temperance and vigilance” (\textit{Quod nem.
laed.} 4 (SC 74, NPNF 273), my translation). See also \textit{In Ioh. hom.} 36: “What, then, was responsible for
evil? What else but laziness, the laziness of the προαιρέσεις” (Τίς οὖν ὁ τῆς κακίας δημιουργός; Τίς δὲ
ἄλλος, ἄλλοι; ἢ ἢ ῥαθυμία ἢ ἕκ τῆς προαιρέσεως (36.2, PG 59.206, FC 356)).
here. The devil attacks a person's virtue. In some places the devil's wiles are obvious, as we saw in chapter three. The devil may tempt a person to attend the theater or the racetrack instead of worship, or he may suggest they need their money too much to be able to give alms. Elsewhere, though, Chrysostom speaks of the devil's sabotaging of virtue as more insidious. This destruction is the devil's foremost aim:

Nothing is so much the devil's object as to convince the human spirit of this, that in sinning no one is liable to punishment and in virtue no one is deserving of commendation and crown, his purpose being to slacken the hands of the zealous, extinguish enthusiasm, deepen the apathy of the faint-hearted and augment their indifference.

The core of Chrysostom's exhortations to virtue is that virtue leads to the kingdom because God punishes sinners but rewards the virtuous. Chrysostom's understanding of compensation is what funds his account of human freedom and self-determination, which are necessary for an act to be either sinful or virtuous. According to the quotation above, then, the devil is doing his best to destroy a person's virtue at its source.

Against all of these attacks, however, a person is “stronger” (ἰσχυρότερος) than the devil and “superior” (ἄνωτέρος) to demons. Her virtue or her pursuit of virtue makes her stronger, according to In Gen. hom. 8.6. The question is stronger or superior in what way, and the answer is morally. A person has virtue but neither the devil nor his demons have it. Christians are morally superior, and both moral statuses are choices, because both

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21 The rest of Chrysostom's corpus elucidates the devil's attacks on faith, which consist of instigating misinterpretations of Scripture or false doctrine: “This is the way, in fact, that many corrupt doctrines are introduced into our life, under pressure from the devil for more negligent readers to give a distorted account of the contents of the Scriptures” (Dom., non est in hom. 2 (PG 56.156, Hill 10)). In De incompr. hom. 2, Chrysostom claims that the Anoemeans are caught in the devil's snare and deception: “Let us pray for them and beseech the loving-kindness of God . . . to free them from this deceit and snare of the devil” (De incompr. hom. 2.55 (SC 184, FC 93)).

22 Dom., non est in hom. 2 (PG 56.156, Hill 9). Οὐδὲν γάρ, οὐδὲν οὖσας ἐσπούδασκεν ὁ διάβολος, ός τὸ θέλεται τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ψυχὴν, ὅτι οὔτε ἐν τοῖς ἀμαρτήμασιν ἐστιν ὑπεύθυνος καλάςεως, οὔτε ἐν τοῖς καταρθώμασιν ἔπαινος ἄξιος καὶ στεφάνων, ἵνα καὶ τῶν σπουδαῖων ἐκλογή τὰς χείρας, καὶ σβέσῃ τὴν προθυμίαν, καὶ τῶν ἀναπεπτοκότων ἐπίτεινῃ τὴν ὀλγισμίαν καὶ αὔξησῃ τὴν ῥᾳδιμίαν.

humans and demons have προαίρεσις, as we saw in chapter three. Demons choose wickedness; should we choose virtue, we are morally superior.

The devil does his best to cause injury to a person's virtue, but a person is stronger and can defeat the devil, keeping her virtue intact. In 8.6, virtue (or a continuous choice for virtue) makes a person superior to anything that would keep her from being virtuous. This is not to say that one must have virtue before one can be superior to those who try to hinder one's virtue. We saw in the previous chapter that for Chrysostom a human's προαίρεσις—or γνώµη—is all that is necessary for a person to triumph over even the devil's attempts to lead into vice. That προαίρεσις or γνώµη is the gift of self-determination God has given humanity. Yet we also saw in chapter three that Chrysostom tells his audience the devil is like a punching bag. Struggling against the devil makes a person stronger, more virtuous. This suggests that the more a person chooses virtue, the easier the struggle to choose virtue becomes.

We saw Chrysostom exhort his audience to remember that they are themselves responsible for their sins, to remember that they have προαίρεσις. This remembering is supposed to help them recall that they can resist the devil and therefore must. For all he tries to injure a person's virtue and in so doing bring her down with him to hell, the devil can be defeated by one's choice of virtue over vice.

Virtue it is to scorn all human affairs, to keep the mind on future realities at each hour of the day, to seek no present good but to know that everything human is a shadow and a dream or even worse.

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24 This benefit to humans is, for Chrysostom, the reason God allows the devil to remain on earth. See above, p. 148.
25 Even this present function of virtue is future-oriented, for the reason a person seeks to be virtuous is to be worthy of the kingdom of heaven.
First Chrysostom exhorts his people not to neglect their salvation, speaking about virtue and its strength. Virtue snatches a person from hell and bestows enjoyment of the kingdom; virtue makes a person superior to demons and the devil in this world. Now Chrysostom wants to be clear about what it is to be virtuous. We explored this question ourselves in the previous chapter. Here we see the themes already discussed: virtue as a heavenly orientation, a preference for the eternal over the temporal, a continuousness (“each hour of the day”), and a Stoic or even Platonic influence. We see, too, how these themes fit within the overall scheme of Chrysostom’s soteriology. We take all that we discovered about virtue in the previous chapter is what Chrysostom means when he says “virtue” in 8.6. Moreover, this account of virtue is what Chrysostom is telling his congregation it can and must be virtuous in this sense because of self-determination.

Virtue it is to adopt the attitude of a corpse in regard to the affairs of this life and like a corpse take no active interest in what threatens the soul’s salvation, but only in regard to spiritual things to be alive and take active interest, as Paul also said. ‘I am alive, though it is no longer me but Christ alive in me.’

Here Chrysostom continues his description of virtue. It begins much like the sentence before it with an encouragement to ignore the temporal and embrace the eternal, but with his quotation of Paul the passage shifts. What has been a passage about what a person can do to attend to her salvation—be virtuous—becomes now about more than the person herself. It is now about a person inhabited by Christ.

Chrysostom’s use of the corpse image may be pagan language, or it may be drawing on Romans 6. Both are distinct possibilities for Chrysostom, and, in fact, he may be using both, though it is more likely that here Chrysostom’s thoughts are driven by Paul’s words. On the pagan side, Marcus Aurelius writes, “‘You are a little soul carrying
around a corpse,’ as Epictetus said.” The term, νεκρός, is the same in both Epictetus and Chrysostom, but Chrysostom is not using corpse language in precisely the same way as Epictetus. For one thing, Epictetus is commenting on the relationship between body and soul, and by his description of the body as a νεκρός he indicates the uselessness of the body. It is not neutral but cumbersome, which is implied by the verb “carrying” (βαστάζων). For Chrysostom, however, the body is neutral rather than negative. The body is not a lifeless mass of flesh to be dragged around but the instrument of the soul, working with the soul to do good deeds. Moreover, the body cannot be evil because God created it, and God created nothing evil.

Another difference is that, though both are metaphorical statements, Chrysostom's metaphor is about a person's attitude rather than about the body-soul relationship. To “adopt the attitude of a corpse” is a choice, or an active posture; to “carry around a corpse” is a sentence. The attitude about which Chrysostom speaks, however, may be drawing on the image from Epictetus. For the Stoic, the soul is the locus of the self; the body is an encumbrance, senseless to the world. Chrysostom similarly gives much importance to the soul as leading the body, and here urges that a person choose to be insensible to the “affairs of this life.” Whereas Epictetus tells his audience that they are in fact souls dragging corpses, Chrysostom urges his people to act thus. Even as he does not have the same negative view of the body as Epictetus, Chrysostom does find the image useful for explaining Christians’ disposition toward this life. Furthermore, much as does Epictetus, Chrysostom places virtue and vice in the soul, rather than the body. Given his

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26 Aurelius, Meditations 4.41.1, my translation.
27 See above, p. 194.
28 We have already seen the many Stoic tones in Chrysostom’s account of virtue.
Stoic leanings and focus on the irrelevance of earthly things, Chrysostom may have Epictetus’s language in mind.

The other likely source of the corpse image for Chrysostom is Romans 6, where Paul discusses a Christian's participation in Christ's death and resurrection in baptism. In his homily on this passage, Chrysostom also uses corpse language. He says, “Just as he who is dead is freed from sinning for the future because he is now a corpse, so also is the man who comes up from the waters of baptism. Because he died there once and for all, he must remain dead to sin altogether.” Again the word is νεκρός, and again the idea is to act like a corpse, that is, unaffected and unmoved. We spoke about what it might be to be a corpse with respect to the affairs of this life, but Chrysostom also tells his listeners to be a corpse in relation to what “threatens the soul's salvation.” What threatens salvation for Chrysostom but sin? In a more explicit example, Chrysostom uses the same language in his *Cat. Or.*, telling his catechumens:

> This is practically saying: ‘What now do you have in common with the present life? You have died, that is, you are corpses as far as sin is concerned. Once and for all you have renounced the present life.’ . . . Therefore do not be active in the things of this life as if you were living, but be as if you had died and were corpses.

Finally, in 8.6, in the same sentence as the corpse expression, Chrysostom quotes Paul in Galatians, indicating that Scripture in general and Paul in particular are at the forefront of his mind. It is most probable that Chrysostom is speaking of ideas he has gained from philosophy in language he takes from Paul. It is difficult to know whether Chrysostom knew the quotation from Epictetus discussed above, and even if he did, Chrysostom does not adopt the same kind of thinking regarding the body-soul relationship. However, the

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29 *In Rom. hom.* 11.1 (PG 60.485, Papageorgiou 202-203).
30 *Cat. Or.*, Stav. 7.22 (SC 240, ACW 112-13).
soul as responsible and the attention to what constitutes true good are important features of Stoic thinking. The language gained from Paul about being dead to sin helps Chrysostom articulate his point in the context of Christianity and Christ's work. A person is only able to be a corpse to what threatens salvation when he has participated in Christ's death through baptism.

Something similar is true of resurrection for Chrysostom:

If you have believed that Christ died and that he was raised up, therefore you must believe in your own death and resurrection . . . If you shared in his death and burial, much more will you share in his resurrection and life. . . . After the future resurrection has been set before our eyes, [Paul] demands of us another resurrection, the new way of life, which is brought about in our present existence on earth by a change in our habits. 31

Christ's resurrection not only establishes the future resurrection; it also raises Christians to a new life in the present, their life of virtue. This metaphorical resurrection is a real occurrence. Chrysostom believes that in baptism the Christian dies to old habits and will live a different life after baptism: “Christ lives in me.” The possibility of Christian virtue is a result of Christ’s prior work on behalf of human beings.

Before we can further explore this thought, a word is necessary about terminology. We have noted the shift in In Gen. hom. 8.6 from an emphasis on what a person does for salvation to Christ’s role in salvation, and these are the two parts of what scholars have often referred to as Chrysostom’s “synergistic” soteriology and what I will call his cooperative soteriology. Chrysostom makes statements, as in 8.6, that emphasize a human responsibility for salvation, but he also makes statements that emphasize God’s responsibility. For instance, in In Gal. comm. 1 Chrysostom writes that, by God's calling,

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31 In Rom. hom. 10.4 (PG 60.480, Papageorgiou 191). Ἐπίστευσας, φησίν, ὅτι ἀπέθανεν ὁ Χριστός, καὶ ὅτι ἐγέρθη; Οὐκόν καὶ τὸ σὸν πίστευε· . . . Εἰ γὰρ ἐν θανάτῳ ἐκοινώνησας καὶ ταυτή, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἐν ἀναστάσει καὶ ζωῇ· . . . αὐτὸς δὲ προκειμένης τῆς μελλούσης, ἐτέραν ἡμᾶς ἀνάστασιν ἀπαιτεῖ, τὴν καινὴν πολιτείαν, τὴν κατά τὸν παρόντα βιόν ἐκ τῆς τῶν τρόπων μεταβολῆς γινομένην.
Christ “brought about reconciliation and bestowed it as a gift, for we were not saved by works in righteousness.”\textsuperscript{32} In many other places, Chrysostom makes the dual role explicit, such as in \textit{In Rom. hom.} 9.2: “Consider how everywhere Paul sets down these two points: both what Christ does, and what we do.”\textsuperscript{33} His \textit{In Heb. hom.} 12.3 observes, “All indeed depends on God, but not so that our free will $\tau \omega \alpha \iota \tau e\zeta o\sigma i\nu$ is hindered. . . . It depends on us $[\epsilon \varphi \iota \mu \nu]$, and on Him $[\epsilon \varphi \iota \omega \tau o]$. ”\textsuperscript{34} It is clear that Chrysostom understands salvation to be a divine-human cooperation.

Scholars have long-noted this divine-human cooperation set out in Chrysostom's soteriology: Louis Meyer's second chapter is an outline of the Christian's incorporation into Christ and his subsequent efforts to become perfect,\textsuperscript{35} and Chryostomus Baur states the matter in terms of grace and free will, writing that Chrysostom's position is “If we do what lies in us, God will also do what lies in him.”\textsuperscript{36} Susan Donegan also uses “grace and free will” to describe the character of Chrysostom's soteriology: “The very ability to receive salvation is a matter of both grace and free will.”\textsuperscript{37}

There is another strand of scholarship, however, that labels Chrysostom's cooperative soteriology “synergistic.” Demetrios Trakatellis characterizes Chrysostom's

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{In Gal. comm.} 1.6 (PG 61.621, NPNF 7). $\alpha \iota t\omega \varsigma \gamma \alpha r \varepsilon \sigma t i n \dot{o} \kappa a t a \lambda \lambda \acute{\alpha} z\varsigma$ καὶ διωρεὰν δοῶς· οὐ γάρ εξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἑσώθημεν.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{In Rom. hom.} 9.2 (PG 60.468, Papageorgiou 168). Σὺ δὲ μοι σκόπει πάς πανταχόω τὰ δύο τίθησι, καὶ τὰ παρ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ παρ’ ἡμῶν.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{In Heb. hom.} 12.3 (PG 63.99, NPNF 425).
\textsuperscript{35} Meyer, \textit{Saint Jean Chrysostome}.
\textsuperscript{36} Baur, \textit{John Chrysostom and His Time}, 1:360. The vocabulary of grace and free will is one with a history of its own, and I have already discussed my reasons for speaking of “self-determination” instead of “free will” with regard to Chrysostom's thought. In an excursus at the end of this study I also discuss the “grace and free will” discussion of Pelagius and Augustine and how Chrysostom fits into it. I find Baur's characterization unhelpful because of the history of this vocabulary after Chrysostom, which leads to a mischaracterization of Chrysostom's thought.
\textsuperscript{37} Donegan, “St John Chrysostom,” 24. As with Baur, the characterization of Chrysostom’s thought as a dichotomy of “grace and free will” is imprecise because of the history these terms acquired after Chrysostom. However, one understands what Donegan means, and her own use does not map later debates onto Chrysostom’s thought.
In Rom. hom. this way: “From the very beginning to the very end of his exegesis on Romans, Chrysostom is eager to maintain a principle of synergy.”\(^{38}\) Panayiotis E. Papageorgiou offers this definition in his dissertation:

This working together of the human efforts and the grace of God is the process which leads to the salvation and ultimately the perfection of man in ‘the image and likeness’ of God and is called by Chrysostom, and the other Greek fathers before him, συνεργία (synergia).\(^{39}\)

Papageiorgiou then argues that the synergia between the human will and the will of God is “the most critical element required for the salvation of man.”\(^{40}\) Christopher Hall, drawing on Trakatellis, titles a section of his essay on Chrysostom's In Rom. hom.

“Προαιρεσίς and the Chrysostomic Synergism,” and writes, “Chrysostom's comments on Matthew's gospel clearly reflect a synergism that is also present throughout Chrysostom's exegesis of Romans. Metropolitan Demetrios Trakatellis draws our attention to a number of key comments in Chrysostom's exegesis where the synergism between the grace of God and the προαιρεσίς of human beings is evident.”\(^{41}\) Hall at least is specific about the synergism, explaining that the cooperation is between grace and προαιρεσίς.

This choice to use the adjective “synergistic” of Chrysostom's soteriology is understandable, but it is a misleading term. Chrysostom himself uses συνεργία to describe salvation only once\(^{42}\) and does not use the verb form συνεργέω in any specific


\(^{40}\) Papageorgiou, “A Theological Analysis,” 88.

\(^{41}\) Christopher A. Hall, “John Chrysostom,” in Reading Romans through the Centuries (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 48.

\(^{42}\) In 2 Thess. hom. 5 (PG 62.493, NPNF 393), quoted below. Papageorgiou claims that a passage from In Gen. hom. 53.2 finds Chrysostom using συνεργία to discuss salvation: “Consider . . . how it was all due to grace from above. I mean, whereas we contribute our utmost, we enjoy in generous measure as well cooperation from God. You see, in case we show indifference and prove recalcitrant, he wants us also to
manner. By the term—noun, verb, or other derivative—he usually means only “working together” or even “assistance.” In Chrysostom's usage the term is not restricted, to a divine-human relationship. When describing creation, Chrysostom emphasizes that creation happened by the word of God alone, not from human labors, nor “συνεργία from oxen,” nor anything else. In one place Chrysostom uses the noun in a discussion of salvation, writing, “For if He has chosen you to salvation, He does not deceive you, nor suffer you utterly to perish. But that he may not by these means lead them to sloth, and lest they, thinking the whole to be of God, should themselves sleep, see how he also demands συνεργία from them.” Note here the emphasis is on the human's cooperation with God, not God's with the human, a theme we will see repeated. We discuss this reasoning for human cooperation, namely, that God does not want idle followers, below.

It is clear that συνεργία is not a technical term for Chrysostom; at most it is a useful description of the working together that God and humans do for salvation. Furthermore,

make an effort so that in this way our contribution may be demonstrated. It is neither the case that everything is due to help from on high (rather we, too, must contribute something), nor on the other hand does he require everything of us, knowing as he does the extraordinary degree of our limitations; on the contrary, out of fidelity to his characteristic love and wishing to find some occasion for demonstrating his own generosity, he awaits the contribution of what we have to offer” (πῶς τῆς ἀνοθέθης χάριτος ἤν τὸ πᾶν. Ἄταν γὰρ ἡμῖς τὰ παρ’ ἐσώτην εἰσενέγκωμεν, δημιοῦσας ἀπολαύσαμεν καὶ τῆς παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ συνεργίας. Ἰνα γὰρ μη βαθμισμόν, μηδὲ ἀναπτυσσόμενς ὄμοι, βούλειται καὶ ἡμᾶς τι συνεισφέρειν, ἵν’ οὕτω καὶ τὰ παρ’ ἐσωτερικά ἐπιδείξῃ—καὶ οὕτω τὸ πᾶν τῆς ἀνοθέθης γίνεται βοσθείας, ἀλλὰ δὲ καὶ ἡμᾶς τι συνεισφέρειν—οὕτω παρ’ ἡμῶν πάλιν ἀπαιτεῖ τὸ πᾶν, εἰδῶς τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀσθενείας τῆς ὑπερβολῆς, ἀλλὰ τὴν οἰκείαν φιλανθρωπίαν μιμούμενος, καὶ βουλόμενος ἄφορὴν τινα λαβεῖν, ὥστε τὴν οἰκείαν φιλοτιμίαν ἐπιδείξῃ—άναμένε τα παρ’ ἡμῶν εἰσενέγκειν τῆς συνεργίας) (PG 54.466, FC 82-83). Though it is true that this language, especially that of “contribution” (εἰσφέρειν), is similar to Chrysostom’s discussions of salvation, in this homily, Chrysostom is discussing Jacob and Rebecca’s deception of Isaac (Gen. 26). There is nothing in the text to suggest that Chrysostom has salvation in mind. Instead, he seems to be speaking of the divine-human cooperation that is the established way of things. God will not do all the good for us, we must act as well.

43 For example, πρὸ τῆς τῶν στοιχείων τῶν ὑστέρων δημιουργίας, τὸ λόγῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ προστάτῃ εἴκουσα ἢ τῇ πάντα τὰ σπέρµατα ἐκδίδεισαν, οὐδενὸς ἐτέρου δηθείσα πρὸς συνεργήσαν (In Gen. hom. 5.4, PG 53.52, FC 72); or, in the prologue to the In Rom. hom., explaining the order of Paul's letters and the identity of Archippus, Chrysostom writes ὅτι γὰρ ἔλαβε συνεργόν ἐν τῇ πρὸς Φίλιμον εἰσπολῇ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῆς ὑπὲρ Ὀυρίσσου (In Rom. hom. prologue, PG 60.393, Papageorgiou 4); or even νονί δὲ, τοῦ Θεοῦ συνεργωθῆς ἡμῖν, ἐπὶ τὰ προκείμενα τὸν λόγον ἀγάμων (In Matt. hom. 12.2, PG 57.204, NPNF 77).
44 In Gen. hom. 5.4 (PG 53.51, FC 72).
45 In 2 Thess. hom. 5 (PG 62.493, NPNF 393).
Chrysostom does not give any indication regarding the psychology of συνεργία. When Chrysostom says that Jacob had God's συνεργία in receiving Isaac's blessing or in making Laban favorable toward him,

46 Chrysostom does not speculate about precisely how God assisted Jacob.47 Therefore, when scholars use “synergism” to describe Chrysostom's soteriological system, they ignore the fact that Chrysostom himself does not use the term as technical soteriological vocabulary. His description of salvation is more idiomatic, preferring to use “God's part” and “our part” (μέρος), “contribution” (some form of εἰσφέρω), or even that which is “up to us” or “up to him” (ἐπὶ ἡμῖν/ἐπί τῷ Θεῷ), which suggests that God does something and humans do something and together this brings about salvation.48 The usual English word for this arrangement is cooperation, so for ease...

46 In Gen. hom. 53.1 (PG 54.465, FC 80); Hom Gen 55.2 (PG 54.481, FC 110).
47 In contrast, Gregory of Nyssa uses συνεργία, its derivatives, and a handful of other, related terms (e.g., συμμαχέον, σύνεργομα) in a technical capacity to refer to the interplay between grace and human freedom that results in Christian perfection. For instance, he writes, “When a just act and grace of the Spirit come together in this (συνέλθοσι δὲ δις ταύτην δικαιοσύνην ἐργον καὶ πνεύματος χάρις), they fill the soul into which they come with a blessed life” (On the Christian Mode of Life, GNO 8.1.46–57, FC 131). Gregory also writes, “Govern yourselves thus as you are about to ascend to the highest power and glory through your cooperation with the Spirit” (ἀς τοιούτῳ ὑμεῖς καθιστήσητε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τῆς ἀνθρώπους ἢμιστον ἰδιώτης) (On the Christian Mode of Life, GNO 8.1.87, FC 157). There has been discussion of Gregory’s use of the term since Werner Jaeger discovered De instituto Christiano and published his monograph on it in 1952 (Jaeger, Two Rediscovered Works). Ekkehard Mühlenberg concludes that, though Jaeger appears to be right, this does not necessarily make Nyssa a semi-Pelagian (Ekkehard Mühlenberg, “Synergism in Gregory of Nyssa,” Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 68 (1977): 104). See also Verna Harrison, Grace and Human Freedom according to St Gregory of Nyssa (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1992). What is significant in all of this is that Nyssa uses συνεργία as a specific theological term; Chrysostom does not.

48 For instance, “He has purchased what we are most concerned in, our salvation, and he has given us a deposit in the meanwhile. Why did He not give the whole at once? Because neither have we, on our part, done the whole of our work. We have believed. This is a beginning; and He too on His part has given a deposit. When we show our faith by our works, then He will add the rest” (Ἡγόρασε, τὰ παρ’ ἡμᾶς, τὴν σωτηρίαν τὴν ἡμετέραν, καὶ ἐδὸκεν ἡμῖν ἁρμαβονα τέως. Διὰ τί τούτῳ μὴ τὸ ἄλλον ἐκδέχωμεν ἐδὸκεν; Ἑπειδὴ μηδὲ ἡμᾶς τὸ ἄλλον ἐγκατασκεύασθαι. Ἐπιστεύσωμεν· τοῦτο ἀρχή· ἐδὸκεν καὶ αὐτῶς ἁρμαβονα, ὅταν τὴν πίστιν διὰ τῶν ἐργῶν διελέξας, τότε τὸ πᾶν προστίθησι) (In Eph. hom. 2.2, PG 62.18-19, NPNF 56); and, “Not everything is up to us, some things depending on us, and some on God. That is to say, choosing the best, being willing, showing zeal and enduring every hardship come from our intention (προθέσεως), whereas bringing them to a conclusion, not allowing them to go wrong, and reaching the very goal of virtuous actions belongs to grace from on high” (οὐκ ἐπὶ ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τὸ πᾶν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν εἶπεν ἡμῖν, τὸ δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐλέειμαι τὰ κάλληστα, καὶ βουληθήμαι, καὶ σκοπῆσαι, καὶ πάντα ὑπομένει πόνον, τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐστὶ προθέσεως· τὸ δὲ εἰς τέλος ἀγαπεῖν αὐτά, καὶ μὴ συγχρησθήσεται διαπεπληγέναι, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ πέρας ἔλθειν τῶν κατορθομάτων, τῆς ἀνοιχτῶν ἐστὶ χάριτος) (Dom., non est in hom. 4 (PG 56.160, Hill 15).
of reading I use this term when describing the divine-human relationship that is part of Chrysostom's soteriology. I mean by “cooperation” nothing more than what I have outlined in this paragraph.

Having established our terminology, there is one more issue to discuss before we return to our examination of In Gen. hom. 8.6. In the passage under consideration we have only the indication that salvation requires both God’s action and human action, not a reason why this is the case. Elsewhere in Chrysostom’s corpus he explains what he understands to be God's reasoning for designing salvation as a cooperation:

[Paul] says, ‘In love, having preordained us.’ For this [preordination] comes not from efforts, nor from good works of ours, but from love; and yet not of love alone, but also of our virtue.\(^{49}\) For if indeed from love alone, it would be necessary for all to be saved; but again, if from our virtue alone, then his coming [the incarnation] was superfluous, and all his economic works. But it is from neither his love alone, nor from our virtue, but from both.\(^{50}\)

The first question here is what Chrysostom understands Paul to mean by “preordination” (προορίζω). Ephesians 1:4-5 says that God preordained us for adoption as children. Chrysostom equates this adoption with salvation, noting here that both God's love and human virtue are necessary for a person to be saved (σώζω), and two sentences later he preaches, “Virtue would never have saved anyone, had there not been love.”\(^{51}\) That Paul uses “preordained” implies to Chrysostom that out of love God decided before any

\(^{49}\) We generally think of virtue as good works, but Chrysostom's statement here indicates that virtue is something other than good works. We saw in the previous chapter what Chrysostom understood virtue to be: living in obedience to God. This includes a struggle against the devil who aims at every moment to destroy a person's virtue. Here also, virtue is indeed both human efforts and good works, as these two are opposed to God’s love in the first clause of the sentence and virtue to God’s love in the second.

\(^{50}\) In Eph. hom. 1.2 (PG 62.12, my translation). Ἐν ἀγάπῃ, προορίσας ἡμᾶς. Οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ πόνων οὐδὲ κατορθομέτον τοῦτο γίνεται, ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ ἀγάπης, οὔτε ἀπὸ ἀγάπης μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης, οὔτε ἀπὸ ἀγάπης μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρετῆς. Εἰ γὰρ δὴ ἀπὸ ἀγάπης μόνης, ἐχθρὴν ἄπαντας σωθῆναι: εἰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρετῆς πάλιν μόνης, περιττὴ ἤ παρουσία αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάντα τὰ οἰκονομηθέντα. Αλλ’ οὔτε ἀπὸ ἀγάπης μόνης, οὔτε ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρετῆς, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων.

\(^{51}\) In Eph. hom. 1.2 (PG 62.12, NPNF 52).
human effort that humans should be saved and adopted as God's children. Chrysostom is not specific about when God made this determination (before what?), but only says it happened “from the beginning” (ἀνωθεν). The point is that God's love must precede human virtue, even as both are necessary.

Chrysostom explains why it would be problematic for salvation to be either love or virtue alone. First, as we have seen, Chrysostom has a commitment to the truth, accuracy, and pedagogical nature of Scripture, and Scripture speaks of Gehenna as a place of torment. Therefore, not everyone is saved. If not everyone is saved, then salvation cannot be a matter of God's love alone. Second, if salvation comes from virtue alone, then the Incarnation would be pointless.

There is one other element that may lead to Chrysostom's assertion that salvation is not only about God's love since that would require salvation for all. During the last part of Chrysostom's tenure at Antioch and during his entire time as Bishop of Constantinople, the Origenist controversies were engulfing the church. Moreover, Chrysostom was himself involved in one particular Origenist controversy as bishop.\footnote{Chrysostom's affiliation with the controversy is clear. When Theophilus drove the Origenists out of the desert, some of them (known as the “Long Brothers”) sought refuge in Constantinople under Chrysostom, which gave an opportunity for Theophilus to make charges against Chrysostom, leading to his eventual exile and death. The Long Brothers held strictly to God's incorporeality (against the anthropomorphism of some monks), but there is no evidence that they believed any of Origen's controversial ideas. Though it is unclear exactly what the Long Brothers believed, all accounts hold that they were orthodox on Trinitarian matters and were willing to reject Origen's views on the Son and Spirit that were no longer acceptable. The issue was one of politics rather than theology, instigated by Theophilus (Elizabeth A. Clark, The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 105–106). For a thorough account of Chrysostom's involvement with the Long Brothers, see Kelly, Golden Mouth, 191–202. Though Chrysostom's involvement here occurs after he has preached his series of homilies on Ephesians, his role and notoriety in the church makes it likely that he would have been aware of the Origenist controversies before his explicit involvement. For a full account of the Origenist controversies, see Elizabeth Clark's aforementioned seminal work, The Origenist Controversy.}

One of Origen's ideas denounced by Epiphanus in the first wave of controversy is that
even the devil will be returned to glory, that is, that all will be saved.53 Chrysostom himself rejects this idea explicitly when he writes, “In the beginning, the devil was good, but from laziness and despair he fell into such wickedness that he could no longer recover.”54 We saw that, for Chrysostom, the devil also has a προαιρεσις and that he is thus responsible for his own fall. Should God override the devil's προαιρεσις to save him, then God could override a human's as well, and this would trample on human freedom. The devil is but the extreme case in the argument, however. The controversy questioned the claim that God saves all, and for Chrysostom to say that salvation is not a matter only of God's love but also of human virtue is to distance himself from the Origenist controversies.

We have now established that Chrysostom understands salvation to be a cooperative venture between God and human beings, wherein the human contribution is virtue. Since humans are free and self-determining, they can be virtuous and they must, for on the basis of their virtue God passes judgment, which results in an eternity either in heaven or in hell. This exploration of cooperation and terminology began with Chrysostom’s statement in In Gen. hom. 8.6 that it is virtue to be like a corpse regarding sin and earthly realities as well as to have Christ living within oneself. Now we return to

53 Elizabeth Clark argues that there are more factors in play in the controversies than Origen's words alone (Origenist Controversy), but that is irrelevant with regard to Chrysostom. He was involved with the controversy and attempted to preach orthodoxy against whatever heretical opinions appeared, whether they were due to Theophilus's problems with Nitrian monks, Epiphanius's iconoclastic tendencies, or Jerome's encounter with Jovinian (as Clark proposes).

54 De paen. hom. 1.2 (PG 49.279, FC 5). It is unclear where Chrysostom gets the idea that the devil fell beyond redemption since neither Luke 10:18 nor any comment on the verse by earlier fathers suggests that the fall was beyond redemption. It may be that Chrysostom is holding to orthodox doctrine and infusing this into the text. He also has a fondness for Matt. 25:31-46, where the evangelist writes that hell was prepared “for the devil and his angels” but heaven for humans. This text suggests to Chrysostom that the devil belongs in hell. On Chrysostom's fondness for this passage, see Randolf Brändle, “Jean Chrysostome: L’importance de Matth. 25,31-46 pour son éthique,” Vigiliae Christianae 31 (1977): 47–52; and Robert Allen Krupp, Saint John Chrysostom, A Scripture Index (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 129–30, where Krupp notes that Chrysostom quotes the passage 132 times.
8.6, where we will discover that even though virtue is our responsibility, God does not leave us to accomplish it alone.

Accordingly, dearly beloved, let us do everything as people who have put on Christ, and not grieve the Holy Spirit. So whenever we are disquieted by passion, or untimely desire, or anger, or rage, or envy, let us think of him who dwells within us, let us drive far away every such inclination. Let our regard be for the pre-eminence of grace showered on us by God and let us curb all the passions of the flesh.

For Chrysostom, God plays the primary role in salvation. God's contribution to salvation is prior to the humans' and makes the human contribution possible. We see this here: “Let us do everything as people who have put on Christ,” and “Let our regard be for the pre-eminence of grace showered on us by God.” We act after having put on Christ, and we act out of regard for the grace already showered on us. Chrysostom thus indicates that there are two moments of salvation: the already done and the ongoing, or the now, and Christ is involved in both. We will look first at what Christ has already done for salvation and then what Christ continues to do.

Absent from 8.6 altogether are the mechanics of how Christ causes salvation. These mechanics are less clear in Chrysostom’s works than in other patristic authors, though he fits within the range of favored explanations. Some, like Clement of Alexandria, conceived of Christ as a role model or as the true teacher who instructs humans in the way that leads from sin to freedom and life. Another popular way to explain what Christ did was to say with Athanasius that Christ’s death fulfills the death

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required by Adam’s sin.\textsuperscript{57} Irenaeus is famous for explaining that Christ recapitulates, or even reverses, Adam’s fall.\textsuperscript{58} Origen is keen to speak about Christ’s defeat of the devil, the prince of this world, and uses language of ransom. Christ offered himself to the devil as ransom for all humanity and then cheated the devil of himself.\textsuperscript{59} I have noted particular proponents of each explanation, but it is not so simple as to say that each of these authors conceived of Christ’s work in only one way. All of the theologians mentioned spoke about Christ’s redemptive work in many related ways; Athanasius’s \textit{On the Incarnation} alone uses all of these models to explain what Christ did. This list is meant to be representative rather than exhaustive.

Chrysostom’s own way of discussing Christ’s work is also complex and uses a few different images. In chapter three we saw Chrysostom explain Christ’s defeat of the devil.\textsuperscript{60} Christ “fettered” the devil; the devil overreached and brought punishment on himself when he tried to take the innocent Christ. The devil’s destruction is a result of his choice, as was his fall, as is the destruction (damnation) of humans who are not virtuous. All comes down to choice.

At other times Chrysostom employs language of reconciliation. Chrysostom argues in \textit{Hom. 2 Cor.} 11, commenting on 2 Cor 5:19, that God was the one who first reached for reconciliation: “Who was the aggrieved one? Himself. Who first sought the reconciliation? Himself.”\textsuperscript{61} The need for reconciliation is due to human προαίρεσις. The

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{57} Athanasius, \textit{On the Incarnation} 4.
\bibitem{58} A representative quotation comes from \textit{Adv. haer.} 3.18.1: “He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus” (ANF 446).
\bibitem{60} See above, p. 132.
\bibitem{61} In 2 Cor. hom. 11.2 (PG 61.477, NPNF 333). Τίς ὁ ὑβρισμένος; Αὐτός. Τίς ὁ πρῶτος ἔλθων εἰς καταλλαγάς; Αὐτός.
\end{thebibliography}
human choice to sin caused the rift, yet God is the first to reach out. Chrysostom begins
to explain how that reconciliation was achieved, and it was not from human effort. He
preaches:

He that does the whole is God, who reconciled the world by the Only-Begotten.
And how did he reconcile it to himself? . . . Forgiving them their sins; for in no
other way was it possible. . . . Though our sins were so great, he not only did not
require satisfaction, but even became reconciled.  

God reconciles by forgiving sins. This is not by decree only, however, for Chrysostom
says it is through the Only-Begotten. Forgiveness occurs through Christ. Though this
passage is no more specific, other comments Chrysostom makes give us a better picture
of his thought on this point.

In short, we are reconciled to God through the Incarnation, death, and resurrection
of Jesus Christ.  Chrysostom's thoughts on the Incarnation are often about the
Incarnation as the prime example of God's συνκατάβασις toward human beings. The
Incarnation displays God's συνκατάβασις and loving-kindness in the way he comes to

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Ibid. ὁ δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐργαζόμενος Θεός ἔστιν, ὁ διὰ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς τὴν οἰκουμένην καταλλάξας.
Καὶ πῶς κατήλλαξεν εαυτῷ; . . . Αφείς αὐτοῖς τὰ ἀμαρτήματα· ἄλλος γὰρ οὐκ ἦν· . . . ἄλλῳ ἰμάς τοσούτων
ὀντων τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων, οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἀπήτησε δίκην, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατηλλάξει·

62 Ibid.

63 Though this project focuses only on Chrysostom's soteriology, it is important to note that
soteriology and Christology are inextricably linked. How Chrysostom understands who Christ is affects
how he thinks about what Christ has done (and how he was able to do it) for humanity, just as is true of any
other theologian. Chrysostom's comments about the person of Christ are fewer than his comments about
Christ's work in the world and for humanity, though Christ's work both reveals and is dependent on Christ's
person. For a rich exploration of Chrysostom's Christology, especially as it relates to broader Antiochene
Christologies, see Mel Lawrenz, The Christology of John Chrysostom (Lewistown: Mellen, 1996); Mel
148–53; and Barnard, “Christology and Soteriology in the Preaching of John Chrysostom.”

64 For a detailed look at the role of συνκατάβασις in Chrysostom’s theology, see David Mark
Chrysostom” (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame, 2000). Robert C. Hill prefers to translate συνκατάβασις as
“considerateness” in Chrysostom’s usage because it does not carry the pejorative connotation that
“condescension” does. Hill also argues that the Incarnation as the ultimate συνκατάβασις of God is
Chrysostom's hermeneutical framework. See Hill, “Chrysostom’s Terminology for the Inspired Word”; and
Hill, “On Looking Again at Sunktatabasis.” Mary W. Tse also follows this thought in her Mary W Tse,
“Συνκατάβασις and Ακρίβεια: The Warp and Woof of Chrysostom’s Hermeneutics; A Study Based on
those who could neither understand nor come to him in any other way.\textsuperscript{65} Regarding the resurrection Chrysostom emphasizes the way Christ's resurrection sets a model for human resurrection, which is both a future reality as well as a metaphor for conversion, as in the quotation about baptism in the previous section. All three moments of Christ's life are important and together bring a person to God, but when Chrysostom speaks of the reconciliation of humans to God, he speaks most often about Christ's death as the event that accomplishes salvation.

Chrysostom preaches, “He made use of their [those who crucified Jesus] wickedness for our salvation. For after the blow the fountains of our salvation gushed forth from thence.”\textsuperscript{66} On the efficacy of Christ's death for eternal life, Chrysostom tells his audience, “When Christ himself was in the midst of death, he overcame it so as to raise up those who had already been worsted by it.”\textsuperscript{67} He also preaches, “Unspeakable is the power of the cross. . . . It was more inconceivable that by dying he should do away with death than that he should not die at all.”\textsuperscript{68} Christ's death is the source of eternal life for humans. In order to spend eternity in the kingdom of heaven, one must first be eternal. Christ's death defeats death and makes mortal human beings immortal.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{65} For instance, “What is this συνκατάβασις? God condescends whenever he is not seen as he is, but in the way one incapable of beholding him is able to look upon him. In this way God reveals himself by accommodating what he reveals to the weakness of vision of those who behold him” (\textit{De incompr. hom.} 3.15 (SC 176, FC 101-102)).

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{In Matt. hom.} 88.1 (PG 58.776, NPNF 521). God (and Christ) used human wickedness for salvation, just as Chrysostom urges his congregation to use the devil for salvation. Chrysostom says the devil tried to deceive people by having Christ crucified with two thieves, but this strategy was foiled and used to make salvation more clear. Chrysostom preaches, “The strategy of the devil was foiled and all recoiled upon his own head. . . . Not only, then, did [Christ] not diminish his glory by the crucifixion, but he even augmented it not a little.” (\textit{In Ioh. hom.} 85.1 (PG 59.460, FC 429)). Everywhere Chrysostom seeks to show that those things that seem to be harmful can be tools for salvation.

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{In Ioh. hom.} 5.3 (PG 59.58, FC 67).

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{In 1 Cor. hom.} 4.1 (PG 61.31, NPNF 17). My translation. ἀφάτου δυνάμεως ὁ σταυρός. . . . τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν, τὸ ἀποθανόντα διαλύει τὸν θάνατον, παραδοξότερον ἦν

\textsuperscript{69} For a more detailed discussion of the possible atonement theories Chrysostom endorsed, see Barnard, “Christology and Soteriology in the Preaching of John Chrysostom,” 153-210; and Lawrenz, “The
Another passage adds a dimension to the effect of Christ's death. In *In Heb. hom.*

16, Chrysostom says that Christ's death fulfills the death deserved by humans:

See how he became a mediator, bringing words from [God] and bringing [them to us], carrying them from the Father to us, and adding his own death. We had offended, and we ought to have died; he [Christ] died on our behalf and made us worthy of the trust (διαθήκης). By this is the trust sure, in that from now on it is not made for the unworthy. Indeed, at the beginning, he [God] made his dispositions as a father to his sons; but since we had become unworthy, there was no longer need of a trust, but of punishment.

Chrysostom here uses language of being “worthy” and “unworthy” (ἀξίος and ἀναξίος), which he does with unparalleled frequency. We saw in the previous chapter how concerned Chrysostom is with compensation language, with rewards and punishments, and we have hinted at worthiness language already in this chapter. As in the statements where a person is rewarded with the kingdom or punished with Gehenna, like the second sentence of *In Gen. hom.* 8.6, here in *In Heb. hom.* 16 a person is either punished for unworthiness or receives her inheritance for worthiness. In this case, however, unlike in cases where Chrysostom puts the choice of reward or punishment, heaven or hell, in his congregation's hands, Christ is the one who makes us worthy. When Chrysostom puts the choice in his congregation's hands, he is assuming they have already been made worthy by Christ, as in *In Heb. hom.* 16, and that they are choosing to make themselves

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Christology of John Chrysostom,” 1987, 177–200. Both authors conclude that Christus victor is the most accurate description of Chrysostom's beliefs but allow for elements of other theories, in particular, the ransom theory. The primary difficulty with both authors, though Barnard is the more egregious offender, is that they apply theories to Chrysostom's thought anachronistically rather than describing Chrysostom's understanding. Though they rigorously investigate his understanding, they spend too much time and effort attempting to overlay more recent theories onto Chrysostom.

60 Διαθήκης is the word used for “covenant” in the NT and the LXX.

61 *In Heb. hom.* 16.1 (PG 63.123-24, NPNF 443, my translation). ὅτα πῶς μεσίτης ἐγένετο λόγος ἀπῆγγει καὶ ἤγγει, τὰ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῖν διαπορθημένων, καὶ τὸν θάνατον προστέθηκεν. προσεκκουκότες ήμεν, ἀπέδεικν ὑφελώμεν, ἀπέθανεν ὑπέρ ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐσκόμισεν ἡμᾶς ἀξίους τῆς διαθήκης. Ταῦτα καὶ βεβαιά ὡστιν ἡ διαθήκη, ἢ οὕτω εἰς ἀναξίους λουσόν γέγονε. Παρὰ μὲν οὖν τὴν ἀρχήν, ἄτε ὡς Πατὴρ πρὸς υἱόν διέθετο· ἐπέδω ἔναξαίοι γεγόναμεν, οὐκέτι διαθήκης, ἄλλα τιμωρίας ἐδει. The *In Heb. hom.* are thought to have been preached very late, likely the winter of 402-403, and only published from shorthand notes after Chrysostom's death (Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 133).
unworthy. We had, in Adam, become unworthy of what God offered, but Christ restored our worthiness. Now, having been restored, because of the freedom God gives us as humans, we can choose to be unworthy again.

We can see this flow in the passage from *In Gen. hom. 8.6*: “Let us do everything as people who have put on Christ, and not grieve the Holy Spirit.”\(^{72}\) We have been made worthy, and if we put on Christ like a baptismal robe, we want to remain worthy.\(^{73}\) Then Chrysostom urges, “Let our regard be for the pre-eminence of grace showered on us by God . . . so that after we have striven lawfully . . . we may be rewarded with that marvelous crown.”\(^{74}\) In both homilies, he states that the grace has been offered, Christ has acted, and then we are to strive, that is, to be found worthy. We will return to this idea in the next section.

Thus far we have discussed that grace showered on us, that is, what Christ has already done. Now we turn to that second movement, our acting as those who have put on Christ, our living with regard for that pre-eminent grace. In *In Gen. hom. 8.6* Chrysostom tells the audience to “think of him who dwells within us,” but elsewhere Chrysostom is more explicit about the role God plays in the Christian’s ongoing struggle for virtue.

After discussing the necessity of the human contribution and zeal for salvation in *Hom. Ps. 121.2*, Chrysostom preaches, “[God] is your defender . . . your ally, your help. . . . He will take a position at your right hand so that you may be invincible, up and doing, strong, powerful, set up a trophy, carry the day, since it is most of all thanks to this that

\(^{72}\) *In Gen. hom. 8.6* (PG 53.75, FC 115).

\(^{73}\) I will discuss the baptismal robe imagery below, on p. 256.

\(^{74}\) *In Gen. hom. 8.6* (PG 53.75-76, FC 115-16).
we shall put everything into operation.” God has not left us alone in our attempts to be worthy.

Chrysostom argues more specifically that virtue itself is a cooperation between God and a human being in In Matt. hom. 82: “A man's willingness (προθυμία) is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above; and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willing­ness... For indeed of these two things is virtue's web woven.” Both God’s and the human’s action are necessary. We also see this theme in Chrysostom's panegyrics for the Apostle Paul. Prompted by Paul's own sufferings of imprisonments, shipwrecks, and the like, Chrysostom argues that nothing Christ commanded is impossible: “If we would contribute as large a share of willingness as we have, then God would weigh in the balance heavily for us, and thus we shall all become unassailable to all the terrors attacking us.”

In the Cat. or., Chrysostom makes it clear that Christians are not alone in their struggle with the devil, that enemy of salvation who aims to injure one’s virtue:

The Lord of angels presides over the contest as judge. This is not only an honor for us, but assures our safety. Is it not an honor and assurance for us when He who is judge of the contest is the one who laid down His life for us? In the Olympic combats the judge stands impartially aloof from the combatants, favoring neither the one nor the other, but awaiting the outcome... But in our combat with the

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75 Exp. in ps. 120.2 (121.2) (PG 55.346, Hill 2:143). The PG of Chrysostom’s Exp. in ps. follows the LXX numbering of Psalms (as Chrysostom would have been using the LXX); Hill re-numbers them to follow the MT. The numbers I give are for the PG, with Hill’s in parentheses. The Psalms commentary is traditionally located during Chrysostom's years in Antioch, but beyond this a date is not offered. Many scholars have suggested a date of 387 for the commentary on Ps 41 in particular but place the rest of Exp. in Ps. in the mid- to late Antiochene period (Mayer, The Homilies of St John Chrysostom, 266).

76 In Matt. hom. 82.4 (PG 58.742, NPNF 494-95). οὐκ ἥρεθεν τις ἀπολογίας ῥοπῆς καὶ ὅτι πάλιν οὐδὲν κερδανοῦμεν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνθότος ῥοπῆς, προθυμίας οὐκ ὁδησθε... γὰρ ἀπὸ δοῦν τούτων ἡ ἀρετή ῥήσεται. An example of a situation where Chrysostom sees this working is Joseph’s resistance of the advances of Potiphar’s wife. He writes, “Regarding the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Gen 39, Chrysostom first compares Joseph to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, then says, “This man, too, after making whatever effort he could and giving evidence of his struggle for continence with great intensity, enjoyed abundant help from on high and all at once prevailed, thanks to such cooperation (συμμαχίας) from God's right hand” (In Gen. hom. 62.4 (PG 54.538, FC 208)).

devil, Christ does not stand aloof but is wholly on our side. . . . He anointed us with the oil of gladness, but He bound the devil with fetters that cannot be broken to keep him shackled hand and foot for the combat. But if I happen to slip, He stretches out His hand, lifts me up from my fall, and sets me on my feet again.\textsuperscript{78}

Note again that Christ's work is past in that he has bound the devil before we entered the arena, and that work is present in that Christ is still on our side, raising us when we fall. Christ has defeated the devil, that is, made it possible for humans to resist him, and he also continues to help humans to resist and defeat the devil themselves. Therefore, when there are temptations, to “untimely desire, anger, rage, or envy,” that is, when there is a choice between vice and virtue, Christ helps us when we choose virtue. Christ already reconciled us and now helps us to remain worthy.

The onus, however, remains on the human choice, however much God helps. Without imploring God, Chrysostom charges the audience to “do everything as people who have put on Christ, and not grieve the Holy Spirit” and to “drive far away every such [evil] inclination.” In another of the \textit{In Gen. hom.}, Chrysostom states, “The grace of God, you see, makes us stronger than steel and quite invincible, if we want it to.”\textsuperscript{79} For all of Chrysostom's statements that humans are able to resist the devil (and ought to) because of their \textit{προαίρεσις}, he also says that it is God's grace which makes a person invincible. Grace is the operative element, though according to this statement, a person must desire to be made strong and invincible. This hints at how Chrysostom sees the cooperation working. God does all the “heavy lifting,” and God's grace is operative and effective, but a human must want to be invincible. God will not force his grace upon us; God created humans with freedom and self-determination. Chrysostom paints God as a gentleman.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Bapt. Instr.}, Stav. 3.8-9 (SC 50.155-56; Harkins, 58).
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{In Gen. hom.} 4.2 (PG 53.40, FC 53). ἀδάμαντος γὰρ ἡμᾶς στερητέρους ή τοῦ Θεοῦ χάρις κατεσκεύασε, καὶ πάντῃ ἀναλότους, ἐὰν διδόθη.
who offers everything but stands aside waiting for permission to give, wooing but never coercing.

_So that after we have striven lawfully in this brief and transient existence we may be rewarded with that marvelous crown in the time to come—a fearful time for sinners but a time to be longed for by those clad in virtue—and that we may be found worthy of those unspeakable goods._

This is the reason Chrysostom urges his congregation to be aware of their free προαιρεσις, to use that freedom to be virtuous, to remember what Christ has done, and to know that Christ still helps them if they are willing. Chrysostom wants his congregation to be crowned and to “be found worthy” “in the time to come.” We saw earlier that the “world to come” is the world of Gehenna and the kingdom, and God, at the judgment sends people to one or the other on the basis of their virtue, and that theme is here again. Referring to “a fearful time for sinners but a time to be longed for by those clad in virtue” is not unlike maintaining that “virtue it is that snatches us from Gehenna in the world to come and bestows on us the enjoyment of the kingdom.” A passage that began as an exhortation for the congregants to take responsibility for their virtue became a reminder of Christ’s work and help in the pursuit of virtue, and now Chrysostom has returned at the end to make it clear that virtue is a person’s own responsibility. One must be found worthy.

We see similar language in the first of Chrysotom’s _Cat. Or._: “Let all of you who have here been esteemed worthy of being admitted to citizenship show an abundance of good will and come forward! Put away from you all you have done up to now, and prove
with your whole heart that you are through with the past." God has deemed the catechumens worthy of all his gifts, and their virtue is a response to this. Once a person has been found or made worthy by God's invitation in Christ's reconciling work, one should prove that one is indeed worthy of those gifts and act like the citizen of heaven one is.  

A statement which nuances the picture we have in In Gen. hom. 8.6 and is supported by Cat. Or. 1 comes from Chrysostom's In 1 Cor. hom. 1: “It was God who willed that you should be saved in this way. We ourselves have wrought no good thing, but by the will of God we have attained to this salvation; and because it seemed good to him, we were called, not because we were worthy.” Here Chrysostom says that salvation has nothing to do with any kind of worth the human has. This, however, refers only to Christ’s initial work, just like the worth language in the passage from In Heb. hom. 16. The past tense “were” (aorist ἦμεν) differentiates the text I have just quoted from all of Chrysostom's exhortations for the people to be worthy or to be found worthy at the judgment, which are present tense. Attaining salvation not because we were worthy means that there is no intrinsic worth in the human being such that it was necessary for God to call him to salvation, as though he deserved it.

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80 Cat. Or., Stav. 1.18 (SC 117-18, ACW 30). Ταῦτα δή πάντα ἐννοοῦντες, οἱ νέοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ στερεώμεθα, μὴ πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος τῶν οἰκείων ἐφορᾶτε κακῶν μηδὲ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῶν ἡμαρτημένων ὡμὲν λογίσθητε: μᾶλλον δὲ, ταῦτα μετὰ ἀκριβείας ἀναλογισάμενοι, μηδὲ οὕτως ἐνδοιάσητε ἀλλ' εἰδότες τὸν ἐκπόντιον τὸ φιλότιμον, τῆς χάριτος τὴν ὑπερβολὴν, τῆς δωρεᾶς τὸ μέγεθος, ὅσοι κατεξώθητε ἐντάθα πολιτογραφήθηναι, μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς εὐγνωμοσύνης προσέλθετε καὶ πάντων τῶν ἥδη προπεραγμένων ὡμέν ἀποστάντες ὀλοκλήρῳ τῇ διανοίᾳ τὴν μετάστασιν ἐπιδείξασθε.

81 Chrysostom does not elaborate on what kind of citizenship he means, but he has just finished quoting Paul (Ephesians 5:27), and Paul in Philippians 3:20 speaks about a Christian's citizenship in heaven. Moreover, Chrysostom's frequent use of heavenly πολιτεία language suggests that the citizenship conferred by baptism is the citizenship of heaven.

82 In 1 Cor. hom. 1.1 (PG 61.13, NPNF 3). Ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς τοῦτο ἠθέλησε τὸ οὕτως ὑμᾶς σωθῆναι. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμὲς κατωρθόσαμεν, ἅλλα διὰ τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν σωτηρίαν εὐράμεθα: καὶ ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸς ἐδοξέψει, ἐκλήθημεν, οὐκ ἐπειδὴ ἥξιοι ἦμεν.
unworthiness brought on by Adam's disobedience, and after having been called in such a way, one is meant to be worthy because one has been deemed and made worthy.

One final image is helpful for understanding what virtue does for a person in the world to come. Several times in the Cat. Or. Chrysostom tells his catechumens to keep clean the garment they put on at baptism: “I exhort you who have just been deemed worthy of the divine gift to keep careful watch and to guard the spiritual garment bestowed on you, keeping it clean and spotless.”83 Note again that the catechumens have been “deemed worthy” (ἀξιόω) as in the passages above. God's esteeming worthy precedes a person's remaining worthy, or, in this case, remaining clean and spotless. A few lines down from this, Chrysostom preaches, “Be careful and take thought for your luster now, so that you will live in purity at all times and get no stain on your robe.”84 Here Chrysostom’s robe metaphor is linked explicitly to living in purity; the spotless robe is the spotless life. In Cat. Or. 4 Chrysostom urges, “You have put on the new [garment], which is so bright that it vies in brilliance with the rays of the sun. See to it that you keep the garment in this same shining beauty.”85 The garment is both literal and metaphorical. Chrysostom refers at the literal level to the white baptismal garment the neophytes put on following their baptism, which symbolizes the marriage robe.86 This they are to keep clean, though the context of the passage makes it clear that Chrysostom means this metaphorically. The robe is also a symbol of their virtue, their new way of life as Christians, and it is this virtue which needs to be kept clean and pure.

83 Cat. Or., Stav. 5.24 (SC 212; ACW, 90).
84 Cat. Or., Stav. 5.26 (SC 213; ACW 91).
85 Cat. Or., Stav. 4.22 (SC 193; ACW, 74).
86 The baptism as marriage is one of Chrysostom's primary images in his Cat. Or.
Alluding to the parable of the wedding banquet in Matt 22:1-14, where a guest is discovered without the proper wedding attire and ejected from the feast, Chrysostom tells the catechumens, “Beloved, you are invited to a marriage; do not come to it wearing a garment covered with filth, but take a garment which is suitable for the wedding feast.”

In Chrysostom's commentary on this parable in In Matt. hom. 69, he explains that the garment in question is the soul, which can only be adorned properly with good works.

Elsewhere Chrysostom uses this parable to explain that those who are not properly attired with virtue will be ejected from the kingdom of heaven, as in Exp. in ps. 143:

Those living in sin are like that . . . Even if they are resplendent in clothing and other finery, their condition is no better than those dead and in darkness, but even far worse, in so far as one condition is an effect of nature, the other a fault of choice (προαιρεσις). There is a darkness which is to come, of which Scripture says, ‘Take him away and cast him into exterior darkness' (Matt 22:13).

For Chrysostom, virtue is like the baptismal robe. God deems a person worthy to wear it, that is, worthy of his grace and salvation, but it is the person's responsibility to keep the robe clean, or to remain worthy. Without a spotless robe, that is, without a virtuous soul, a person is not worthy to remain at the wedding banquet, the kingdom of heaven. Virtue makes one worthy of the kingdom, or, in the words of In Gen. hom. 8.6, worthy of unspeakable goods and crowned with that marvelous crown.

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87 Cat. Or., Montf. 2.18 (PG 49.234; ACW, 178).
88 In Matt. hom. 69.3. In fact, Chrysostom tells his audience that the monks in their “garments of hair” are those properly attired for the feast, not kings who wear purple: “If you were able to open the doors of the mind, and to look upon their soul, and all their ornaments within, surely you would fall down upon the earth, not bearing the glory of their beauty, and the splendor of those garments, and the lightning brightness of their conscience” (In Matt. hom. 69.3 (PG 58.652, NPNF 424).
89 Exp. in ps. 142.3 (143.3) (PG 55.451, Hill 310). Τοιοῦτοι εἰσὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν ἁμαρτήμασι ζῶντες . . . κἂν φαίδροι γίνονται ἀπὸ τῶν ἐσθημάτων καὶ τῆς ἀλλης θεραπείας, τῶν νεκρωθέτων ἁπάς καὶ ἐν σκότῳ ὄντων οὐδὲν ἀμείνων διάκειται, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλῷ χαλεπότερον, ὅσο τὸ μὲν φύσεως πράγμα, τὸ δὲ προαιρέσεως κατηγορία. Ἡστι σκότος καὶ τὸ μέλλον περὶ οὗ φησιν, Ἅρατε αὐτόν, καὶ ἐμβάλετε εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἔξωτερον.
Conclusion

Chrysostom begins *In Gen. hom. 8.6* with an exhortation to his audience: “Let us not neglect our salvation.” It is therefore clear that, for Chrysostom, there is something the audience can do to attend to its salvation, and Chrysostom tells them what that is: be virtuous. God has made human beings free and given each a προαίρεσις. Because they are free, it is possible for them to be virtuous. Then, because it is possible to be virtuous, God requires that they be virtuous. Only virtue will make them worthy of the kingdom of heaven when they stand before God at the judgment.

Up until this chapter we had seen that Chrysostom was concerned that his congregation know the devil and his demons are unable to cause any harm to human beings. Demons cannot cause them to sin, and demons cannot damn them. However much the devil deceives or tempts, a person is free and able to resist—and therefore must. Chrysostom’s project, however, is larger. It is not only about a person’s ability to resist demons but about her responsibility to do so. His project is about a person’s responsibility to be virtuous. Not only can demons not damn, but God does not save unilaterally. A person cannot expect to be saved unless she add some effort of her own. God requires our virtuous victory over the devil. God does not leave a person alone in her effort. Christ reconciled her to God, made her worthy, and continues to help her remain worthy should she desire it, but the responsibility to be virtuous is hers alone, which means that the responsibility for her salvation is also hers alone.
CONCLUSION

This dissertation has, on its surface, been about John Chrysostom’s demonology. What are demons, where do they come from, and how do they interact with human beings, according to Chrysostom? In his answers to these questions, we have seen that Chrysostom is in many ways similar to his predecessors. We surveyed the demonologies of pagans, Jews, and Christians from Homer to Augustine in order to establish a broad context for Chrysostom’s work, and in so doing we saw a world populated by spirits: some good, some evil, some ambiguous. This world was characterized by a general fear of the physical harm that could befall a person from evil demons who caused illness, poverty, pregnancy complications, and even death. It was not a debilitating fear, however, but a way of life. In response to the demonic threat, people of late antiquity employed amulets, magic bowls, and magical papyri to protect themselves and their families from the danger of demonic action. Fourth-century Christians as much as Jews, intellectuals as much as the uneducated, rich as much as poor, participated in such magic as a part of life. It was what one did.

Chrysostom, however, responds to this fearful way of life by telling his congregation that they do not understand demons at all. If they did, they would not be afraid. We looked at the details of Chrysostom’s demonology and saw that, when it comes to the origin and nature of demons, Chrysostom believes the devil to be a spiritual creature made good by God in the beginning who fell from his position because of pride, and the demons to be angels similarly created good who fell with him. This happened before the creation of the rest of the world. The devil and his demons are incorporeal, spiritual beings created good and possessing a προαίρεσις, which allowed for their fall.
Though Chrysostom explains these finer points of demonology, he does so rarely and only with occasional comments; Chrysostom’s primary concern is with the limits of demonic activities and correcting his congregation’s misunderstanding of those limits.

We observed Chrysostom’s habit of warning his congregation against laziness (ῥαθυμία) when it comes to the devil. The devil is always working, using deception and wiles, enticing with words and clever stratagems, to convince a person to sin. Sometimes the devil even attacks physically, as in the case of Job. However, this is where Chrysostom tells his congregation that they misunderstand. The devil does wish to destroy human beings but amulets and magic bowls are unnecessary, for the destruction the devil has in mind is spiritual, and a person is able to resist.

The first thing Chrysostom does in his attempt to rectify his audience’s mistaken assumptions about demons is to explain the difference between true and apparent evil, or true and apparent harm. The congregants, he says, believe that demons are governing the world because of all the suffering they see. They believe that demons are causing harm. Chrysostom tells his congregants that the demons may, in fact, be causing the suffering they experience, but this suffering is not true harm. It is only apparent harm. True harm is harm done to the soul, and the soul is impervious to all harm except that inflicted by the person on herself: sin. Sin is harm to one’s virtue. All other suffering—illness, poverty, physical injury, even death—is not evil, not truly injurious. Therefore, though demons can cause suffering, they cannot cause true injury.

The audience has failed to appreciate the limitations of demons, and these limits are the core of Chrysostom’s exhortation to the congregation. If demons are causing suffering and apparent harm, it is only with God’s permission. Demons cannot do
whatever they please; they must receive permission from God. Still, what harm they cause is not true harm or evil. Only a person herself can cause true harm or evil and then only to herself. Here Chrysostom’s demonology begins to look much more like anthropology. Chrysostom explains that the devil cannot cause a person to sin (though not for lack of trying). God has made each person free and self-determining and has endowed each person with a προαίρεσις. Because the προαίρεσις is free, neither the devil nor God can compel a person to choose one action over another; the choice is entirely within her power (ἐφ’ ἡµίν). Further, because the προαίρεσις is ἐφ’ ἡµίν, the προαίρεσις is the seat of moral responsibility, what makes an action virtue or vice.

The high importance Chrysostom places on virtue is because he understands virtue to be an essential aspect of salvation. Human beings are free and thus able to be virtuous. Because they can be virtuous, God requires them to be virtuous, though God does not leave people alone in their attempts to be virtuous. God makes salvation possible in Christ and offers human beings the gift of entrance into the kingdom, but humans must also cooperate with God’s work and bring their own contribution, their virtue, in order to walk through the kingdom’s gates. Virtue is what makes people worthy of the kingdom of heaven when they stand before God at the judgment.

Chrysostom tells his people that sin is their own fault and virtue their own responsibility, regardless of what the devil and his demons are doing. The devil is the enemy of salvation, and every Christian is locked in a struggle with this enemy. The Christian enters the arena in her baptism, and the devil does everything in his power to drag a person into hell. Thus, this struggle against the devil for virtue is what defines the Christian life. Chrysostom articulates his anthropology by means of demonology.
Chrysostom’s rhetoric about demons highlights the self-determination of human beings and their resulting moral responsibility. This self-determination and responsibility Chrysostom in turn uses to exhort his congregation to be virtuous, which is the state of all human beings that God intends.

The preceding account of demons, virtue, and salvation implies that, as Chrysostom understands the world, humans have a measure of responsibility for their salvation, and demons highlight this responsibility. Though God has done, and continues to do, the major part of the work, God requires his people to put up a fight:

This is why [God] wants you to work a little: so that the victory may be yours too. And just as a king desires his son to be in the line of battle, and be seen, so that a trophy can be given to him, even though [the king] himself achieves everything: so too does God act in the war against the devil. In return [God] asks only one thing from you—that you show genuine enmity against him. If you present him with this, he will finish off the whole war.  

Salvation is a war against the devil, who tries at every step with every device available to him to keep Christians from the kingdom of heaven which God has prepared for them. Therefore, when Chrysostom exhorts his congregation to be virtuous, he is encouraging them to take responsibility for their salvation fight against the devil. They both can do something about their salvation, and they must.

What began as an exploration of Chrysostom’s demonology has taken us through the realm of anthropology and into soteriology. The three fields are intertwined for Chrysostom in a single enterprise such that a study of Chrysostom’s demonology is by necessity a study of his anthropology and soteriology. Demons are not so frightening as his congregation believes. In fact, demons can be used to attain salvation, a tool whereby a person may be found worthy of the kingdom: “Behold even the Devil has become a

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1 In Matt. hom. 16.11 (PG 57.254, my translation).
The more the devil tries to harm her virtue, the more the vigilant Christian will profit. When she considers hoarding her money, she will remember that she is stronger than the devil and choose to give alms instead. When she considers forsaking church attendance in favor of the theater or the races, she will remember that she is not subject to the devil and choose worship instead. She will strengthen her virtue and become even more superior to the enemy of her salvation as she climbs this circular stairway to heaven. She will herself be found vigorous and glowing with the sweat of one who is worthy of the gifts she has received, worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven.

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2 De diab. tent. 1.4 (SC 140, NPNF 189, my translation). Ἰδοὺ καὶ σωτηρίας αἴτιος ὁ διάβολος γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ οὐ παρὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ γνώμην, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν τέχνην τοῦ Ἀποστόλου.
EXCURSUS: CHRYSOSTOM A PELAGIAN?

That Chrysostom speaks of the need for a person to be worthy of the kingdom of heaven leads some to ask whether Chrysostom was a Pelagian or even a semi-Pelagian.\(^1\) Is Chrysostom suggesting a person can “earn” her salvation? Anthony Kenny expresses the issue well: “According to Chrysostom, then, virtue is woven together out of God's grace and man's resolve. God's grace has the greater part in this process, but it does not precede our election. Is this doctrine Pelagian, or semi-Pelagian?”\(^2\) Robert C. Hill takes up the same question with regard to Chrysostom's *Comm. Ps.* He writes, “It is with regard to the role of grace in the process of salvation . . . and the relation of divine grace to human effort and free will that Chrysostom's instruction to his congregation on the Psalms . . . would have offered greater comfort to the Pelagians.”\(^3\) It should be noted that both of these scholars conclude that Chrysostom is neither Pelagian nor semi-Pelagian. Though they will note Chrysostom's emphasis on human effort and ask whether the emphasis is too strong, most scholars also note Chrysostom's emphasis on God's grace as necessary for salvation and so conclude that Chrysostom is still well within the bounds of orthodoxy.

It is important to note the anachronism in this question. Debate over whether a person can “earn” salvation is a Reformation-era debate at the earliest, when the primary concerns were of works versus faith and the apparent possibility of buying one's

\(^1\) For other modern treatments of this question, see Papageorgiou, “Chrysostom and Augustine on the Sin of Adam and Its Consequences”; Ely, “Chrysostom and Augustine on the Ultimate Meaning of Human Freedom.”


Chrysostom had different concerns. The language used in Pelagius's famous debate with Augustine is not of “earning” salvation but of grace, free will, and original sin. Furthermore, the debate does not occur until after Chrysostom's death, and for this reason it is impossible for Chrysostom to be a Pelagian.5

One impetus for this labelling is that Pelagius and Julian of Eclanum, one of Pelagius's followers, both offer quotations from Chrysostom in support of their arguments.6 Philip Schaff is representative of early opinions when he writes, “Cassian, the founder of Semi-Pelagianism, was his [Chrysostom's] pupil and appealed to his authority. Julian of Eclanum, the ablest opponent of Augustin, quoted Chrysostom against original sin; Augustin tried from several passages to prove the reverse, but could only show that Chrysostom was no Pelagian. We may say that in tendency and spirit he was a catholic Semi-Pelagian or Synergist before Semi-Pelagianism was brought into a system.”7 The passage Julian quotes (according to Augustine) is from Chrysostom's Cat. Or.: “For this reason we baptize even infants, though they are not defiled with sin, in order that there may be given to them holiness, justice, adoption, inheritance, and the brotherhood of Christ, that they may be His members.”8 The line loved by Julian and defended by Augustine is, of course, that infants are “not defiled with sin.” Julian and Augustine, however, are arguing over whether Chrysostom has a notion of original sin as

4 The famous example of this concern is Luther's description of James as an “epistle of straw.” Luther was concerned that the Catholic Church had begun to place too much emphasis on what a person did in order to achieve salvation at the expense of God's grace and the inability to deserve that grace. It should be noted that Luther did not like Chrysostom.

5 Though just barely, as Chrysostom died in 407, and Pelagius arrived in Rome sometime in the first decade of the fifth century.

6 Hill notes this support but does not think it says anything about Chrysostom's position except that it leaves the door open for such interpretations (Hill, “A Pelagian Commentator on the Psalms?,” 264–65).


8 Cat. Or., Stav. 3.6, as quoted in Cont. Jul. 1.6 (PL 44.655, FC 25).
defined by their own debate. Chrysostom in this passage is waxing eloquent about the gifts bestowed in baptism and mentions infants who may also receive these gifts in baptism. His concerns are not those of Augustine, Pelagius, or Julian. From Chrysostom's comments it is clear he believed the sin of Adam and Eve to have brought evil into the world and Christ's death and resurrection to have restored humans to their place in the kingdom of heaven, as well as making it possible for them to be virtuous. Chrysostom does not spend time detailing how Adam's sin comes to each person.

That Augustine defends Chrysostom is also significant because it suggests that Augustine saw Chrysostom or something of his ideas worth defending as orthodoxy.

Augustine minces no words in his defense:

Do you, then, dare to set these words of the holy bishop John in opposition to so many statements of his great colleagues, and separate him from their most harmonious society, and constitute him their adversary? Far be it from us to believe or say such an evil thing of so great a man. Far be it from us, I say, to think that John of Constantinople, on the question of the baptism of infants and their liberation by Christ from the paternal handwriting, should oppose so many great fellow bishops, especially the Roman Innocent, the Carthaginian Cyprian, the Cappadocian Basil, the Nazianzene Gregory, the Gaul Hilary, the Milanese Ambrose.\(^9\)

It is possible Augustine is only using Chrysostom for his own argumentative purposes just as Julian did, and very likely he speaks of him only because Julian quoted him, but Augustine places Chrysostom in the line of orthodox theologians both east and west and is offended that anyone would claim him for their heretical purposes. Chrysostom's reputation must have been beyond reproach. Moreover, it is in the company of great bishops, including the Cappadocians, that Augustine places Chrysostom, indicating that

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\(^9\) *Cont. Jul.* 1.6 (PL 44.655, FC 25).
Augustine did not think him a “mere” preacher or moralist but a church leader in his own right. ¹⁰

However, the questions that prompt the designation of Pelagian or semi-Pelagian, and which are raised by it, do deserve space here. It is Chrysostom's emphasis on human effort as a necessary aspect of salvation which gives some scholars pause. We saw, however, that Chrysostom has a strong emphasis on God's grace as necessary for salvation. In fact, it is clear that God's contribution is both bigger than and prior to the human contribution. Chrysostom does speak of the need for a person to make an effort before God will help, but this is always a statement about the pursuit of virtue, which only happens in the context of Christ's prior work of restoration. Christ's work of incarnation, death, and resurrection has enabled the person to seek the good and is thus prior to any human effort.

¹⁰ Chrysostom's office as bishop would have influenced this conception as well, for bishops were, at the time, theologians and teachers of doctrine as well. Still, the passage under scrutiny comes from Chrysostom's Cat. Or., preached when he was a priest at Antioch.
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