Is Evil Inevitable for Creation and Human Life?
Studies on Martin Luther’s Biblical Interpretation

Jussi Koivisto
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Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by due permission of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Helsinki in Auditorium XII, The Main Building of the University of Helsinki, on the 18th of May 2012 at 12 o’clock.
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1 This article was originally published in Finnish and has been translated in English for this dissertation.
Abstract

This article dissertation examines Luther’s idea of evil in his Biblical interpretation. In Luther’s central works and in his various comments on Biblical passages he seems to repeat over and over again the idea that individual human beings or other creatures cannot avoid being part of evil or becoming victims of evil. In short, evil seems to be an inevitable part of human life and the Creation. This article dissertation studies this kind of inevitability of evil from various perspectives.

In order to provide a multiple perspective on the inevitability of evil in Luther’s works, this dissertation studies the following themes in these works: the terminological definition of the inevitability of evil; the manifold phenomenon of *fascinare*; the serpent (Gen. 3) possessed by the Devil; did the first human choose evil? (Gen. 3); was God the origin of evil?; how was God involved in evil?; the problem of evil. Various methods have been used: systematic argumentation and concept analysis, contextualizing Luther in the history of doctrines and ideas, using reception criticism or the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Biblical texts, and source criticism. Using these methodological approaches to Luther, this dissertation offers new insights on Lutheranism and the various traditions preceding it. It introduces the ancient tradition which dominated early, medieval and early modern Christianity, but is not recognized in modern exegesis: the idea that the serpent of Genesis chapter three was possessed by the Devil.

The main results of this dissertation can be summarized as follows: Luther considered evil in its various forms as an inevitable part of human life and the Creation. Luther avoided giving the impression that God was the causal, ontological or active origin of evil. However, Luther thought that God had permitted evil to slither into the world. The active origin of evil in the fall of angels and the first human was the Devil. However, after these two falls, God has been involved more actively in evil: He uses and is even present in evil so that He can execute His good plans for the salvation of humankind and for His own glory. Luther also suggested that (an omnipotent) God allowed the Fall to occur, because through Christ’s salvific sacrifice humankind could truly comprehend how much God cared for humans. In other words, Luther deemed that God permitted evil for executing His good aims. On the other hand, Luther thought that liberation from various forms of (inevitable) evil, including sin, possession, and bewitchment, was only possible through pastoral care or spiritual healing orchestrated by the Holy Spirit.
Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation is hard work. At least for me it has been a process of continuous learning to do serious research. One obvious difficulty in Luther studies has been the challenge to do original research. Luther, namely, is one of the most studied persons in the world. The amount of research on Luther probably exceeds the expectations of any person who is interested in studying him or his ideas. Some people have asked me, whether it is possible to find anything new in Luther, or hinted that Luther studies are (too) demanding an area of research. It is indeed difficult to find anything new from Luther and it is a demanding area of research in many respects: linguistically (incl. Latin, German, Finnish, Swedish, Hebrew, Greek etc.), the amount of both research and source material is extensive, and so forth.

In spite of all these difficulties, I still consider this journey worthwhile. I have found ideas from Luther that I did not expect to find, and experienced the joy of finding something new. Although Luther has been an object of extensive interest and research, he has attained this status for good reasons: even now his thoughts and ideas are provocative, fresh, and in most parts profound, spiritual, and rational at the same time. The study has therefore enriched me in various ways, as I have also learned to do independent study and learned to appreciate even more what scholars of other disciplines have to offer. I truly believe in the possibilities which science and its experts can offer to us.

I am very grateful to the various institutions and people who have helped me to get through this study. First of all I would like to thank my alma mater, the University of Helsinki, which has given me the possibility to learn theology with access to all its resources (e.g. great teachers and impressive facilities) in order to become a researcher. In addition to these possibilities and resources, this institution has also funded my research through its Tiedesäätiön nuoren tutkijan apuraha (The Science Foundation’s Research Fund for Young Scholars), a project called Kolmivuotinen tutkimusmääräraha (The University of Helsinki’s Three-year Scholarship Fund) led by professor Risto Saarinen, and väitöskirjan loppujuontaattamisapuraha (The University of Helsinki’s Scholarship for Completing the Dissertation). In addition to the University of Helsinki, many other institutes have also funded my research: Kirkon tutkimuskeskus, Suomen kulttuurirahasto, Emil Aaltosen Säätiö, and Tieteen ja taiteen kris- tillinen tukisäätiö. In addition, I would like to thank the Finnish Graduate School of Theology, where I was a fully funded member and which granted me travel support for conferences, offered possibilities to give presenta-
tions, gave important information regarding postgraduate studies, etc. I am also grateful to the Chancellor of the University of Helsinki who granted me travel support for conferences. To all these institutions, I am sincerely grateful.

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I would also like to thank Research Professor Wim François and Professor August den Hollander who accepted my short presentation in one of the sessions of their *Biblia Sacra* group in the *Sixteenth Century Conference* held in Geneva, May 2009. From this presentation grew one of
the articles of this dissertation and they gave excellent critical feedback in the editing process. I would also like to thank all the members of the Nordic Luther Forum, with whom I have had the privilege of becoming acquainted and of sharing an academic interest in Luther. I am also grateful to the Sixteenth Century Society, which has accepted my presentations in its conferences and accepted my article for publication. There are also many other foreign scholars, conferences, and institutions to whom I am grateful, but it is not possible to enumerate them all here.

This dissertation would have not been possible without the support of my family members. I would like to thank my mother- and father-in-law, Kaarina and Tapio Nuorteva, who have often given of their time to take care of our children. Without my parents, Leena and Jouko Koivisto, I would not be here. They have raised me and given the kind of upbringing and support which has taken me far. Without their positive confidence and support, I could not have been able to manage this process. To you I am extremely grateful for all your support. The sincerest thanks belong to my beloved wife Laura-Elina who has had the strength to stand the uncertainty which my studies have brought to our family. I am both simultaneously sorry and grateful. I am sorry that I have been too much involved in academics at times, but I am also [very] grateful that you have supported me so much. Although we have lived through the so-called “rush years” during the past decade, it has been the best time of my life.

Saara and Matleena, my two daughters, are the sunshine of my life. Every day you remind me what is truly important in this life. You also give me strong confidence in future generations. Last but not least, I want to thank Christ [Jesus]. Without Christ I would be nothing and have nothing. Therefore, the honor for everything good in me and in my life belongs from start to finish to the Christ who has borne my sins on the cross. It is my hope that, for the rest of my life, I would serve You.
1. Introduction

1.1. (Inevitable) Evil in the Discourse

Various manifestations of evil belong to the most elementary of human experiences. In spite of its elementariness, or perhaps because of it, it is difficult or even impossible to give an all-embracing definition of evil. Evil has multifarious faces. There is, for example, a difference in emphasis between the history of religion and modern discussion (e.g. Enlightenment thinkers and Marxists). In the history of religion evil is considered either a destiny that is bound up with the mutability of existence and related suffering or a dark cosmic force in conflict with the power of good. Modern discussion is focused on structural evil, in which alienated conditions produce alienated people. Enlightenment thinkers, for example, found alienated conditions in the wrongly programmed mechanism of culture and education, while Marxists found them in the rule of private property exalted as an end in itself. Although in the history of religion and in modern discussion evil is understood differently, their views on evil are not necessarily contradictory. They are simply different perspectives on the same human experience of the corruption of this world and its inhabitants.

The current research is especially interested in the psychological and social mechanism which makes human beings hurt each other in certain situations. A good example of this is Stanley Milgram’s experiment on obedience, in which he studied the measures ordinary people were willing to take against their fellow human beings if they received orders from an authoritative person in an authoritative environment. As is well known, a surprising number of people were even ready to give another person a lethal electric shock. Although these studies have produced interesting psychological and sociological results in human behavior, their results do not eliminate the seriousness of evil acts and the distress which, for example, genocide causes. It is also important to remember that the psychology and the sociology of evil are only limited approaches to evil. In addition, the concept of evil still interests researchers as a philosophical, historical, religious and theological concept. Evil does not, therefore, have multifari-

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4 For example, see Bloxham 2008, pp. 203–245; Milgram 2005; Zimbardo 2008.
ous faces in human experience alone, but also in current academic research.

There have also been traditional attempts at defining evil. One of these attempts has been the division of evil into three different categories: 1. evil in nature, including earthquakes, floods and so forth; 2. physical evil, such as illness and death; 3. moral evil, for example, sin. Although these three categories may seem to be universal conceptions, it is important to remember that the existence of evil or its form of existence is debatable. The difficulty in using the concept of evil, or definitions for it, lies in the proportionate nature of evil. Although many religions and cultures define evil as the opposite of good, the definition of evil varies between them. This dichotomy and simultaneity of evil is probably the reason why evil often has a mythic nature. As Paul Ricoeur has argued: “If there is one human experience ruled by myth, it is certainly that of evil.” According to him, every individual experiences the presence of evil in the world and everyone has the feeling of belonging to a history of evil more ancient than any individual evil act. Evil – in one form or other – is, therefore, an essential part of human experience. Because of its essentiality for humans, it can even be argued that evil is an inevitable part of human life. Namely, if one accepts Ricoeur’s statement, evil is an inevitable part of every human experience.

Evil does not only have multifarious faces in regard to the differences between religions and cultures. Multifariousness is also present within the same religion or culture. Christianity, which considers Biblical texts authoritative, is a good example of this. In the Bible, evil (in Hebrew: רע and רעה; in Greek: κακός, κακία, πονηρός, and πονηρία) means, among others, the following:

1. something that is worthless or corrupt (II Kings 2:19; Prov. 20:14, 25:19; Jer. 24:2; Matt. 6:23, 17:7);
2. displeasing, ugly, and sad (Gen. 21:11–12, 28:8; 41:19–20; Neh. 2:3; Eccl. 7:3);

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7 About the problems regarding the existence and definitions of evil from logical and philosophical point of view, see: Weingartner 2003, esp. pp. 9–41. See also Dalfert 2008, pp. 78, 80. One interesting aspect of evil is its surplus. For example, see Saarinen 2003, pp. 131–135; Snyder, 1990, pp. 78–86.
8 More about the proportionate nature of evil, see Dalfert 2008, pp. 86–88.
9 Ricoeur 2005, 2897–2904, esp. p. 2897
3. painful or injurious (Gen. 26:29, 31:7; Deut. 26:6, 28:35; I Sam. 18:10; II Sam. 12:18; Prov. 11:15; Rev. 16:2);

4. trouble, distress, and calamity which mankind, and particularly Israel must endure (Gen. 19:19, 47:9; Ps. 90:15; Matt. 6:34; Eph. 5:16);

5. punishment or chastisement sent from God (Deut. 31:17; I Kings 14:10; II Kings 21:12; Jer. 26:19; Amos 9:4); in some cases God is even said to send an evil spirit as punishment (Judg. 9:23, 56–57);

6. the wrong that men do to one another (e.g. Gen. 19:7, 44:5; Deut. 26:6; Judg. 11:27; 19:23);

7. the moral badness, maliciousness, and perversity of the sinful heart (e.g. Job 8:10; Mark. 7:21);

8. in some cases God, exercising his providential control, uses evil for his severe purposes (Job 2:10; Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6);13

These various aspects of evil have influenced later Christianity, which has formed multifarious ideas regarding the nature of evil. In addition to Biblical texts, later Christianity has also applied extra-biblical ideas of evil in its doctrines (e.g. from Neo-Platonism). In short, the nature of evil, especially regarding the Devil and sin, has been contemplated throughout Christianity. One example of this is the Augustinian tradition, which, according to Charles T. Mathewes, interprets evil's challenge in terms of two distinct conceptual mechanisms: ontological and anthropological. Ontologically, in terms of the status of the evil in the universe, Augustinian tradition understands evil as nothing more than the privation of being and goodness. The privation of evil does not mean that evil does not exist at all; it means rather the absence of existence which is an ontological shortcoming. Anthropologically, evil is understood in the Augustinian tradition in terms of the effect of evil on a human being. From this point of view evil is explained as human wickedness as rooted in the sinful perversion of the human's good nature. In other words, anthropological evil means the perversion of the imago Dei, and effects a distorted, misoriented, and false imitation of what the human should be.14 According to Mathewes, Augus-

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tine's conception of evil as privation prevents the concern that God, who possesses absolute authority over the Creation, is responsible for evil: "If evil is the lack of being, then God cannot have willed evil, because God's will is precisely what is not evil, and evil is precisely the lack of accordance with God's will."\(^\text{15}\)

Augustine's idea of evil as \textit{privatio boni} originated from Plotinus. Through this notion of evil as an absence of good, Augustine tried to contest the stark Manichean dichotomy between good and evil. In Confessions, for example, he argues that evil cannot be substance, because in this case it would be good by definition. For Augustine, all things were good by definition, because (from Plotinus) he took it for granted that existence was superior to nonexistence. Augustine also taught that evil could not exist apart from good as Frederick H. Russell has pointed out.\(^\text{16}\) Augustine's idea of \textit{privatio boni} has substantially affected Western Christianity.

The Augustinian friar Martin Luther\(^\text{17}\) is usually considered as part of the Augustinian tradition and one of its most prominent representatives. As this dissertation will reveal, Luther, like Augustine, also applied both Biblical and extra-Biblical ideas to his notion of evil. In addition, Luther's many ideas on evil indeed resembled Augustine's. On the other hand, as this dissertation will also affirm, Luther did not fully agree with Augustine.

Although this dissertation touches on, among many other things, Luther's relationship to the Augustinian idea of evil as \textit{privatio boni}, its actual focus is on the inevitability of evil. Evil, namely, was also according to Luther an inevitable part of Creation and human life and experience. This he had learned from his struggle against various anxieties. However, what Luther meant by the inevitability of evil was not based on merely the experience that evil seems to haunt every individual in one form or another. As this dissertation suggests, for Luther the inevitability of evil was also a matter of correct Biblical interpretation.

1.2. Aim of the Dissertation

The aim of this article dissertation is to examine Luther's ideas of inevitable evil. The inevitability of evil in this dissertation, as in Luther's works, means that evil in one form or another is inevitable in Creation and, especially in human life. The dissertation, naturally, also deals with Luther's

\(^{\text{15}}\) Mathewes 2001, p. 76. See also pp. 77–81; Evans 1982, pp. 148–149.


\(^{\text{17}}\) Cf. to Hagen 1993, p. 1.
concept of original sin. However, this dissertation does not focus only on the inevitability of original sin, but also on other forms of inevitable evil in Luther’s works, such as: various harm done by the evil eye or the bewitchment, the possession of the serpent of Genesis 3:1 by the Devil, and how God omnipotently and inevitably uses evil for his own ends.

This article dissertation, therefore, focuses on Luther’s understanding of inevitable evil from various vantage points both explicitly and implicitly. Later in this introduction, I will examine the terminology regarding inevitable evil in Luther’s works. The articles try to answer the following individual questions: How did Luther define the Latin word *fascinare*, which was one form of inevitable evil and had a significant connotation connected to the evil eye belief and witchcraft? What sources did Luther use for constructing his conception of *fascinare*? What did Luther mean exactly when he spoke about the serpent possessed by the Devil in his lectures on Genesis? Where did this conception originate and what sources did Luther use? Did Luther think that evil chose humans or vice versa? Was God the origin of evil, according to Luther? Why did a good God let evil things occur, according to Luther? How did Luther understand God’s involvement in evil? What did Luther think about liberation from various forms of inevitable evil (*fascinare*, original sin, evil in general, and anxieties)?

The Conclusions of this dissertation summarizes the key results and further analyze concepts in need of clarification. In addition, I will also suggest questions that remain unanswered and that should perhaps be examined later. By analyzing and introducing Luther’s various ideas of inevitable evil, I attempt to show that this notion was an important part of Luther’s theology, and was mainly based on his Biblical interpretation – a mixture of independent scholarship and the influence of antecedent authors (including Augustine). It is also important to remember that when Luther explained the Bible, he had at the same time theological, confessional, biblical, and contemporary purposes.18 Therefore, Luther’s manner to explain the Bible should not be compared with the modern, strictly academic, exegesis.

Luther’s conception of inevitable evil has not been previously studied thoroughly although several studies on Luther’s Biblical interpretation19 and some studies regarding Luther’s various ideas of evil20 exist.
All the individual articles aim to fill this lacuna in individual themes, and the dissertation as a whole attempts to provide a more extensive perspective on this issue. Therefore, there are different sets of research results: 1. the definitions presented in the introduction (especially chapters 1.6. and 1.7.); 2. the individual results of each article; 3. the collection of significant aspects in the Conclusions, and 4. some additional perspectives on Luther's understanding of inevitable evil.

This dissertation does not contain all the aspects of inevitable evil. It was impossible to analyze in detail all forms of evil (diseases, wars, hell, etc.), which, according to Luther's extensive works, may be an inevitable part of Creation and human life. Neither is my purpose to render an exact picture of Luther's notion of evil as such, but to show that evil in its many forms, according to him, is an inevitable part of the Creation and especially of human life. The idea or essence of evil in its various forms is examined in the articles when necessary.

1.3. Methods

Various methods have been used in this dissertation. The reason for this is that some articles have a more systematic approach (especially the fifth article) and others have a more exegetical approach (especially the third article). Many articles are also combinations of both. This kind of combination of both systematic and exegetical approaches is predicted in the first article, which is a hypothesis for this survey. In addition, many articles represent developments in the history of theology and ideas (e.g. the third article).

Because the articles have various approaches, it is understandable that these studies have been done using various methods. The main method has been systematic argumentation and concept analysis. Using this method in practice means a systematic analysis and close reading of either Luther's use of explicit concepts referring to the theme of this dissertation (such as *inevitabilis*) or argumentation on a theme related to inevitable evil (such as whether Luther thought that an individual could choose evil).


I have used other methods in addition to the systematic concept and argumentation analysis. I have also studied, for example, the various contexts from which Luther's ideas originated, as well as how Luther was situated in the history of doctrine (see especially the third and fourth articles), the history of ideas (especially the second article), or the early modern era (especially the second article).

In addition, I have used a method which could be called reception criticism\(^{21}\) or the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Biblical texts.\(^{22}\) This method in practice is an analysis of how Luther interpreted various texts and which sources or ideas he used in his interpretation. The method applies especially to articles two and three, but also partly to articles four and five, which examined the fall of angels and the first humans. Furthermore, I will give an overall picture of Luther's exegesis in the third article.

In some cases, it was necessary to examine source critical questions regarding Luther's works. Good pre-conditions for source critical analysis existed especially for studies examining Luther's lectures on Galatians and Genesis (see articles 2 and 3). Namely, various lecture notes and editions on these lectures have survived. The variety of sources has made it possible to examine and evaluate, among other things, the reliability of various versions.

1.4. Structure of the Dissertation

In the field of Luther studies an article dissertation is a new and rare phenomenon. Actually, to the best of my knowledge this might be the first article dissertation in Luther Studies worldwide. However, I believe that it will not be the last. The reason for this belief is that in recent years the importance of articles in highly ranked journals has increased in such fields as humanities and theology. In the so-called hard sciences, the quality of research has been evaluated for decades already according to both the quality of the journals publishing research articles, and the indexes of reference.\(^{23}\) This method of measuring the quality of research is now also be-

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\(^{21}\) See e.g. Clines 2009, p. 552 for the definition of reception criticism.

\(^{22}\) For more on *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Biblical texts, see Froelich 2009, 30; Huttunen, 2010, pp. 15–19; Luz 1994, pp. 23–28.

\(^{23}\) For example, references on theological and humanistic studies can be searched on the online program Publish or Perish. However, the current abundant and compelling need for publications in the field of humanities has been severely criticized because it results in a lack of interest, for example, in teaching. For more about this issue, see Hanson & Heath, *Who Killed Homer? The Demise of Classical Education and the Recovery of Greek Wisdom* (2001).
coming more prevalent in theology. For example, the Faculty of Theology at the University of Helsinki, where I have done my studies, has paid serious attention these developments in recent years.

Several pros and cons can be mentioned in regard to the article dissertation. The pros include: 1. the continuous critical feedback from anonymous peer reviewers helps to improve argumentation; 2. important parts of the dissertation are presented to the academic community in journals before defending the dissertation; 3. the work is divided into easily manageable portions. The cons include: 1. it is difficult to plan the form and structure of the dissertation when trying to combine 4–6 independent studies together; 2. getting an article accepted by a highly ranked journal often requires a long-lasting process demanding several changes to the article without any guarantee of publication.

Because this is an article dissertation, achieving coherence is much more demanding than in a monograph dissertation. It is actually even impossible to attain the same coherence as in a monograph dissertation, because each article is an independent study which I have worked on in recent years. Therefore, the reader of this dissertation should remember that this dissertation consists of two different groups of studies: 1. each individual article is an independent study formed according to the standards of the journal in which it is published; 2. the introduction and conclusions synthesize the common features of the articles with the aim of combining them into a cohesive whole which gives new research results on Luther’s idea of inevitable evil.

Although the article dissertation is at least to some decree inevitably a discontinuous whole, I have tried to build a logical order for the articles. The first article is a hypothesis or an opening chapter for the following articles. This short article was published in the 40th anniversary issue of *Sixteenth Century Journal*, which consisted of approximately 100 scholars presenting various predictions for the future regarding their own field of specialty. My article was titled “The common future of Luther and Biblical Studies.” The aim of this article was to demonstrate that in the near future scholars will pay more attention to detailed questions concerning Luther’s interpretation and reception of the Bible. These detailed studies may, according to my prediction, cause a revaluation of previous standard interpretations and wall-to-wall studies on Luther’s theology.

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24 For example, the limited number of characters in journals compels the condensation of the argumentation in the article.
The aim of articles two to five is to test this hypothesis and prediction. Articles two to four reveal that Luther emphasized inevitable evil in its various forms in his interpretations of certain verses of the Bible: Galatians 3:1 and Genesis chapter three. The fifth article examines Luther’s idea of inevitable evil in a broader context: Luther’s view on what the Bible as a whole argues about God’s involvement with evil. Articles two to five will, therefore, try to prove that Luther considered evil to be inevitable for human life and the Creation. Later in this Introduction I will examine how Luther explicitly referred to inevitable evil, and the Conclusions will present a final confirmation that Luther considered evil as inevitable. In this way my article dissertation aims to test the hypothesis and prediction presented in the first article. In other words, by proving that Luther considered evil as inevitable for human life and the Creation in his interpretation of individual Biblical verses and the Bible, my attempt is to offer a new approach and attribute to Luther’s theology of evil.

1.5. Main Sources

The main sources of this dissertation belong mostly to the category of Luther’s most important works and represent his mature theology, which he developed after or during the Reformation. I introduce these sources to some decree in each individual article. In this chapter, I will present them more thoroughly. I have also used many other sources, both from Luther and the antecedent tradition. A more detailed description of some of these sources is presented in each article. However, there are many sources to which I have referred only occasionally and, therefore, they have not needed a more thorough presentation.

Luther’s various comments on Galatians are among the most important sources of this dissertation. He worked a great deal on St. Paul’s letter on several occasions during 1516–1535. Luther’s love towards this particular letter is seen in one of his Table talks, where, according to his wife, he called Paul’s letter to Galatians his “Ketha de Bora” (Katharina von Bora). In addition, in 1544, when his Latin works were collected for publication, Luther asked that they print only those works which included “doctrine,” such as his Large Commentary on Galatians. In fact, Luther’s Large

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25 It is difficult to define the end of the Reformation. One could draw the line, for example, at Confessio Augustana (1530) or at Formula of Concord (1577). On the other hand, the idea of the Reformation is still strongly present in various Protestant Churches, which critically try to evaluate doctrinal, ecumenical and modern ideas through the Biblical texts.
(and at the same time last) Commentary on Galatians (1531/1535) is one of his most important works. It has survived in lecture notes, various editions based on these lecture notes, and translations. Actually, his Large Commentary on Galatians was not just a commentary on Galatians. It also summarized many of Luther’s most important theological ideas and, in particular, clearly presented his doctrine of justification and God’s mercy. The importance of this work can be seen in its effect on later Lutheranism. The Formula of Concord (henceforth abbreviated as FC), for example, advises the reader to become acquainted with Luther’s “brilliant” (praecelar) commentary on Paul’s Epistle to Galatians. In other words, Luther’s Large Commentary on Galatians has been an authoritative work for official Lutheran formulations.

The second significant source of this dissertation is Luther’s lectures on Genesis in 1535–1545; this is actually the main source for both the third and fourth articles. Later Lutheranism considered this source his theological testament. It is a successful description of these lectures. The lectures, namely, are not only the most well-known late works of Luther, but also the most extensive of his works with 2,000 pages of edited Latin text. Only Luther’s first Psalm commentary compares with this work in length. As Luther’s lectures on Galatians, also his lectures on Genesis were noted and praised in FC as “brilliant” (praecelar). The fourth article examines more carefully the relationship between FC and Luther’s lectures on Genesis. For Luther, Genesis – similarly to Galatians – had a special status among the books of the Bible. In his early scholia to Genesis, for example, Luther argued that Genesis is “the foundation and the fountain of the whole Holy Scripture.”

Third main source of this dissertation, the De servo arbitrio (henceforth abbreviated as the DSA), is also one of the books which falls into the category of Luther’s most important works. As Robert Kolb summarizes the meaning of this work: “De servo arbitrio focuses on a few topics – not just the human will – but reflects and reveals the organic nature of Luther’s entire theology. Thus, each topic in this work cannot be considered apart from the larger and long-term development of his theology.”

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26 For example, see Drescher 1911, pp. 2–7, 13–14; Thurén 2003, p. 7.
27 See also Mannermaa 2005; WA 40 I [Dr], 39 (14–28).
28 BK, p. 936 (n. 67).
29 For example, see Huovinen 1981, pp. 20–21.
30 WA 3–4; WA 42–44; WA 55 I–II.
31 BK, p. 889 (n. 44). See also pp. 865–866 (n. 61–62).
32 WA 9, p. 329 (2–5).
33 Kolb 2005, pp. 15–19.
This becomes evident, for example, from Luther’s analysis regarding the relationship between free will and Christ. In the DSA, he says that those who defend *liberum arbitrium* for receiving God’s mercy are actually denying Christ. They, namely, do not actually leave any room for Christ’s mercy and reject Him as the merciful Mediator and Saviour. Therefore, it is evident that bound choice and God’s sovereign mercy were at the heart of Luther’s theology.

However, the DSA not only represented Luther’s conception of free will or the organic nature of his entire theology (including inevitable evil). The dispute between Luther and Erasmus was first and foremost about what the Bible said about free will. Both Luther and Erasmus explicitly agreed to argue on the basis of Canonical Biblical texts to defend their standpoints. As Knut Alfsvåg has argued: “For both Erasmus and Luther, this is not only a debate about a theological question, it is a debate about exegetical, i.e., theological debate as such.” In other words, the dispute between Luther and Erasmus was not par excellence a matter of highly philosophically and theologically sophisticated discussion on human freedom. Instead, at the heart of the dispute was the struggle: Did the Canonical Biblical texts confirm the freedom to choose salvation? Because the exegetical aspect of this dispute has often been ignored by Luther scholars, it is reasonable to give it some attention here – especially, if one considers the over-all theme of this dissertation.

Erasmus defended his views in *De libero arbitrio* with about 200 scriptural passages which he divided into the following categories: 1. Old Testament passages defending free will; 2. New Testament passages defending free will; 3. Scriptural passages apparently refuting free will; 4. passages used by Luther to disprove free will. This division proved, according to Erasmus, that the Bible was self-contradictory, and he tried to overcome this contradiction with learned and moderate debate with Luther.

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34 WA 18, pp. 777 (33) – 778 (16). See also pp. 609 (15) – 610 (3), 614 (1-26), 615 (12-14), 631 (8-15).
35 WA 18, pp. 639 (13) – 640 (1). See also Holeczek 1984, p. 145; Kolb 2005, pp. 22–23; WA 18, pp. 607 (6-17), 615 (14-18), 647 (31) – 648 (2), 650 (23) – 651 (7), 756 (24) – 757 (20). Luther also differentiates between God and Scripture and argues that there is much in God that people do not know: WA 18, 606 (10-13). Although both Erasmus and Luther agreed to dispute with canonical texts, they also discussed with Sirach which reliability as a canonical text is debated, because it is omitted from Masoretic text. See more about this issue Alfsvåg 1996, pp. 83–85, 90–93.
37 For more on the lack of interest in DSA’s exegesis, see Alfsvåg 1996, pp. 2–4.
38 Alfsvåg 1996, p. 25.
Luther followed Erasmus' division in the sense that he also handled both those passages of the Bible which seem to defend free will and those passages which seem to deny it. Both Erasmus and Luther, also included an introduction to their treatises in which they discussed some important principles for an exegetical investigation. Erasmus doubted that true piety was always founded on definite conclusions, especially regarding the difficult question of free will. Luther argued against this sort of doubt, believing that true faith did not avoid definite statements. Although Luther admitted that there were difficult questions in the Bible, there was nothing unclear concerning major issues such as the enslaved will. Luther was not only confident of his view, but also attacked Erasmus with all his rhetorical power to defend his ideas.\textsuperscript{39}

Although both Luther and Erasmus agreed to use the Bible as the only source of their dispute, Erasmus was dependent on Jerome's presentation of the exegesis of Origen. Luther, instead, considered these to be the worst ecclesiastical authors and criticized Erasmus for relying too much on secondary sources such as antecedent commentaries.\textsuperscript{40} For Luther the simple and clear meaning of the Biblical texts was the truth and, therefore, one should concentrate more on a philologically accurate exegesis than depend on secondary authors.\textsuperscript{41} Luther's independence from any secondary author regarding Biblical interpretation led him to declare the radical ideas in the DSA.

It is, therefore, evident that Luther did not want to submit to any other authority than the Bible itself. As the fifth article of this dissertation will suggest, Luther's theological and Biblical integrity and radical interpretations in the DSA become evident even in such difficult matters as God's involvement in evil. Luther's emphasis that the clear message of the Bible was truer than any secondary authority explains why Luther was ready to independently and even quite radically present his views on the relationship between God and evil.

As the fifth article of this dissertation will prove, Luther's radical ideas on God and evil in the DSA have been a difficult issue for later Lutheranism. In spite of its radical nature and difficulty for later Lutheranism, the DSA is presented in FC in a positive manner – as are Luther's lectures on Galatians and Genesis. FC refers to the DSA in the chapter focusing on free will, and argues that Luther in the DSA explained “excellently

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., pp. 28–33. See also pp. 43–48.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid. pp. 142–145.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid. p. 87.
and thoroughly” (*egregie et solide*) the lack of human freedom in the process of conversion to God.  

In sum, all three sources at the same time focus on Biblical argumentation and represent Luther’s theology as a whole. In addition, these sources have had a significant influence on later Lutheranism, including FC. Because these sources are so significant among Luther’s works, their importance affirms that Luther’s conception of inevitable evil was not some peculiar side issue, but an essential part of his theology. Because all of these sources are among Luther’s most important and cited works, a justifiable question is whether it is at all possible to find new perspectives on Luther in these works. It is undoubtedly a challenge, but I have the positive conviction that this dissertation will offer some fresh perspectives on Luther’s theology. The next chapter begins our journey toward Luther’s understanding of the inevitability of evil. The long tradition of studying some theological or philosophical theme starts with a terminological definition, and this dissertation is no exception to this tradition.

1.6. Fatalism, Determinism or Inevitability?

Luther often either implied or explicitly argued that human beings and all of Creation are totally dependent on God’s decisions and activity. Some Luther-scholars have suggested that this dependence concerns only (spiritual) matters which are above human abilities, especially matters regarding salvation. It is true that Luther, for example, in his Large Commentary on Galatians (1531/1535) argued that an individual has freedom of will in those things which are subordinated to him or her in the first chapter of Genesis. Such freedom concerns, according to Luther, actions such as building a house, tending an office or steering a ship. However, freedom in this context does not mean human independence from God. Rather, it means that the power of sin has not destroyed all the human abilities which God granted to humans in the Creation. The Fall destroyed mainly the spiritual abilities of human beings, but not all of their natural abilities. Therefore, Luther’s aim was not to emphasize human independence from God, but that humans still have God-given natural abilities after the Fall, although these natural abilities have also weakened.

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42 BK, p. 889 (n. 44)  
43 For example, see Watson, pp. 176–177.  
45 WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 293 (18) – 294 (22).
In fact, Luther’s emphasis on God’s sovereignty concerns many other issues besides mere salvation. Namely, Luther suggests in the DSA that all things occur necessarily and inevitably. As this dissertation will suggest, one interesting and staggering feature in Luther’s theology is that evil simply takes over a human being without her or his own consent. It is, of course, justified to ask how this necessity or inevitability of evil is related to every day human experience, where an individual needs to choose between various choices (e.g. what to eat or what to wear). Luther was aware of this tension between the inevitability of all things and human everyday experience of various choices. Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle has given an excellent explanation of this tension in Luther’s works. Her thesis could be summarized as follows, based on Luther’s Assertio and De servo arbitrio: from a human perspective things appear fortuitous and arbitrary, but from the divine viewpoint all things occur necessarily. In other words, Luther did not want to deny that human beings have freedom to choose at least regarding so-called ordinary things (whether to go to work or what to eat). However, this “freedom” was only an ostensible freedom, because, according to Luther, also ordinary things occurred because of necessity. Therefore, what I will argue in this dissertation is that evil things also occur inevitably. I do not, however, intend to say that this is synonymous with denying ostensible human freedom.

It is difficult to find a proper word or term to describe Luther’s idea of evil, which is controlled and orchestrated by powers beyond human capacity. It is evident that this form of conception comes close, for example, to the fatality of evil things. Luther’s alleged fatalism, however, is disputed. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy gives the following definition of fatalism: “Though the word ‘fatalism’ is commonly used to refer to an attitude of resignation in the face of some future event or events which are thought to be inevitable, philosophers usually use the word to".

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46 WA 18, pp. 615 (31-33), 616(13) – 617 (22), 636 (23-30), 670 (25-26), 692 (1-16), 693 (28-36), 699 (15-17), 711 (27-30), 736 (27-33), 772 (36) – 773(7).
47 O’Rourke Boyle 1982, pp. 86–88: “It is the same binary perspectival system that operates in Luther’s argument. In the initial occurrence of his necessitarian dogma in the Assertio, he explains that ‘from a human perspective [nobis ad inferna spectantibus] things appear arbitrary and fortuitous, but from the divine viewpoint [sed ad superna spectantibus] all things occur necessarily.’ In De servo arbitrio he reiterates that it follows irrefutably from the eternal and immutable nature of God’s foreknowledge and will that ‘everything we do, everything that occurs, even if it seems to us [nobis videntur] to happen mutably and contingently, nevertheless happens in fact necessarily and immutably, if you behold the will of God [si Dei voluntatem spectes].’”
refer to the view that we are powerless to do anything other than what we actually do."  

Luther cannot be called a (straightforward) fatalist in the sense that the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy gives to its “common” use. Luther resisted that form of resignation in the face of inevitable future events in which God’s predestination and foreknowledge were interpreted to excuse sinful behavior, passivity or the neglect of one’s duties. In other words, believing in God’s foreknowledge and predestination should not lead to the kind of resignation in which an individual despises good works. Such fatalistic resignation also led, according to Luther, to the despising of “the incarnation of the Son of God, His suffering and resurrection,” “the Bible”, “sacraments”. As an example of this fatalistic resignation Luther mentions the Muslim (or more precisely Turkish) way to dive fearlessly with the sword in war, and the Epicureans, whose attitude to life Paul explained as follows: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1. Cor. 15:32; NIV). According to Luther, in this form of fatalism people do not take into consideration their own behavior, and above all God’s revealed will, which is grounded on the Bible and is evident in the salvation given by Christ’s incarnation and suffering. In other words, Luther’s aim was to say that one should not seek the certainty of salvation in God’s hidden will, but instead in His revealed will, which commands us to do good works and believe in Christ.  

Luther, therefore, rejected the fatalism which caused resignation and annihilated the importance of good works, the Bible, and sacraments. On the other hand, it is important to remember that Luther did not reject all fatalistic tendencies. He came close to a philosophical definition of the term in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: “philosophers usually use the word to refer to the view that we are powerless to do anything other than what we actually do.” In fact, in the DSA he even praised the ancient idea of fate (fatum) mentioned by Virgil. According to Luther, pagan philosophers (like the common people) knew that things often turn out differently in human life than an individual may have planned. Things occurred according to God’s predestination and foreknowledge, not because of human decision.  

SEP: Fatalism.  
WA 18, pp. 617 (23) – 618 (18). About fate in the DSA, see also pp. 718 (15-20), 745 (20) – 746 (14). See also O’Rourke Boyle, p. 88.
In spite of Luther's fatalistic tendencies, it would be problematic to call Luther a fatalist in the full or at least in the “common” meaning of the word, because he imposes conditions on fatalism: it cannot annihilate the importance of good works, the Bible, the salvation brought by Christ, or sacraments. Although Luther came close to a philosophical definition of fatalism, as the articles of this dissertation show, he focused on the theological framework. Because of these conditions, fatalism is not the best term for describing Luther's idea of evil taking over a human being without her or his own consent. We must have a better word.

One obvious candidate is determinism. In Luther-research, however, Luther's alleged determinism – just like fatalism – is disputed.\(^{52}\) The problem in describing Luther's conception of evil as determined evil is that Luther avoided calling God as the origin of evil or giving the impression that God would have actively caused or determined the fall of Satan and the first humans. This is examined in the fifth article of this dissertation. As Luther suggested in one of his Table talks from the 1540s, he explicitly denied that God would have actively caused or determined evil. He also explicitly denied that God had positively and efficaciously determined or wanted evil or sin. Instead of positive or efficacious determining, God had permitted, for example, the Pharaoh of Exodus and Judas Iscariot to sin. God, however, had positively and efficaciously determined and wanted some events – such as David’s kingship, or Christ’s suffering.\(^{53}\)

Therefore, it is too radical to call Luther a thoroughgoing determinist,\(^{54}\) although his theology includes deterministic tendencies (see also the fourth and fifth articles). In addition, determinism – just like fatalism – is such a philosophically loaded term, that using it to describe Luther’s idea of evil would have required a much more philosophically-oriented approach. The focus of this dissertation is on Luther’s view on evil in his Biblical interpretation, instead of Luther’s relationship to philosophy.


\(^{54}\) Cf. to Urban 1971, pp. 113–139
Because both fatalism and determinism are insufficient for describing Luther’s idea of the evil that takes over a human being without her or his own consent, one has to find a proper term for describing this idea. There are three main criteria for this kind of term: 1. the term should not be too philosophically loaded; 2. it should describe in the best possible way Luther’s idea of evil that takes over a human being without her or his own consent; 3. Luther should have used this term explicitly in his works for describing this sort of evil. I came to the conclusion that the best way to describe this form of evil in Luther’s works is the Latin word *inevitabilis* or *inaevitabilis* which literally means something which is inevitable, unavoidable or even necessary. This term fulfills well three main criteria for a proper term.

There is one additional advantage in using *inevitabilis*: it is similar to the word *necessitas*, which Luther often used in the DSA for describing the inevitability or necessity of evil. Although Luther used the term *necessitas* more than *inevitabilis* for describing inevitability or necessity, the latter term is better. There are indications that Luther became critical regarding *necessitas* in his later years and tried to find a better vocabulary for describing God’s sovereign rule over His creation. In addition, the disadvantage of using *necessitas* is that it is – just like determinism and fatalism – a more philosophically loaded term than *inevitabilis*. However, because Luther used both terms for describing evil which takes over a human being without her or his own consent, in the introduction I will analyze more carefully Luther’s explicit use of both *inevitabilis* and *necessitas*. In the articles, the inevitability of evil is mainly present implicitly.

1.7. Definition of Inevitable Evil in Luther’s Works

1.7.1. *Inevitabilis* and its German equivalents

As already mentioned, this dissertation examines Luther’s conception of inevitable evil both explicitly and implicitly. The main stress, however, is on the implicit presence of inevitable evil in Luther’s works, because Luther does not often explicitly refer to evil as inevitable. Articles two to five focus on inevitable evil mostly from an implicit point of view. Instead, this chapter is devoted to presenting Luther’s explicit use of inevitable evil. For a better understanding of Luther’s implicit conception of inevitable evil, it is best to start from the systematic-conceptual definition of inevitable evil.

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in Luther’s works. Because Luther spoke and wrote in Latin and German, I have naturally focused on the Latin word *inevitabilis* and its German equivalent in those contexts in which Luther refers to evil. I will first focus on *inevitabilis* and then move on to its equivalents. I will proceed in chronological order, taking into account all important contexts.

The first important reference to *inevitabilis* is found in Luther’s marginal notes on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* (1510). Luther argues in these notes that before baptism the soul is inevitably polluted by corrupted flesh because of original sin. However, after baptism, the soul is no longer inevitably polluted by corrupted flesh. Instead, “it detains the cause for the pollution of soul with original sin, but avoidably and from the consent of soul.”

When Luther wrote these notes on Lombard’s *Sentences*, he was just beginning his career and was closely connected to the antecedent scholastic tradition. Therefore, Luther did not stress the lack of human powers in regard to evil, but admitted that after baptism a human being has the power to not consent to sin.

In 1517 in his *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology* Luther distanced himself from scholastic theology, which gave too much room for human decisions. Luther also distanced himself from scholastics such as John Duns Scotus and Gabriel Biel, who admitted some autonomy or freedom for the individual (regardless of his evilness) to want either good or evil. In his disputations, however, Luther did not use the Latin term *inevitabilis* for describing the lack of human powers regarding evil, but for opposing the Manichean idea according to which the human will is “by nature evil” or that there is an evil nature as such. According to Luther, there is “naturally and inevitably both evil and nature corrupted by evil”.

In other words, Luther resists here the dualistic Manichean understanding which did not interpret evil as a quality attached to nature, but instead considered evil nature as an elementary substance.

In *Operationes in Psalmos* (1519–1521), Luther speaks about “eternal and inevitable” tribulation, which differs from common anxiety. Luther speaks about this kind of unusual and severe tribulation when he comments on Psalm verses 13:1–2 (“How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?”; NIV). According to Luther, these verses speak about severe and immortal tribulation which is “eternal and

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56 WA 9, p. 76 l. 9-17. See also, p. 76 (19-29).
inevitable” according to all Aristotelian reasons: “material, final, efficient, and formal.” Luther does not define exactly what he means by this Aristotelian differentiation or by the inevitability of this tribulation. This form of inevitable and eternal tribulation probably meant here that it was something an individual could not resist when it occurred. However, what is evident is that as an explanation for severe and immortal tribulation, Luther differentiated between two parts of the soul: 1. the temporal and mortal; 2. the immortal. The former dies in this life, while the latter lives immortally the future life. The temporal and mortal part of the soul does not suffer from this inevitable tribulation as much as the immortal part of soul, which is tortured inconsolably. Luther also argues that this form of inevitable, immortal, severe, and spiritual tribulation feels like an eternal death or hell (*infamum*). The reason for its infernality is that in this kind of tribulation God’s help seems to take forever and one has to struggle with desperation. It is not surprising, therefore, that Luther calls this form of tribulation as the most severe.58

The inevitability of this kind of tribulation means that an individual cannot avoid it. Such tribulation, however, concerns only some individuals. Luther argues that those who have not “tasted” this tribulation do not know about it.59 In other words, this eternal, most severe and inevitable tribulation has to be experienced in order to understand its nature. The fifth article of this dissertation discusses in more detail the inevitability of tribulation in the DSA.

In his lectures on Isaiah (1532), Luther speaks about the inevitable guilt that humans deserve because of their sins. Luther argues that verse 53:5 (“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed;” NIV) can be applied to Christ’s salvific work, because he carried the inevitable guilt and punishment which belonged to sinners.60 Luther also used some German equivalences for *inevitabilis* or *necessitas: unvermeidlich* and especially *unwiderruflich*. He spoke, on the one hand, about God’s *unwiderruflich* punishment and anger over sin, and on the other hand, about God’s *unwiderruflich* forgiveness of sins because of His beloved Son.61

58 WA 5, pp. 385 (17) – 386 (3). See also WA 31 I, p. 382 (12-18).
59 Ibid.
60 WA, 25, p. 329 (14-21).
61 WA 2, p. 686 (32-35); WA 10 I:1, pp. 534 (18) – 535 (3); WA 22, pp. 376 (34-39), 389 (18-23), 419 (38) – 420 (8); WA 41, p. 173 (19-24); WA 45, pp. 271 (10-20), 678 (5-7).
1.7.2. **Necessitas**

The Latin word *necessitas* has a variety of meanings including necessity, need, and poverty.\(^62\) Luther also used *necessitas* according to its variety of meanings such as necessity and need.\(^63\) Luther maintained, for example, that humans should trust in God (or Christ), who can help in all anxieties (*necessitatibus*).\(^64\) However, a more important use of *necessitas* regarding the scope of this study can be found in instances where Luther used it for describing necessity or compulsion. Luther, for example, argued in 1520, in his *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per Bullam Leonis X. novissimam damnatorum*: “Quia nulli est in manu sua quippiam cogitare mali aut boni, sed omnia (*ut Viglephi articulus Constantiae damnatus recte docet*) de necessitate absoluta eveniunt.” He especially favored English pre-reformator John Wycliffe’s idea of necessity and also emphasized it in the DSA, where he argued that all things occur by absolute necessity. *Assertio* and the DSA demonstrate that necessity or absolute necessity of all things was a proper term for Luther between 1520–1525, when he emphasized God’s sovereignty over Creation.\(^65\)

Many scholars have noted Luther’s criticism in the DSA of the medieval distinction between *necessitas consequentiae* and *necessitas consequentis*. Some medieval theologians tried to solve the problem of divine determination and human freedom with this distinction. *Necessitas consequentis* meant necessity resting solely upon what God wills. *Necessitas consequentiae*, on the other hand, defined the necessity of an act as resting on God’s plan but contingent upon certain freely made human decisions.


\(^{63}\) See e.g. WA 1, pp. 149 (20-22), 367 (21-24), 600 (20-30); WA 19, p. 509 (11-13); WA 20, pp. 268 (13), 739 (1-4); WA 25, pp. 75 (3-4), 212 (23-24); WA 27, pp. 29 (9-12), 393 (34) – 394 (25); WA 28, pp. 55 (19-20), 238 (8-10), 703 (4-8); WA 30 I, p. 17 (22-23); WA 36, p. 327 (24-28); WA 40 III [Hs], pp. 20 (15) – 21 (3); WA 41, pp. 736 (34) – 737 (4); WA 43, p. 176 (16-24); WA 45, pp. 28 (1) – 30 (1); WA 49, p. 139 (7-8); WA 56, p. 77 (17-19); WA 3, p. 63 (20-23); WA 14, pp. 616 (39) – 617 (23); 17 I, pp. 401 (5-7), 405 (6-8); WA 28, p. 617 (5-10); WA 30 I, pp. 3 (28-29), 4 (16-21); WA 31 I, p. 84 (5-6): WA 34 I, p. 134 (8-10); WA 37, p. 546 (8-12); WA 41, p. 627 (14-16). See also WA 15, p. 681 (23-25); WA 20, p. 540 (19-22); WA 34 II, p. 72 (10-12); WA 37, p. 563 (32-33); WA 44, p. 789 (36-40); WA 45, p. 186 (7-10); WA 46, pp. 492 (11-12), 762 (31-33); WA 59, p. 270 (29-36).

\(^{64}\) WA 7, p. 146 (4-11); WA 18, pp. 670 (25-26), 692 (1-16), 693 (28-36), 699 (15-17); McSorley, p. 331. See also WA 18, pp. 772 (36) – 773 (7), 786 (3-7). See also WA 7, p. 612 (26-31). However, Luther did not blindly follow Wycliffe’s conceptions, but criticized Wycliffe regarding the use of logic; see WA 26, p. 443 (25-34).
Luther did not favour this distinction because it raised more questions than it solved, and solved the critical problems in a deceptive way.\(^{66}\)

Luther was not, therefore, particularly interested in scholastic or philosophic definitions of *necessitas*.\(^{67}\) For Luther the concept of *necessitas* was first and foremost a theological concept, which among other things, protected an individual from presumption. Luther argued that necessity “arouses the fear of God in us that we would not become presumptuous and nonchalant.”\(^{68}\)

Luther also used *necessitas* when he wrote about the necessity of evil, which refers especially to sin. In many of his works he referred to the necessity to sin. However, by necessity to sin he did not mean that sinning occurred by compulsion and against the will of a human being. Instead, sin had been an inherent quality and inclination for evil ever since the Fall of the first humans.\(^{69}\) In other words, it is necessary for humans to sin, because they are corrupted by sin. In the DSA, for example, Luther argues that all people in the fallen world “serve sin” and become more evil, if God allows them to proceed in their evilness without giving them His Spirit.\(^{70}\)

In the DSA Luther also argued that only God can save a human being. In other words, without the salvation and renewal of God, an individual necessarily sins and does evil. However, the godless individual does not sin because of coercion, but because of immutable necessity (*necessitas immutabilitatis*). By this immutable necessity Luther meant that evil individuals cannot change their evil nature and evil will, but sin simply because they want to sin and cannot act otherwise without God’s saving power.\(^{71}\) Luther also argued in several of his other works that people do either good or evil because of mere necessity.\(^{72}\) In short, without God’s intervention, humans necessarily and willingly sin: God decides who continues to sin and to whom is granted God’s saving power. We will come across this idea of necessity to sin without God’s saving power throughout the articles of this dissertation. As the articles will show, this idea, however, has various aspects.


\(^{67}\) See also WA 1, p. 388 (14-16).

\(^{68}\) WA 18, pp. 746 (36) – 747 (7).

\(^{69}\) WA 1, pp. 404 (19) – 405 (3); WA 18, p. 784 (1-66); WA 29, p. 140 (11-15); WA 39 I, p. 178 (29-35).

\(^{70}\) WA 18, p. 705 (14-36).

\(^{71}\) WA 18, p. 634 (14-36). See also pp. 636 (23-25), 747 (21-27).

\(^{72}\) WA 4, p. 213 (10-14); WA 18, pp. 717 (12-18), 719 (36) – 720 (10); WA 56, pp. 179 (26) – 183 84). See also WA 18, pp. 609 (24) – 610 (5). Cf. pp. 710 (31) – 711 (19).
1.8. Abstracts of Articles

**The common future of Luther and Biblical Studies**


This article is part of the 40th anniversary jubilee issue in which scholars from various fields of early modern studies presented future research trends. The article predicts that Luther and Biblical studies have a solid foundation for a future rapprochement. The most important argument of the article is that in the future studies regarding Luther’s interpretation of the biblical texts will focus on more detailed and narrower themes. One of these themes is how Luther interpreted invidual passages in the Bible. These more detailed and narrower studies will open new perspectives, also for more extensive themes in Luther’s theology. This article serves as the hypothesis of this dissertation, which aims clearly show that research on Luther’s interpretation of individual passages will open new perspectives on Luther’s conception of inevitable evil.

**Martin Luther’s Conception of fascinare (Gal. 3:1)**


The evil eye belief is a universal phenomenon and present in the Bible, both in the Old and the New Testament. Christian scholars have usually discussed this phenomenon in their comments on Galatians 3:1. Luther, for example, concentrated on the manifold notion of the bewitchment of the evil eye (Gr. βασκαίνω, Lat. fascinare, Ger. bezaubern; Gal. 3:1) in his Scholia (1516), Commentary (1519), and Large Commentary (1531/1535) on Galatians. Luther understood fascinare as a higher-level concept that included witchcraft (e.g. harming through the evil glance) and both psychic and spiritual disturbance. Luther’s interpretation of this concept is fascinating mix of folklore, Biblical scholarship and the perspectives of ancient authors. In spite of the many similarities between the different Commentaries, there were also differences—especially between early Commentaries (1516, 1519) and the Large Commentary (1531/1535). I will prove in detail how Luther contextualized the evil eye belief to his various comments on Galatians 3:1 and who and what were his models in doing this.
Key words: Luther, the evil eye belief, *fascinare*, bewitchment, Galatians.

**Martin Luther’s Conception of the Serpent Possessed by the Devil (Gen. 3) and the Antecedent Tradition**


The conception of the serpent possessed by the Devil may sound far-fetched to the modern reader who finds no explicit reference to this conception in Gen 3. However, this conception played a vital role in early and medieval Christianity (= Armenian, Greek, Syrian, and Latin exegesis). Martin Luther was also interested in this notion and concurred with this tradition. This article aims to unravel the tradition behind this odd-sounding conception, with special emphasis on Luther’s interpretation.

**Is it Possible to Choose Evil? Interpretation of the Fall in Early Lutheranism**

*Teologinen aikakauskirja 115* (2010), pp. 228–248

The Fall of mankind, depicted in chapter 3 of Genesis, is one of the best known Biblical stories in the Christian tradition. Early Lutherans emphasized that the Devil was the actual cause for the fall and that the first humans were his victims. This article analyzes this idea which differs substantially from Catholic tradition.

**God and Evil in Luther’s *De servo arbitrio***

*Harvard Theological Review*, the second revision of the article is under review.

Lutheranism was accused of making God the origin of evil in the sixteenth century. This accusation did not come out of the blue. Martin Luther, for example, implied in the DSA that God is involved thoroughly in evil. However, God’s thorough involvement in evil did not imply for Luther that God would also be the origin of evil. This article, therefore, examines
whether Luther really considered God to be the origin of evil. For an accurate picture of how Luther understood God's involvement in evil, the article also examines the following themes: an omnipotent God's influence on evil; God's ubiquity even in evil; a hidden God; predestination; and the problem of evil.
2. The common future of Luther and Biblical Studies

Providing a future perspective on early modern studies needs, of course, selection. My own special expertise is in theology, more precisely Luther studies and Biblical studies. It is therefore understandable that I would like to see these two fields more united in the future. I also see many possibilities in the cooperation between Luther and Biblical studies. In fact, there is already one interesting and recent example which promises this kind of future: Katja Juntunen’s dissertation (2008), “Der Prediger vom ‘weißen Berg’ Zur Rezeption der ‘besserer Gerechtigkeit’ aus Mt 5 in Martin Luther’s Predigtüberlieferung 1522–1546”. Juntunen, who is a New Testament exegete, dissects in her dissertation the reception of Matthew 5 in Martin Luther’s sermons. She especially focuses on Luther’s applications and interpretations of Jesus’ teaching of “better righteousness” and the law in Matthew 5. Juntunen’s work is in a way exceptional in that exegetes usually concentrate on the reception of the Old Testament in the New, or on the reception of Biblical texts in the early church.

However, concentrating on Luther’s Biblical interpretation is not “new” in the narrow sense of the word. Luther’s connection to Biblical texts has always fascinated scholars and for obvious reasons: Luther was a professor and doctor of the Bible and, in addition, a preacher. For example, at the time of the Lutheran orthodoxy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries scholars were fascinated by Luther’s ideas concerning how the Holy Spirit inspired Biblical texts. In the twentieth century, however, Luther’s relationship to the Old Testament, the Hebrew language and Judaism was especially topical in Luther studies (e.g. Heinrich Bornkamm: “Luther und das Alte Testament”, 1948; Siegfried Raeder: “Hebräische bei Luther, untersucht bis zum Ende der ersten Psalmenvorlesung”, 1961; “Benutzung des masoretischen Textes bei Luther in der Zeit zwischen der ersten und zweiten Psalmenvorlesung 1515–1518”, 1967). There are also many recent studies on Luther’s interpretation of Biblical texts (e.g. Mickey Mattox: “Defender of the most holy matriarchs. Martin Luther’s Interpretation of the women of Genesis in the Enarrationes in Genesin, 1535–1545”).

Juntunen’s work is exceptional because she first makes an exegetical analysis of the verses of Matthew 5, dissects Luther’s interpretation of these verses and draws conclusions about Luther’s reception of them. It is not only research about Luther’s Biblical interpretation, but also an exegetical analysis. In addition to exegetical questions, Juntunen pays attention to
the historical situation in Wittenberg, to Luther's personal experiences and
to the medieval tradition. However, the results of this work remind one
that Luther's interpretation and reception was not only based on Christian
tradition (e.g. Augustine), historical context and personal experiences, but
also on the actual (Latin and Greek) manuscripts of the Gospel of Matthew.

Even though Luther’s relationship to Biblical texts has always
fascinated scholars, I presume that in the near future (say the next 4-14
years) scholars will pay more attention to, for example, the following ques-
tions:

1. What kind of manuscripts and textual variants did Luther use?
2. What was Luther’s reception of individual Biblical passages and
   verses?
3. What kind of (exegetic) methods or approaches did Luther use for
   interpreting individual passages and verses?

In other words, I presume that scholars will concentrate on the more de-
tailed questions concerning Luther's interpretation and reception of the
Bible. The simple reason for this is that there are already many wall-to-wall
surveys about Luther’s exegesis (cf. “Luther und das Alte Testament”) while
at the same time many individual passages in Luther's works are still
quite unknown. It is presumable that new perspectives on Luther’s exegesis
can be found from these relatively unknown works and therefore they will,
probably, entice scholars. However, this does not necessarily lead to an ab-
rupt reduction of wall-to-wall surveys. Instead, more detailed surveys on
Luther's exegesis may help in the revaluation of standard interpretations
and previous wall-to-wall surveys. In other words, detailed surveys will
probably provide new insights on Luther’s hermeneutic. It is foreseeable
that Luther’s methodological and hermeneutical “tool box” will prove
more manifold and detailed than one has imagined. He also had many
other nuances in his interpretation in addition to the well-known prin-
ciples: “was Christum treibet”, “Scriptura sacra sui ipsius interpres” etc.

Another reason why I believe that these questions will be rele-
vant in the near future relates to methodological changes in academic ex-
egesis. Today the historical-critical method has lost its absolute primacy
and various post-modern and reader-orientated methods (e.g. feminist exe-
egesis, reader–response criticism, liberation theology and exegesis) have
had an increasingly important role in academic exegesis. One can also in-
clude the early modern and modern reception of Biblical texts and the hi-
sory of effects in the rising methodological trends in exegesis. Today Bibli-
cal scholars are more aware of the limitations of historical-critical methods than 40 or 50 years ago. Even though this group of various (historical and critical) methods (e.g. text criticism) still plays an important role, there is a new kind of openness towards other methodological approaches.

I suppose that the reception of Biblical texts and the history of effects will be at the forefront of exegetic methods in the near future. In addition to this, continuous fascination about Luther’s Biblical interpretation and especially current exegetic interest in Luther (cf. Juntunen) are the reasons why I believe that there is a promising future for cooperation between Luther studies and Biblical studies.
3. Martin Luther’s Conception of *fascinare* (Gal. 3:1)

Introduction: the Evil Eye Belief

The belief, and often the fear, that the evil eye can cause various sorts of harm prevails in many cultures. The evil eye belief varies in different cultures, but has at least one thing in common in all cultures where it can be discerned: eye power can cause sudden harm to another’s property or person.\(^73\) The person who casts the evil eye as well as its object vary from culture to culture. For example, in Ancient Israel and Italy it has at times been cast by high ecclesiastical officials. However, in Greece it is often thought to be cast by witches who can bewitch people. In the Mediterranean, for example, the object of the evil eye can be a person of any age, but women and the weak are especially susceptible. On the other hand, the wealthy or handsome are often considered susceptible because they are objects of envy. In fact, envy is one common key factor of the evil eye belief in various cultures.\(^74\) The evil eye belief is situated mainly in North Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Indonesia, and Central America.\(^75\) In addition to being a universal notion, it boasts a long history. The relationship of envy to the evil eye was, for instance, important both in Ancient and modern Greece and in the south of Italy.\(^76\)

Christian readers might associate the evil eye belief with ancient mythologies and folklore and believe it to be absent from the Bible and Christian tradition in general. It is, perhaps, surprising to some that the conception of the evil eye (Hebrew: *ayin ha ra*) is present in both the Old and New Testament. *Ayin ha ra* has a twofold meaning in the Old Testament: jealousy and hate, in which jealousy encompasses both envy and

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\(^74\) Ibid., pp. v–vii.


greed (see Prov. 23:6, 28:22; 1 Sam. 18:8–12). The idea of the evil eye is present especially in the Septuagint (LXX). In the New Testament, βασκαίνω in Galatians 3:1 is the clearest reference to the evil eye belief. Some scholars argue that Paul uses βασκαίνω in Galatians 3:1, because he thought that the Galatians had fallen into the hands of some magician and were under a demonic spells. Instead, J. Louis Martyn argues that the (false) teachers of Galatia were “virtual magicians” who led Galatians from the realm of faith to the realm of superstition. Others agree that βασκαίνω alludes to the magical arts, but think that it was used figuratively so that it refers only, for example, to confusion of the mind. Some scholars consider βασκαίνω to be a (mere) part of Paul’s reproving rhetoric, irony or sarcasm. In any case, it is evident that βασκαίνω has a twofold meaning in Galatians 3:1: on the one hand, it has a connotation to evil eye belief; on the other hand, Paul uses it metaphorically for describing the spiritual confusion of Galatians.

79 See also H. Schlier, Der Brief and die Galater (Übersetzt und erklärt; Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 15th edn, 1989), pp. 119–121.
82 Mika Hietanen, Paul’s Argumentation in Galatians. A Pragma-dialectical Analysis of Gal. 3.1–5.12 (Diss. Åbo Akademi, Faculty of Theology; Helsinki, 2005); Longenecker, Galatians (n. 80), p. 100. See also Eastman “The Evil Eye and the Curse of the Law: Galatians 3.1 Revisited” (n. 78), p. 86.
The Latin word for *ayin ha ra* and βασκαίνος is usually *fascinum* (or *fascinus, fascinatio*), which means literally bewitching, witchcraft, or hurting with an evil glance. John H. Elliott discusses in his article *Paul, Galatians, and the Evil Eye* (1990) the etymology between βασκαίνο and *fascinare*: “In Latin, the Greek terms baskaino, baskanon, baskanos, and baskania are taken directly (f for b, c for k etc.) and latinized as fascino, fascinus, fascinator, and fascinatio.” In light of Elliott’s etymological explanation, it is understandable that the verb *fascinare* corresponds well to the verb βασκαίνο. Therefore, it is not surprising that βασκαίνο in Galatians 3:1 is translated in the Vulgate as fascinare.

In the history of Christianity, many significant theologians (e.g. John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Martin Luther) have commented on the βασκαίνο/fascinare of Galatians 3:1. One prominent feature of patristic, medieval and early modern commentators is that they use a variety of sources in their interpretation of the βασκαίνο/fascinare of Galatians 3:1. Jerome, for example, referred to Vergil and The Wisdom of Salomon, among other sources, and Thomas Aquinas to Averroes. Patristic, medieval and early modern commentators used these diverse references especially to explain various forms of evil eye beliefs. Because βασκαίνο/fascinare has a strong connotation of the evil eye

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belief, Galatians 3:1 made it possible for Christian commentators to explain the common phenomena of the evil eye belief extensively.

Compared to patristic and medieval commentators, Luther used the greatest variety of sources and gave the most extensive explanations of the βασκαίνω/fascinare of Galatians 3:1. The great variety of sources and elements in Luther's comments on Galatians 3:1 is a typical feature of early modern Christianity, which was a mixture of ancient, medieval and pre-modern conceptions. Studying Luther's comments on Galatians 3:1 will reveal the nature of the various ancient, medieval, and pre-modern elements and sources he used in this particular interpretation. In addition, studying Luther's comments on Galatians 3:1 will reveal what Luther thought about the evil eye.

Luther's informal way of interpreting Paul's use of βασκαίνω/fascinare may seem odd to the modern reader who is accustomed to strictly academic Biblical commentaries. The reason for Luther's lengthy and often preaching approach to interpreting the Bible lies in a different understanding what Biblical interpretation ought to be. Luther did not engage in exegesis in its modern (historical-critical) form as a sub-discipline of theology. For Luther, exegesis and theology were intertwined. When Luther explained the Bible, he had at the same time theological, confessional, biblical, and contemporary purposes. Luther, for example, argued in his Commentary on Galatians (1519) that the work “is not so much a commentary as a testimony of my faith in Christ.” This also applies well to other comments of his on Galatians. Luther's various comments on Galatians 3:1 should, therefore, be considered in the context of the sixteenth century and as a part of the medieval (or early modern) enarrare-tradition. This term meant literally to speak, tell, set forth in detail, or to speak in public in detail. As Kenneth Hagen argues: “In the case of an ‘enarratio’ of Galatians, for Luther, it is to publish the doctrine, the soteriology, and the Christology of Paul.”

Luther's close connection to the

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88 Ibid. See also Ambrosiastri qvi dicitvr commentarivs in Epistvlas Pavlinas. Pars tertia: In Epistvlas ad Galatas, Ad Efesios, Ad Filippenses, Ad Colosenses, Ad Thesalonicenses, Ad Timothevm, Ad Titvm, Ad Fилomenem. (recensvit H. I. Vogels; Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, 81:3; Vindobonae: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky; 1969), pp. 29–30; Biblia mit Postilla von Hugo de Sancto Caro: 7, Basel, 1502, fol. z6va-b

89 K. Hagen, Luther's Approach to Scripture as seen in his "Commentaries" on Galatians 1519–1538 (Tübingen: Mohr; 1993), pp. 2–5, 49–51.
enarrare-tradition should be kept in mind when analyzing his interpretation of *fascinare*.

The aim of this study is, therefore, to dissect Luther’s conception of *fascinare* (Gal. 3:1) which has gained some attention in earlier research but has not been thoroughly investigated.90 This study will reveal how Luther’s conception of *fascinare* changed over the course of his various comments on Galatians as well as how he changed sources for the construction of his conception. I demonstrate that Luther used (freely) not only Christian, but also various non-Christian sources for constructing his conception of *fascinare*. The universal conception of the evil eye belief is also present in Luther’s interpretation as this article will demonstrate. In order to reveal the exact definition of *fascinare* in Luther’s works, I will use systematic concept and argumentation analysis. In other words, I will systematically analyze the way in which Luther understood this notion as well as what kind of meaning he gave to this notion. Luther’s comments on *fascinare* (Gal. 3:1) are preserved in following works: Glosses/Scholia (1516) and two Commentaries on Galatians (1519 and 1531/1535).91 These works are the main sources for this article and they are dissected individually.

**Fascinare** in Glosses and Scholia (1516)

Although this study focuses on Luther’s interpretation of *fascinare* in his various comments on Galatians, it is also important to notice that Luther used *fascinare*, its derivatives, and its German equivalent *bezaubern* in his other works as well. He spoke, for example, about how the autodidactic...

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90 See especially J. Haustein’s study *Martin Luthers Stellung zum Zauber- und Hexenwesen* (Münchener Kirchenhistorische Studien, 2; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990), pp. 33, 84–90 which includes an overview of how Luther understood witchcraft, sorcery, and bewitchment in his Commentaries on Galatians. In spite of Haustein’s insightful remarks, he concentrates on the relationship between witchcraft and bewitchment and does not present an exact differentiation between various forms of *fascinare*. He, for example, ignores spiritual bewitchment which Luther described in detail in his Large Commentary on Galatians (1531/1535). The following scholars have commented or touched on Luther’s conception of *fascinare* without thoroughly investigating it: G. B. Christopher, “The Virginity of Faith: Comus as a Reformation Conceit,” *ELH* 43:4 (1976), pp. 479–499 (490); Elliott, “Paul, Galatians, and the Evil Eye” (n. 85), pp. 267–268; S. E. Schreiner, “Appearances and Reality in Luther, Montaigne, and Shakespeare,” *JR* 83:4 (2003), pp. 345–380 (345–357).

91 *D. Martin Luthers Werke*. Kritische Gesamttausgabe. Weimar 1883– (hereafter abbreviated as WA) 57, pp. 20 (3) – 28 (9), pp. 75 (7) – 85 (28); WA 2, pp. 505 (3) – 531 (18); WA 40 I [Hs], pp. 308 (8) – 547 (11); WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 308 (31) – 547 (27). The revision of the Commentary (1519) from the year 1523 does not offer any new material or insights. For more on Luther’s “commentaries,” see Hagen, *Luther’s Approach to Scripture as seen in his “Commentaries” on Galatians 1519–1538* (n. 89), pp. 1–7.
fanatics were bewitched by their own tenets and “separate bread, wine and water from the Word” against the teachings of the Bible.\(^{92}\) In a number of sources, \textit{fascinare} and its equivalences indicated to Luther first and foremost doctrinal illusion or heresy.\(^{93}\)

Luther’s conceptions of various forms of \textit{fascinare} become evident especially in his commentaries on Galatians. First of all, Luther discusses the meaning of the verb “to bewitch” (\textit{fascinare}) in the Glosses and Scholia to Galatians 3:1. In his Glosses, Luther explains that the verb “bewitched” meant “deceived or deluded through evil, that is through conviction.” He associated this notion with delusion by means of a conjuring trick (\textit{praestigium}): “those who are deluded through a conjuring trick, do not know what they see and in hindsight think that they see something they do not actually see.” Luther used this idea of visual delusion as a metaphor for spiritual illusion: just as visual illusion brings on hallucinations, those who are deceived in their spirit think that falsehood is truth and that injustice is justice. As an example, he mentions Isaiah 8:19, in which the charms of muttering mediums and spiritists are presented in contrast to God’s messages.\(^{94}\) From the brief remarks of the Glosses, it is possible to conclude that Luther used visual delusion (or hallucination) as a metaphor for spiritual illusion, by which he meant illusions concerning righteousness in particular. This metaphor of visual delusion probably originated from the so-called \textit{Glossa ordinaria} tradition of which Luther knew.\(^{95}\)

\(^{92}\) See e.g., WA 30 I, pp. 54 (1) – 55 (39). See also Moss & Cappannari, “\textit{Mal’occhio, Ayin hara, Oculus Fascinus, Judenblick}: The Evil Eye Hovers Above” (n. 77), p. 8.

\(^{93}\) See e.g. WA 28, pp. 371 (1-2), 737 (29) – 738 (20); WA 32, pp. 162 (1-21), 446 (24-40); WA 45, pp. 495 (33) – 496 (14); WA 49, pp. 697 (41) – 698 (26); WA 53, p. 545 (3-16). See also WA 7, pp. 340 (24) – 341 (13); WA 20, p. 456 (17); WA 38, pp. 146 (36) – 147 (7); WA 50, p. 379 (13-24), where Luther speaks about the bewitchment of Papist teaching. See also WA 1, pp. 24 (37) – 25 (9); WA 15, pp. 189 (24) – 190 (4); WA 17 II, p. 512 (13-42); WA 29, p. 557 (32) – 558 (7); WA 34 II, pp. 364 (20) – 365 (9); WA 38, p. 557 (6-8); WA 39 I, pp. 390 (1-19), 422 (1-15); WA 41, p. 737 (17-22); WA 43, pp. 64 (4-34), 629 (10-11); WA 44, p. 221 (11-22), where Luther explained how the Devil or demons could bewitch, for example, the cattle, the weather or the human senses through e.g. witchcraft. For Luther’s use of the conception of bewitchment as, for example, a dictum, see: WA 18, p. 144 (3-10); WA 26, p. 356 (18-24); WA 36, p. 535 (2-4); WA 44, p. 135 (6-9); WA 47, p. 690 (16-19, 35-38); WA 53, pp. 376 (5-7), 457 (23-30).

\(^{94}\) WA 57, p. 20 (6-7, 15-19).

In the Scholia (1516), Luther did not mention visual delusion, but used the term “corporal” bewitchment. “Corporal” bewitchment did not refer to visual delusion as it is in the Glosses (1516), but to harming children by casting the evil eye: “bewitchment is such that it is believed to hurt infants the most.” What Luther calls corporal bewitchment very much resembles witchcraft. Luther used this type of corporal bewitchment as a metaphor for the bewitchment practiced by a pernicious teacher who corrupts the intellect of “simple souls” through godless wisdom.\(^{96}\) Luther explicitly referred to various sources for constructing his conception:

1. Vergil’s Bucolics: “Vergil says in Bucolics: ‘I do not know what eye is bewitching my tender lambs’;”
2. Jerome’s commentary on Galatians: “Jerome says, ‘God sees which one is true. Because it can happen that demons serve this sin’;”
3. Luke (11:34): “the spiritually pestilential doctor sets his insane eye – that is, his wisdom, which is the same as his ‘worthless eye’ as Christ calls in Luke 11 – on simple souls until he hurts them and perverts their comprehension;”
4. Ps. 1:1: “Furthermore, they are called in the Scripture ‘cunning,’ ‘illusionists,’ and ‘lying deceivers’ as is in Psalm 1: ‘On the pestilence seat’ – in Hebrew ‘of deceptors’ – ‘do not sit;”
5. Prov. 3:32: “Abomination of the Lord is every illusionist and his simple speeches;”
6. Augustine’s Regula: “Just as Saint Augustine notes in his Regula: ‘fixing eye’ this is a bewitcher or illusionist, because to be a bewitcher is to fix an eye and thus hurt by fixing it;”
7. Ps. 5:7: “In the same manner, it is said in Psalm 5: ‘God detest the blood and deceit of a man,’ because such is the soul deceived, as long as falsehood is offered to those thirsting after truth.”\(^{97}\)

Haustein studied the way in which Luther related to other medieval and early modern commentaries in his Scholia (1516). He concluded that, compared to antecedent commentaries, the only fresh and innovative thing in Luther’s Scholia was his reference to the pestilent spiritual doctor as an allegory of \textit{fascinator}. Otherwise, Luther explicitly adapted three aspects of Jerome’s commentary on bewitchment in Galatians 3:1: the citation from Vergil, the idea that demons are effective in (the sin of) be-

\(^{96}\) WA 57, pp. 75–76.

\(^{97}\) Ibid.
witchment, and the statement that children are especially subject to the affliction (cf. Hebr. 5:12–19). Haustein also remarked that Luther adopted the notion of the “evil eye” and the connection between bewitchment and the envious gaze (fascinare-invidere) from Erasmus who adapted the connection from the Glossa ordinaria tradition.98

Luther’s use of Jerome’s commentary in particular may at first appear to suggest that he had some kind of special appreciation towards Jerome as Biblical Scholar. However, the use of Jerome’s Commentary by early modern scholars such as Luther did not indicate any respect for this Church Father that was out of the ordinary. Jerome was simply widely appreciated at that time. Luther became familiar with Jerome’s Commentary, because Erasmus placed it at the beginning of his Church Father edition.99 In other words, Luther used Jerome’s commentary for a simple reason: it was the best-known commentary of that time.

It can be concluded that Scholia offer (naturally) more information on bewitchment than Glosses. In addition, there is small, but interesting difference between these sources. In the Glosses, Luther presented two forms of bewitchment: visual and spiritual. The former worked as a metaphor for the latter. Luther also presented two forms of bewitchment in the Scholia: corporal bewitchment, which he identified with witchcraft and physical injury caused by the evil eye, and spiritual bewitchment, which meant godless wisdom. In both sources, Luther referred to spiritual bewitchment. However, the other form of bewitchment varied: in Glosses it was the visual and in the Scholia the corporal. This difference makes evident that Luther considered there to be three different forms of bewitchment in 1516: corporal (or physical), visual, and spiritual. He also mentions these three various forms of bewitchment in his Large Commentary on Galatians in greater detail.

Luther’s Commentary of 1519 is closely connected to Scholia in regard to *fascinare* in Galatians 3:1. Luther adapted some of the references to various authors (=Vergil, Jerome, Luke 11:34, Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 3:32) that he made in the Scholia to his Commentary (1519). There is one especially important similarity between Scholia (1516) and Commentary (1519). Just like in Scholia, here, Luther considers children, the most common victims of (corporal) bewitchment, analogous to the (doctrinal) mindlessness of the Galatians: they were like poor infants who had been bewitched. In other words, as in Scholia Luther refers to two types of bewitchment, the physically harmful (which is the same as corporal bewitchment in the Scholia) and the spiritually harmful: “–And this is a very fine comparison; for just as a bewitcher (*fascinator*) fastens baleful eyes on the infant until he does it harm, so a pestilential doctor fastens his evil eye, that is, his impious wisdom, on simple souls until he corrupts the true intelligence in them.”

Even though Luther did not explicitly refer to the corporal and the spiritual bewitcher as he did in the Scholia (1516), it is clear that the concepts “bewitcher” and “pestilential doctor” are identical to the notions of the corporal and the spiritual bewitcher.

Luther also added many new elements to his conception of *fascinare*. Firstly, there is a reference to folklore according to which childhood sickness is called *die elbe* or *das hertzgespan*. The symptoms of this bewitchment (or ailment) include wasting (*tabescere*), withering (*macrescere*), being in torment (*misere torqueri*), and sometimes incessant screaming and crying. In *Decem Praecepta Wittenbergensi predicata populo per P. Martinum Luther Augustinianum* (1518), Luther calls “herczgespanst” the extension of the chest. It can be, therefore, concluded that *die elbe* or *das hertzgespan* means some sort of atrophy which may include heart and/or chest pains. In any case, this type of ailment and bewitchment is obviously very physical in nature. In the Commentary (1519), this type of physical bewitchment is believed to derive from the envy of “jealous and spiteful old hags.” Here, Luther connects bewitchment (*fascinare*) to envy (*invidere*), but in more implicit form than in Scholia (1516) where he explained that *fascinare* means envy in Greek. In addition to these early modern beliefs, Luther refers to the belief according to which mothers try to prevent this physical and envious bewitchment and sickness with

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100 WA 2, pp. 505 (3) – 506 (15).
charms and superstitions which are unknown to him.\textsuperscript{102} In other words, Luther is clearly contextualizing Galatians 3:1 to the folklore of his own cultural environment and era – just like Jerome, whose example probably inspired him.

Secondly, Luther questioned whether such witchcraft as corporeal bewitchment really existed and was harmful as Paul seemed to believe. When Luther handled this question, he did not directly quote Jerome, but made his own conclusions and deviated from Jerome’s interpretation. Luther correctly argued in his Commentary on Galatians (1519) that Jerome was not certain about its existence. Jerome, namely, assumed that Paul did not know whether this type of bewitchment existed, but rather took the notion from the common people and used it as a colloquialism.\textsuperscript{103} Even though Luther did not directly attack Jerome’s neutral explanation of the existence of bewitchment and his interpretation of Paul, he believed that demons (or witches with the aid of demons) could truly harm infants through (corporeal) bewitchment. This harming did not happen without God’s permission: if God so allowed, demons could harm children with their evil deeds in order to punish the incredulous and test believers.\textsuperscript{104} According to Haustein, Luther connects exegetic tradition with the concrete ideas of harmful witchcraft of his era. However, the conception that only God can permit truly harmful witchcraft was Luther’s original contribution and is not found in the antecedent tradition.\textsuperscript{105}

Luther did not define more precisely what and who he considered the objects of this type of punishment or testing. Did he mean the punishment and testing of children who were attacked through witchcraft and the bewitchment of the evil eye, the children’s parents, or some other people who saw these phenomena or heard about them? In any case, he justified his belief in the existence of bewitchment by referring to evident and common experiences from his own time – specifically, instances of bodily harm caused to humans and animals. One might think he was referring only to the early modern period, but this is not the case: he argued

\textsuperscript{102} WA 1, p. 402 (14-28); WA 2, pp. 505 (3) – 506 (15). See also Haustein, \textit{Martin Luthers Stellung zum Zauber- und Hexenwesen} (n. 90), p. 85; WA 16, p. 551 (18-41); WA 57, p. 75 (8-18). An interesting detail is that Luther was referring to male bewitchers (\textit{fascinator} / \textit{doctor}). Cf. to Haustein, \textit{Martin Luthers Stellung zum Zauber- und Hexenwesen} (n. 90), p. 179, in which it is suggested that Luther considered witches mainly to be women. See also S. Brauner, “Martin Luther on Witchcraft: A True Reformer?,” in J. R. Brink et al. (eds.), \textit{The Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe} (Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, 12; Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1989), p. 38.

\textsuperscript{103} PL 26, p. 347; WA 2, pp. 505 (23) – 506 (15).

\textsuperscript{104} WA 2, pp. 505 (3) – 506 (15).

\textsuperscript{105} Haustein, \textit{Martin Luthers Stellung zum Zauber- und Hexenwesen} (n. 90), p. 86.
that even Paul did not ignore these things.\textsuperscript{106} In other words, Luther assumed that Paul knew that there was such bewitchment (of the evil eye), which was detrimental to physical well-being, and also assumed that Paul shared his feeling about the existence of bewitchment. Luther, therefore, differed in his Biblical interpretation and experience about bewitchment from Jerome, who was more skeptical towards the existence of this phenomenon and who thought that Paul was skeptical towards it. Thirdly, Luther added some new references to Biblical passage: Job 29:15, 38:32–33; Isaiah 13:21–22, 34:13; Matt.18:9.\textsuperscript{107}

In sum, Luther discussed two types of bewitchment in his Commentary (1519), as he did in the Scholia (1516). He apparently identified corporal (or physically harmful) bewitchment with witchcraft, and believed that it could genuinely harm children in particular. The second type of bewitchment could be called spiritual bewitchment because it caused the mindlessness or insanity in the Galatians through corrupt and harmful doctrinal teaching. Therefore, Luther divided bewitchment into two categories in both, Scholia and the Commentary: witchcraft and spiritual disturbance. The Commentary included additional remarks compared to Scholia: Luther pondered the existence of corporal bewitchment; and placed it in the context of the common beliefs of the early modern era (e.g. malicious witches harming infants because of envy).

\textit{Fascinare} in Large Commentary on Galatians (1531/1535)

Definition of \textit{fascinare}

The most extensive explanation of Galatians 3:1 is given in Luther's Large Commentary (1531/1535). The current critical edition is divided into two different parts: 1. lecture notes (1531) made by Luther's student Menius Rörer; 2. the edited version which was based on Rörer's lecture notes and accepted by Luther (1535).\textsuperscript{108} There are five different edited versions: A (year 1535), B (year 1535), C (year 1538), D (year 1543), and E (year 1546). Earlier editions (A, B: year 1535) and Rörer's lecture notes (1531), vary from the later editions (C: year 1538, D: year 1543; E: year 1546) regarding \textit{fascinare}. According to the editions of 1535 (A, B) and Rörer's lecture notes (1531), Luther argued, while explaining Galatians 3:1, that Paul considered

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{106} WA 2, pp. 505 (3) – 506 (15).
\item \textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{108} WA 40 I, pp. 1–14.
\end{itemize}
“witchcrafts” (veneficia) in Galatians 5:20 “the same as bewitchment” (veneficia, quae eadem sunt cum fascino). In the later editions, (C: 1538; D: 1543; E: 1546) the passage is – for some unknown reason – different. It argues that witchcraft in Galatians 5:20 is “an individual case of bewitchment” (veneficium, quod est species fascinis). Which passage actually presents Luther’s ideas: the earlier or the later?

According to my analysis, both passages fit the context. First of all, his earlier statement that “witchcrafts” are “the same as bewitchment” should be interpreted in the context to mean that Luther was identifying different forms of witchcraft with bewitchment. Luther namely argued that the Devil can cause heart defects and blindness in infants through (female) witches. As in the Commentary 1519, he suggested that this type of bewitchment, which he identified with witchcraft, really existed. He also introduced new and interesting elements since the Commentary 1519, claiming that it is not only witches (with the aid of demons) who practice this type of bewitchment. He implied that the Devil can work through other types of creatures as well. According to Luther, in verse 3:1, for example, Paul seems to say to the Galatians: “You have fallen in the same manner as small boys whom female witches (venefica), vampires (lamia) and blood sucking owls (strix) are accustomed gladly and easily to fix a spell on with their bewitchments, which is actually a trick of Satan.”

Later editions (C, D, E) also conform to the context. However, in order to find out what witchcraft as “an individual case of bewitchment” means, it is necessary to consider Luther’s whole interpretation of Gal. 3:1. In all editions (A, B, C, D, E), corporal bewitchment means the bewitch-
ment of the five natural senses of a human being, while the spiritual bewitchment corrupts the mind (*mens*), the anthropologic centre of spirituality, which he considered identical to the heart (*cor*), the conscience (*conscientia*), and the spirit (*spiritus*). He used the Latin word *mens* (=mind) probably because he was aware that the Greek form of Galatians 3:1 began with Paul’s address, Ω ἄνόητοι which means “You mindless.” In addition to corporal and spiritual bewitchment, there is a third type: witchcraft causing physical harm. The threefold conception of bewitchment is also implicitly present in Rörer’s lecture notes (1531). Therefore, it is quite understandable that Luther could have referred to witchcraft as an individual case of bewitchment.

Even though there is a small – but interesting – difference between the earlier versions (A, B, and Rörer’s lecture notes) and the later editions (C, D, E) of Luther’s comments on Galatians 3:1 (1531/1535), all refer to three different forms of bewitchment. The first is the bewitchment which Luther identified with different forms of (physically harmful) witchcraft. This type of bewitchment is identical to the corporal bewitchment presented in the Scholia (1516) and the Commentary (1519). The second type, which Luther calls corporal bewitchment in the Large Commentary (1531/1535), means the bewitchment of five human senses. This type of bewitchment is mentioned in the Large Commentary and bears a close resemblance to visual delusion in Glosses 1516. The third type, spiritual bewitchment, corrupted and disturbed the spirit. This form of bewitchment was present in all comments on Galatians (1516–1546). In sum, it is clear that Luther included in bewitchment (as is clearly expressed especially in editions C, D, E) psychic and spiritual disturbance and witchcraft.

As the careful reader probably noticed, Luther uses corporal bewitchment differently than he does in Scholia (1516) and Commentary of 1519. Rather than the physically harmful witchcraft of Scholia and Commentary of 1519, corporal bewitchment here affects the five senses. Luther’s differentiation between corporal and spiritual bewitchment resembles Wilfried Joest’s remark on Luther’s anthropology in *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (1967), according to which the soul is “the middle be-

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113 *Novum Testamentum Graece*, (n. 86), p. 496; WA 40 I [Hs], pp. 309 (1) – 322 (12); WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 41 (29) – 42 (10-25), 209 (17-19), 316 (22-29), 319 (32) – 320 (11), 322 (13-34), 323 (31) – 327 (36), 525 (11-13), 587 (26-28), 605 (22-28), 616 (25-28), 649 (15-32) – 651 (14-19); WA 40 II [Dr], pp. 24 (15-17, 23-27), 72 (36) – 73 (14), 178 (16) – 179 (23); WA 57, p. 20 (6-19). See also N. R. Leroux, *Martin Luther as Comforter. Writings on Death* (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, 133; Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 209–210; WA 38, p. 557 (6-8).

114 WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 308 (31) – 322 (21); WA 40 I [Hs], pp. 308 (8) – 322 (12).
tween the body and the spirit” (*anima medium inter corpus et spiritum*). Thus, the spirit signifies the relationship with God and the body signifies the presence in the world that is constrained by death. Just like in Joest’s study, Luther speaks about the spiritual and more “natural” abilities of soul (*potentiae animae*) in the Commentary (1531/1535). Therefore, it could be concluded that, for him, corporal bewitchment referred to the natural abilities of the soul, and spiritual bewitchment to the spiritual abilities of the soul. This distinction between spiritual and corporal bewitchment resembles Origen’s distinction between spiritual and bodily senses, which had a considerable influence on Medieval mysticism, and probably on Luther as well – in spite of the fact that Luther also criticized some other themes in Origen’s anthropology in his *De servo arbitrio* (1525).115 Luther included also other interesting aspects especially in corporal and spiritual bewitchment as next chapters betoken.

**Corporal *fascinum***

When Luther discussed corporal bewitchment, he wanted to show how the Devil produces hallucinations and other deceptions of senses (eg. paracusia). He described the Devil, for example, as an illusionist who could make people see reality in the wrong light. He defined how the Devil could practice “healing” by deluding the senses into discerning an imagined injury and the healing of it. This kind of “healing” was only a jest because the Devil could not heal real bodily injuries. According to Luther, this type of bewitchment affected the elderly in particular.116

Even though Luther’s example seems rather odd, his idea that the Devil could tamper with the senses in this way was not extraordinary. For example, his medieval predecessor, Thomas Aquinas argued in his comments on *fascinare* in Galatians 3:1 that demons can cause hallucinations.117 Peter Olivi (1248–1298), John Duns Scotus (c. 1265–1308), and William Ockham (c. 1285–1347) thought that madness naturally had a bodily origin, but Olivi and Scotus also noted the possibility that a demon could

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116 WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 314 (25) – 315 (18).

bring about a mental disorder by affecting the imagination.\textsuperscript{118} Even though it is difficult to say whether Luther took anything directly from this late medieval scholarly discussion about hallucination and demoniacal powers, he certainly adapted ideas from older sources. However, he no longer used Jerome’s or Erasmus’ Commentaries – probably because he had become increasingly independent from and critical of these scholars since 1519.\textsuperscript{119} Instead, he used ancient stories and legends when he was developing his theory about corporal bewitchment and hallucination. He referred to odd events in the biography of Julius Caesar, which is told in Suetonius’ \textit{De uita Caesarum}, a story about Macarios in \textit{Vitae patrum}, and Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}. Luther’s interpretation of these works shows how eager he was to use demonological explanations to account for various strange phenomena occurring in ancient history.\textsuperscript{120}

Luther described and interpreted one event in Caesar’s life as portrayed in \textit{De uita Caesarum} as follows:

\begin{quote}
So great are the astuteness and the power of Satan to deceive the senses. And no wonder, since a change of sense and of color can take place through glass. Therefore he can easily deceive an individual with his conjuring tricks, so that she imagines that she sees something that she really does not see, or hears a voice, thunder, a flute, or a bugle that she really does not hear. Thus, the soldiers of Julius Caesar thought that they heard someone playing a reed pipe or a bugle. Suetonius remembers to mention this event in his book \textit{The Life of Caesar}: Someone of unusual size and shape suddenly appeared to be sitting and playing a flute nearby. When not only shepherds but also many soldiers and a few buglers had come running from their stations to listen, the flute player snatched a bugle from someone, leaped into the river, blew a mighty blast, and made his way to the opposite bank. Thus, Satan has the uncommon ability to touch all the
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\textsuperscript{119} See e. g. WA 40 I, p. 2; Mau, “Die Kirchenväter in Luthers früher Exegese des Galaterbriefes” (n. 99); WA 2, pp. 484 (1) – 487 (34); WA 18, pp. 180 (21-27), 600 (1) – 787 (15), esp. pp. 733 (32) – 734 (3); WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 194 (14) – 198 (17), 259 (26-34), 308 (18-26).

\textsuperscript{120} WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 315 (19) – 316 (20).
senses in such a way that you swear you see, hear, or feel something which you nevertheless do not see, etc.\(^{121}\)

The original text of Suetonius mentions that this mysterious man appeared to Caesar when he was considering whether to attack the opposite bank or not. He therefore regarded the flautist’s appearance as a sign from the gods, pressed on to the opposite bank as the mysterious man had done and started a war against his opponents. Luther’s interpretation of this story illustrates his belief in the truth of these mystical past events. On the other hand, he gave the incidents his own interpretation, and considered the supernatural reappearance in a non-Christian context the work of the Devil, even though the stories did not refer to Satan or evil spirits. In other words, he considered the sign from the gods in *The Life of the Caesar* a Devil-sent hallucination and the voice of the bugle as paracusia.\(^{122}\)

Luther also explained his ideas about the mechanism that produces hallucinations, which were caused by corporal bewitchment, in detail with reference to an event described in *Vitae patrum*. According to Luther, the book told the story of two parents who were tricked by the Devil into seeing their daughter as a cow. They brought their daughter to the holy man, Macarius, and asked him to pray to restore her to her human form. When Macarius saw the daughter, he said, “I see a girl and not a cow.” According to Luther, the holy Macarius had spiritual eyes that were unaffected by the Devil. Later when he prayed for the parents of the girl to be liberated from the Devil-sent illusion, their eyes were opened and they saw their daughter in her actual form. This story thus showed that true spirituality could liberate human beings from corporal bewitchment.\(^{123}\) It illustrates well how corporal bewitchment could originate from spiritual

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\(^{121}\) This translation is mainly from LW (=Luther's Works, Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House) 26, p. 191. However, I have made some small modifications to this translation. Cf. to WA 40 I [Dr], p. 316 (9-20). See also WA 40 I [Dr], p. 317 (14-19), in which Luther apparently suggests that the Devil could implant different kinds of visions and colors in the senses.

\(^{122}\) C. Suetonius Tranquillus: *C. Suetoni Tranquilli Opera, I: De vita Caesarum libris VIII* (recensuit: Maximilianus Ihm; Lipsiae: B. G. Teubner, 1908), 1, cap. 31.ii–34.i. Cf. C. Suetonius Tranquillus, *De vita duodecim Caesarum liber I-XII*, Venetiis 1490, c. 1. Just like the modern edited version, the version from the fifteenth century does not mention anything about demons or Satan with regard to the story about “someone of unusual size and shape,” but considers this vision to be a sign from the gods (*deorum ostenta*). Cf. Haustein, *Martin Luthers Stellung zum Zauber- und Hexenwesen* (n. 90), p. 87.

\(^{123}\) WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 314 (25) – 316 (20). Cf. PL 21, c. 451, in which Rufinus tells the original story and suggests that demons had caused a magical fantasy in the inner vision of the parents. See also WA 45, pp. 263 (3-24) and 529 (5-15), where Luther tells the same story.
bewitchment, and analogically (at least in some cases) deliverance from corporal bewitchment and hallucination occurred through healing spirituality.

Spiritual *fascinum*

Thus far I have concentrated mainly on corporal bewitchment (without neglecting physically harmful bewitchment), which does not mean that Luther regarded it as the most prominent form of bewitchment. He rather considered spiritual bewitchment, characterized by the false opinions and images of Christ, as both the most dangerous and the most elegant of bewitchments. Luther also characterized these opinions and images as ungodly doctrines caused by the Devil, who could make some people so insane that they considered their unholy opinions and ideas to be the truth. It is important to note that spiritual bewitchment did not affect only comprehension and imagination. The false and ungodly opinions and images also promoted either depressive emotions (e.g. desperation) or spiritual pride, which was notably expressed by the leaders of the “sects” (e.g. Ulrich Zwingli and Thomas Münzer). Luther, for example, argued that these leaders did not believe in rational arguments, which were based on the Bible, because of their pride. Therefore, cognitive spiritual bewitchment could engender, according to Luther, harmful spiritual emotions such as depression and pride.¹²⁴

The elegance of spiritual bewitchment is illustrated in the Large Commentary on Galatians in a very interesting manner. Luther referred to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (11:14) which argued that the Devil could disguise himself as “an angel of light.” According to Luther’s interpretation, the verse referred to the Devil imitating Christ and threatening Christians with eternal death. The Devil presented Christ as a ruthless tyrant who tried to make depressed people even more anxious about their sins and the imperfections of their good works. In extreme cases, the false images of Christ and lack of consolation caused such anguish that the person was driven to commit suicide. Even though Luther himself did not fall into this extreme despair, he experienced severe tribulations. He feared that he was not totally freed from the Devil and his oppressive images of Christ, even though he was an experienced theologian.¹²⁵ It thus

¹²⁴ WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 298 (19) – 299 (28), 315 (21) – 323 (30).
¹²⁵ WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 96 (10-11), 130 (36) – 131 (20), 298 (19) – 299 (28), 315 (21) – 322 (21).
See also WA 42, pp. 111 (26) – 112 (22). See also Schreiner, “Appearances and Reality in Luther, Montaigne, and Shakespeare” (n. 90), p. 348; WA 20, pp. 745 (11) – 746 (12).
appears that this demonizing approach to spiritual bewitchment was not only a theory to Luther: it was also based on personal experience.

For a thorough understanding of the nature of spiritual bewitchment, it is also worthwhile to dissect what Luther thought about liberation from spiritual bewitchment. Just as liberation from corporal bewitchment does not occur through one’s own powers, liberation from spiritual bewitchment also needs some kind of outer force. Luther states according to lecture notes (1531) that God does not allow the whole congregation or all people to be (spiritually) bewitched. Therefore, he exhorted Christians, when bewitchment occurs, to be “brother to a brother and go together listen to a sermon or stay at home with a brother.” In other words, if one person (or brother) is bewitched, another should liberate him (or her). In fact, God has decreed that they should console each other so that they can stand together against the Devil. For some unknown reason this interesting passage about the liberation from bewitchment through the sermon and brotherly consolation is omitted from the edited versions.126

However, this does not mean that this passage about liberation would not be Luther’s own conception. Midelfort, namely, addresses the same kind of imprisonment in his book *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-century Germany* (1999): just as the physically possessed (=the Devil could take hold of a body without harming the soul) could not liberate themselves, the sinful could not free themselves from spiritual possession, according to Luther. Only the Holy Spirit could effect the liberation from physical or spiritual possession.127

It is justified to ask, whether spiritual possession and spiritual bewitchment are identical.128 In any case, it is evident that according to Luther one could not escape from spiritual bewitchment or (either physical or spiritual) possession without any divine interference. Therefore, it is plausible that the description and instruction of liberation from bewitchment is Luther’s original thought and not a lapsus made by Rörer, though it is omitted from edited versions.

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126 WA 40 I [Hs], p. 319 (1-10); WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 319 (32) – 320 (11). See also WA 40 I [Dr], p. 319 (25-31).
128 See WA 29, pp. 77 (11) – 78 (4); WA 51 pp. 55 (38) – 57 (9) which seem to indicate that bewitchment and possession are quite similar cases.
In sum, it is evident that liberation from spiritual bewitchment takes place through pastoral care and, analogically, just as liberation from bewitchment is not possible through the powers of an individual, bewitchment does not have human origin. In other words, Luther sees both bewitchment and liberation from it as extra nos, that is, outside one’s own efforts. For example, according to the Large Commentary 1531/1535, the Devil sent bewitches (fascinatores), or pseudo apostles, whose doctrine caused Galatians to sense/know (sentire) Christ in a different way. In other words, the origin of the spiritual bewitchment was the Devil (and his bewitches), whom Luther calls the true Bewitcher (Fascinator).

Conclusions

I have gathered here some key results and commented on Luther’s relationship to Pauline theology regarding the βασκαίνω/fascinare of Galatians 3:1. First of all, it can be concluded that Luther used visual illusion as a metaphor for spiritual bewitchment in the Glosses, which meant spiritual illusion especially concerning the doctrine of righteousness. Instead, the Scholia (1516), and the Commentary (1519) included the notions of corporeal and spiritual bewitchment. The former damaged infants in particular through an evil glance cast by a bewitcher or by demons, while the latter caused (spiritual) mindlessness and insanity through corruptive and harmful doctrinal teaching. In the Scholia and the Commentary (1519), Luther constructed his interpretation of corporeal bewitchment especially through Jerome’s and Erasmus’ Commentaries.

Luther also distinguished between spiritual and corporeal bewitchment in the Large Commentary. Here, as earlier, he described spiritual bewitchment in terms of the corruption of spirituality, which affects the mind in particular, but his notion of corporeal bewitchment had changed: he defined it as a bewitchment of the five (natural) senses identifying it with, for example, hallucinations. This type of bewitchment was present in the Glosses (1516), but absent from the Scholia (1516) and Commentary (1519). In the Commentary (1531/1535), bewitchment of the five (natural) senses was (ontologically) connected with spiritual bewitchment, which could affect the former. Analogically, deliverance from spiritual bewitchment could affect deliverance from corporeal bewitchment. Luther not only saw corporeal bewitchment in a different light, he also used different authors and sources to construct and put forward his ideas. He no
longer referred to Jerome's or Erasmus' Commentaries on Galatians, but turned to ancient stories and legends such as The Life of Caesar and the story about holy Macarios – probably because he had become increasingly independent from and critical of these scholars since 1519. A special feature of the discussion on corporal and spiritual bewitchment in Large Commentary on Galatians was that Luther emphasized that the Devil was the actual cause for bewitchment. This was not expressed in the previous commentaries. In addition to giving a new definition of corporal bewitchment in his Large Commentary (1531/1535), Luther also introduced a third type of bewitchment, which he associated with different forms of (physically harmful) witchcraft. Even though he did not give it a name, it was very clear that in content it was similar to what he referred to in the Scholia (1516) and the Commentary (1519) as corporal bewitchment.

This study proved that Luther used both Christian and non-Christian sources for constructing his complex conception of fascinare. He used these sources particularly in order to describe the various forms of the evil eye belief. In addition to these sources, he may have used other sources as well. The three aspects of fascinare (spiritual, visual and physical) can be found also in medieval commentaries (Aquinas' commentary, Glossa ordinaria tradition, and Nicholas of Lyra's Postilla literalis super totam Bibliam), although Luther did not explicitly refer to them.130 Still, it is evident that Luther knew Glossa ordinaria and Lyra’s Postilla literalis super totam Bibliam, because they belonged to his standard exegetical toolbox.131 Although I have compared these sources with Luther’s comments, it is difficult (or even impossible) to say whether Luther adapted anything from these sources. This study, namely, proved that Luther adapted important elements from other sources (e.g. Jerome’s commentary).

In spite of Luther’s extensive use of secondary sources, his interpretation conforms with Paul’s use of βασκαίνω/fascinare in two respects: in both cases, this term has a connection to the evil eye belief and is used metaphorically to describe the spiritual confusion of the Galatians. However, it is important to remember that Luther emphasized the evil eye be-

130 Biblia Latin cum Glossa Ordinaria, Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strasburg 1480/81, IV (n. 87), p. 359; Lyra, “Postilla litteralis” (n. 87), fol. 81; Aquinas, Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura: I (n. 15), pp. 591–592. See also Biblia mit Postilla von Hugo de Sancto Caro: 7 (n. 88), fol. 26va-b.

lief in his commentaries while it is difficult to define exactly how much Paul thought of the evil eye belief when he used βασκαίνω/fascinare in his Epistle to Galatians. The only certainty in Paul’s use of this term is that it has carried some connotation of the evil eye belief which was common in the Mediterranean and, therefore, also probably in Galatia due to its location in today’s Turkey (or Asia Minor).

When comparing Paul’s use and Luther’s interpretations of βασκαίνω/fascinare, one prominent difference is Luther’s highly demonological approach to the concept. Paul did not include much “demonology” in his Epistle to Galatians (including the verse 3:1), but it is evident that Luther had a demonological explanation of βασκαίνω/fascinare (Gal. 3:1). One significant reason for Luther’s demonological emphasis lies in his ambition to use Pauline theology to defend the faith of Christ against the Devil. This use of Pauline theology also explains why he called the Devil as true bewitcher: Fascinator.

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132 Hagen, Luther’s Approach to Scripture as seen in his "Commentaries" on Galatians 1519–1538 (n. 89), pp. 2–4.
4. Martin Luther’s Conception of the Serpent Possessed by the Devil (Gen. 3) and the Antecedent Tradition

I. INTRODUCTION

The third chapter of Genesis is one of the best known passages of the Bible in the Christian tradition. Throughout the centuries, the story has intrigued theologians, historians, artists and many others. The story is usually regarded as the fall of humankind, and at least one has viewed it in close connection to the salvation which Christ accomplished through his death and resurrection. As early as the first century, St. Paul expresses this connection in his epistle to the Romans (5,14-15): “Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!” (New International Version, henceforth abbreviated as NIV). St. Paul saw that Adam caused the mortality of humankind through his trespass. St. Paul also used this trespass as an analogy to the mercy which Christ has delivered.

In the same way, the current Catechism of the Catholic Church states that “Although to some extent the People of God in the Old Testament had tried to understand the pathos of the human condition in the light of the history of the fall narrated in Genesis, they could not grasp this story’s ultimate meaning, which is revealed only in the light of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ”\(^{133}\). In other words, Genesis chapter three has played an important role in Christianity, because its true meaning has been understood in the light of Christ’s salvific work. Without the “Fall of Man”, as modern Bible translations usually head the chapter, Christ’s suffering and death would have been unnecessary.

Modern academic exegesis does not interpret the story from the Christological point of view. Rather, modern biblical scholars emphasize the etiological nature of the story. According to these scholars, the story (or Yahwist, who is often considered its author) attempted to explain the following: “Why there was no shame about nakedness at the beginning” (2,25; 133 Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica, New York, NY, Doubleday, An Image Book, 1997, p. 109 (388).
3,7,10); “Why the serpent seems isolated and is often a loner” (3,14); “Why the serpent must crawl on its belly” (3,24); “Why there is enmity among serpents and humans” (3,24); “Why women have such pain in giving birth” (3,15), and so on. Despite this etiological emphasis, some of these scholars have explicitly denied the etiology of evil in the story. Gerhard von Rad, for example, argued in his commentary on Genesis that “There is no aetiology of the origin of evil’ (Westermann, ad hoc). Throughout the entire story this antagonist of man remains in a scarcely definable incognito, which is not cleared up. Many modern biblical scholars are also reluctant to connect the Devil, Satan or any other kind of evil force to the story. In this sense they differ from, for example, the Church fathers and

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other scholars before the era of enlightenment and modern biblical scholarship\textsuperscript{137}. It is evident that different eras and different contexts have engendered various interpretations of this story. These various interpretations stem not only from manifold hermeneutical approaches to the text (e.g., historical-critical methods and Christian allegories), but the story itself is loaded with so many implications that it necessarily arouses ambiguous connotations\textsuperscript{138}.

The ambiguous nature of the text raises the question of valid ways to read the texts without distorting its inner structure. This question is also relevant when analyzing Martin Luther’s interpretation. In his various comments on Genesis, Luther suggests that the fall was caused by the serpent, who was possessed by the Devil. This idea may sound quite odd for a modern (Christian) reader, who is perhaps used to focusing on the sin of the first humans. Of course, people are usually keen to identify the serpent as the Devil, but the idea that the serpent is possessed may sound quite far-fetched, even to Christian readers. Namely, the story mentions nothing explicit about the Devil or Satan. The conception of the serpent possessed by the Devil, however, is not some oddity which appears only in Luther’s works. Rather, this conception has not only a long exegetical history but a certain hermeneutical logic behind it as this article will demonstrate.

My aim, therefore, is to betoken the aspects Luther and his predecessors included in this odd but fascinating idea of the serpent possessed by the Devil. In addition, I aim to betoken how Luther’s predecessors influenced him as well as what he contributed to this conception\textsuperscript{139}. In other words, this article aims to shed light on one very limited exegetical question.

\textsuperscript{137} For more about the effect of the enlightenment on Biblical scholarship, see, e.g., H. W. Frei, \textit{The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics}, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1974, pp. 1–16.

\textsuperscript{138} A good example of the ambiguous nature of this story is CHARLESWORTH, \textit{The Good & Evil Serpent} (n. 134), pp. 282–285, where Charlesworth presents 57 questions regarding the second creation story (Gen 2,4–3,24).

\textsuperscript{139} I have reserved the study of this concept from the 16\textsuperscript{th} century onwards to another article which dissects, for example, modern approaches to the serpent.
through a detailed study. Through this detailed study, I attempt to elucidate both the history of the conception of the serpent possessed by the Devil and Luther's approach to the serpent of Gen 3 as well as his hermeneutical process in his studying and teaching of this particular biblical text. Because the focus of this study is exegetical, I have also analyzed how some of Luther's comments in his lectures (1535–1545) are plausible according to the inner structure of Gen 3. The sources of this study consist of various commentaries and comments on Gen 3. Luther's lectures on Genesis (1535–1545) are the most eminent of these sources in regards to the scope of this study.

Before dissecting more carefully the conception of the possession of the serpent by the Devil, it is important to mention that Luther and some of his predecessors argued explicitly that the Devil used the serpent as its instrument or, for example, spoke through it. However, some of Luther's predecessors did not explicitly mention that the serpent of Gen 3 was possessed by the Devil. Still, their conception that the Devil used the serpent for its evil ends denotes implicitly that the serpent was possessed by the Devil – if possession is understood as some external force commandeering its object. The conception of possession in this article is therefore a notional umbrella which includes various conceptions regarding the use of the serpent (Gen 3) by the Devil.

II. THE CONCEPTION OF THE SERPENT POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL (GEN. 3) IN CANONICAL, PSEUDEPIGRAPHIC, PATRISTIC AND MEDIEVAL SOURCES

The Life of Adam and Eve, an Old Testament pseudepigraph140, is probably the first source which considers the serpent possessed. It is impossible, however, to argue with any certainty that this is the first source which indicates the serpent of Gen 3 possessed by the Devil, because the date of this source remains uncertain. The most natural span for its original composition would range from 100 B.C. to 200 A.D, more probably toward the end

140 Cf. to H. A. Kelly, Satan a Biography; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 183: “The Life of Adam and Eve is included by modern editors among the ‘Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament’, but in most versions the work is not a pseudepigraph at all, because no well-known worthy purports to tell the story. The story simply gets told by an unannounced narrator, as is true of Genesis and the other historical books of the Old Testament.”
of the first Christian century\textsuperscript{141}. However, some scholars have suggested that it was written as late as the fourth century A.D\textsuperscript{142}. In addition to its uncertain date, there are at least six different versions of the \textit{Life of Adam and Eve}: the Greek \textit{Life of Adam and Eve}, the Latin \textit{Vita Adae et Evae}, the Armenian \textit{Penitence of Adam}, the Georgian \textit{Adam book}, the Old Church Slavonic \textit{Adam book}, and Coptic fragments. These versions and the manuscripts of each version differ significantly, indicating that the text has often been handled very freely. In addition, the debate in the literature about the relationship between these versions and the form of the original version continues\textsuperscript{143}.


\textsuperscript{143} G. A. ANDERSON, \textit{The Penitence Narrative in the Life of Adam and Eve}, in ANDERSON – STONE – TROMP (eds.), \textit{Literature on Adam and Eve. Collected Essays} (n. 142), pp. 3, 12: “In summary, we can say that the Latin has reworked the earlier tradition found in the Armenian and Georgian”, 21, 38; DE JONGE, \textit{The Christian Origin of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve} (n. 142), p. 350; M. DE JONGE, \textit{The Literary Development of the Life of Adam and Eve}, in ANDERSON – STONE – TROMP (eds.), \textit{Literature on Adam and Eve. Collected Essays} (n. 142), pp. 239–249; T. KNITTEL, ‘Das griechische ‘Leben Adams und Evas’‘ (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, 88), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2002, p. 9; TROMP, \textit{Grammatical Notes} (n. 142), p. 28; J. TROMP, \textit{The History of the Transmission of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve, in The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition} (n. 142), pp. 67–71, 103: “It has been argued in the preceding pages that all extant manuscripts and versions derive from a single manuscript, the archetype. This archetype itself was a copy of an earlier version, since it must be assumed to have contained a number of scribal errors”. See also KNITTEL, ‘Das griechische ‘Leben Adams und Evas’‘, pp. 150–185, esp. p. 172; M. E. STONE,
M. D. Johnson considers it evident that Greek and Latin recensions of the Life of Adam and Eve are compatible with the beliefs reflected in the Pseudepigrapha as a whole, the theology of rabbinic Judaism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and early Christianity. Because these recensions include no polemic or sectarian tendencies, it is difficult to identify the milieu from which the material has sprung. Nevertheless, Johnson draws some conclusions regarding the origin of the source. According to him, the original document was probably written in Hebrew, as its theology is that of Pharisaic Judaism, and originated in Palestine. Johnson says in his introduction to the translation of this work that “our documents have a consistently non-Philonian approach to biblical interpretation, with no trace of allegorization or symbolic treatment of biblical figures. The work stands much closer to the Midrash or Haggadah so typical of Qumran and the Rabbis”\textsuperscript{144}.

The later Greek version of this work is neither exclusively Jewish nor Christian. For example, Marinus de Jonge says about the Greek Life of Adam and Eve: “If GLAE is not typically Christian, it is not typically, let alone exclusively, Jewish either. Jesus is not mentioned, but neither is Moses”\textsuperscript{145}. Insufficient evidence is available about the exact influence of the (Jewish) Life of Adam and Eve on the first Christian scholars. On the other hand, evidence that early Christian scholars such as Theophilus of Antioch (d. c. 180), Irenaeus (c. 130–202) and Tertullian (c. 160–220) have influenced the Greek Life of Adam and Eve is also insufficient. In his article

\textit{The Fall of Satan and Adam’s Penance: Three Notes on the Books of Adam and Eve}, in Anderson – Stone – Tromp (eds.), \textit{Literature on Adam and Eve. Collected Essays} (n. 142), p. 44, where Stone says that a Coptic version of the Life of Adam and Eve also existed and that “all these versions (except, of course, the surviving Greek work) were translated from Greek, but not directly from that surviving Greek work, still usually called (following Tischendorf’s misnomer) The Apocalypse of Moses”, 56: “The writer is still not confident that any particular surviving recension of the primary Adam book represents ‘the original’. See also J. M. Evans, \textit{Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition}, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968, pp. 55–58.

\textsuperscript{144} Johnson, \textit{Life of Adam and Eve} (n. 141), pp. 249–256, 277.
\textsuperscript{145} De Jonge, \textit{The Christian Origin of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve} (n. 142), pp. 347–363, esp. pp. 350–351. Cf. to Anderson, \textit{The Penitence Narrative in the Life of Adam and Eve} (n. 143), p. 23. The preface of the story mentions Moses, but this is a later addition which Johnson suggests (in the footnote) led to the erroneous title “Apocalypse of Moses” (Johnson, \textit{Life of Adam and Eve} [n. 141], p. 259). Johnson has also translated the title as follows: “The narrative and life of Adam and Eve the first-made, revealed by God to Moses his servant when he received the tablets of the law of the covenant from the hand of the Lord, after he had been taught by the archangel Michael”. For more on the relationship between Christianity and the Life of Adam and Eve, see Levison, \textit{Adam and Eve in Romans 1:18–25 and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve} (n. 142), pp. 87–101; Tromp, \textit{The Story of Our Lives} (n. 142), pp. 102–119.
The Christian Origin of the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, Marius de Jonge has shown that indications of literary dependence one way or another are insufficient. Nevertheless, Jonge suggests that the oldest Greek form of the story was written by an author or authors in the circles of “mainstream” Christianity. This author retold the story of Gen 3 and, in Jonge’s words, “added a supplement in order to make clear, once and for all, that Adam and Eve repented, were pardoned, taken up into heaven and would rise again at the last judgment.” In spite of the uncertain context and form of the original version, it is evident that later versions – especially the Greek and Latin ones – have influenced Christianity from the Middle Ages onwards. One indication of this is, for example, the many (vernacular) translations of the story.

The Greek version of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (*Apocalypse of Moses*) depicts in a fascinating way the dialogue between the serpent and the Devil, a dialogue that is also present in the Armenian version:

“And the devil spoke to the serpent saying, ‘Rise and come to me, and I will tell you something to your advantage.’ Then the serpent came to him, and the devil said to him, ‘I hear that you are wiser than all the beasts; so I came to observe you. I found you greater than all the beasts, and they associate with you; but yet you are prostrate to the very least. Why do you eat of the weeds of Adam and not of the fruit of Paradise? Rise and come and let us make him to be cast out of Paradise through his wife, just as we were cast out through him.’ The serpent said to him, ‘I fear lest the LORD be wrathful to me.’ The devil said to him, ‘Do not fear; only become my vessel, and I will speak a word through your mouth by which you will be able to deceive him’.”

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149 JOHNSON, *Life of Adam and Eve*, (n. 141), p. 277 (ch. 16). See also pp. 277–279 (ch. 17–18): “…The devil answered me through the mouth of the serpent, ‘You do well, but you do not eat of every plant.’…For when he came, I opened my mouth and the devil was speak-
This passage contains a surprising theme: the devil suggests to the serpent that he could speak through it to deceive the first humans. Eve later tells this story to her children after the fall. Because of its uncertain date and exact connection to relevant Christian sources, it is difficult – or even impossible – to determine whether this source has influenced, for example, the Church fathers concerning the idea of the possession of the serpent.\textsuperscript{150}

The \textit{Life of Adam and Eve} is not the only early source which linked the serpent of Gen 3 to the Devil or Satan. In both the early Christian and Jewish traditions, the serpent (Hebr. \( \psi \nu \); Greek \( \delta \phi \iota \zeta \); Lat. \textit{serpen\-}\textsuperscript{151}) usually serves as a metaphor for the Devil (or Satan) or is somehow connected to him.\textsuperscript{152} Some passages in the New Testament have played an important role in, for example, Christian scholars' connecting the serpent of Gen 3 to the Devil, especially John 8,44: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (NIV) and Rev 12,9: “The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{150} Cf. \textsc{Evans}, \textit{Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition} (n. 143), p. 82, where he suggests that “Cyprian (d. 258), on the other hand, adopted the view expressed in the \textit{Vita Adae et Eva} that the angel 'suffered with impatience that man was made in the image of God'”. This idea is expressed in the Latin \textit{Life of Adam and Eve}, but not in the Greek version, which includes the discussion between the serpent and the Devil: JOHNSON, \textit{Life of Adam and Eve} (n. 141), pp. 262–263. See also p. 255; DE JONGE, \textit{The Christian Origin of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve} (n. 142), p. 363.
\item \textsuperscript{152} \textsc{Skinner}, \textit{Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis} (n. 136), pp. 72–73: “In later Jewish theology the difficulty was solved, as is well known, by the doctrine that the serpent of Eden was the mouthpiece or impersonation of the Devil. The idea appears first in Alexandrian Judaism in Wisd. 2:24 (‘by the envy of the devil, death entered into the world’)––”.
\end{itemize}
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world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him" (NIV). Many Church fathers (e.g. Chrysostom, Ambrose) and Christian scholars used these New Testament passages as well as, for example, deuterocanonical books (e.g. Wis 2,24) to argue that the Devil was involved in the fall or influenced and spoke through the serpent. Procopius of Gaza (c. 465–528), for example, thought that John 8,44 proved that the Devil spoke through the serpent. The identification of the serpent with the Devil was also present in Second Temple Judaism, for example, and in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the New Testament (e.g. Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Savior 16; First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ 23).

Justin Martyr (103–165) was the most important and influential of the ‘Apologists’ or Defenders of the Christian religion in the second century and was also the first Christian scholar to postulate Satan’s responsibility for inducing the fall of Adam and Eve (if the Life of Adam and Eve is presumed to be a later work). He did not explain his reasoning, but simply identified Satan with the serpent. Other early commentators and Fathers such as Tatian (c. 120–180), Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen (c. 185–254), Methodius of Olympos (d. c. 311), and Theophilus of Antioch, who wrote the first commentary on the beginning of Genesis, also connected or identified the serpent with the Devil. Theophilus, for example, argued that the former angel who became “the maleficent demon,” known from Rev 12,9 spoke through the serpent. The connection between the serpent and the

153 See also, e.g., Luke 10,18–19, which is often linked to the serpent of Gen 3.
157 KELLY, Satan a Biography (n. 140), pp. 176–177.
Devil was (partly) a response to Celsus, a Greek opponent of Christianity in the second century who argued that Gen. 3 and its speaking serpent was more like an old wives’ tale than divinely inspired history. To counter this criticism, some of these early fathers (e.g. Tatian and Ireneus) took the New Testament’s association of the serpent with Satan as their point of departure (e.g. Rev 12:9) and, according to J. M. Evans’ survey *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (1968), “invented a version of the episode according to which Eve’s assailant was an angel who was expelled from Heaven after he had persuaded her to eat the forbidden fruit”\(^\text{159}\).

Later Church fathers explicitly argued – just like Theophilus – that the serpent was possessed by the Devil. Through this conception, they could simultaneously preserve the literal meaning of the Gen 3 (the serpent was a real serpent) as well as the canonical and allegorical approach to this text (the serpent was influenced by the Devil)\(^\text{160}\). One of these fathers was Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373), the deacon of Edessa and Nisibis and a productive writer well-known far beyond the borders of his native Mesopotamia\(^\text{161}\). In his *Commentary on Genesis*, his most important work, Ephrem dissects in detail the astuteness or cleverness of the serpent. According to Ephrem, the natural serpent was astute in comparison to other “dumb animals which are under the control of mankind”. However, its astuteness had not yet exceeded human astuteness. According to Ephrem,

\(^{\text{159}}\) Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (n. 143), pp. 71, 81. For more on the development of the allegorical reading of Gen. 3 and, for example, the argument against Celsus, see pp. 69–99 and Origenes, *Contra Celsum* 4:39, ed. MARCOVICH (Supplements to Vigilae Christianae, 54), pp. 255–257.

\(^{\text{160}}\) See, e.g., P. C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings. Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives*, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2008, p. 180; Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (n. 143), p. 88: “...Gregory of Nyssa refined this idea still further: ‘And he, that evil charmer, framing his new devise of sin against our race, drew along his serpent train, a disguise worthy of his own intent, entering his impurity into what was like himself – dwelling, earthly and mundane as he was in will, in that creeping thing’”.

the serpent was mindless and possessed neither human mind nor wisdom. According to Ephrem, Adam – unlike the serpent – had a human soul and a human intellect and was, for example, able to name the animals. Regarding the serpent’s ability to speak, Ephrem introduces interesting possibilities: “As for the serpent’s speech, either Adam understood the serpent’s own mode of communication, or Satan spoke through it, or the serpent posed the question in his mind and speech was given to it, or Satan sought from God that speech be given to the serpent for a short time”162.

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162 Ephrem the Syrian, Commentary on Genesis 15-16, in Hymns on Paradise, transl. S. Brock, Crestwood, NY, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990, pp. 206–208; Ephrem the Syrian, Selected Prose Works: Commentary on Genesis 15-16, transl. E. G. MATTHEWS, Jr. – J. P. AMAR, and ed. K. MCVEY (The Fathers of the Church, 91), Washington, D. C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1994, pp. 106–108. Cf. to the critical edition of Ephrem’s Syrian commentary: Sancti Ephraemi Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii, ed. R. M. TONNEAU (Corpus Christianorum Orientalium, 152; Scriptores Syri, 71), Leuven, L. Durbecq, 1955. See also MATTHEWS, Jr., Introduction (n. 161), pp. XLI – XLIII, XLVI–LI and E. G. MATTHEWS, Jr., The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian, in J. FRISHMAN – L. VAN ROMPAY (eds.), The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation. A Collection of Essays (Traditio Exegetica Graeca, 3), Leuven, Peeters, 1997, pp. 143–161 from which it becomes evident that there exists an Armenian Commentary on Genesis, which is also attributed to Ephrem the Syrian. It has been translated into the original Syriac, but, as Matthews, Jr. suggests, this original can no longer be considered the work of Ephrem the Syrian. According to Matthew’s view, the Armenian commentary differs in structure, style, language and themes from Ephrem’s genuine Syriac Commentary on Genesis (e.g. regarding the serpent in Gen. 3) and shares nearly nothing in common with the genuine poetical works of St. Ephrem. The Armenian Commentary on Genesis is dated to the late 11th or early 12th centuries and originates from the Black Mountains area near Antioch. Just as in Ephrem’s true Commentary on Genesis, Armenian Commentary on Genesis also places Satan behind the scheme and portrays the serpent as his vessel; see The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem, transl. E. G. MATTHEWS, Jr. (n. 161), pp. 21–41, esp. p. 24: “Whether God, as it was said, granted speech [to the serpent], or whether Satan spoke through it, why did [God] take away the feet [of the serpent] since it would still move quickly?”, 26: “Satan was tortured an tormented in secret through the punishments that came and fell upon the serpent; the enemy was broken and crushed when he saw his vessel crawling on its belly and on its navel”. Ephrem also wrote Hymns on Paradise. These hymns do mention the serpent and implicitly argue that the serpent is the vessel of Satan; Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns on Paradise 3.4, 8.12, 15; 4.4; 6.8, 9; 7.6; 11.9; 12.2, 3; 15.13, 16; esp. 15.14, transl. S. Brock, Crestwood, NY, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990, pp. 91–96, 98–99, 111–112, 120–121, 157, 161, 187–188, and esp. p. 187: “The serpent served as a garment for the evil one to put on: on seeing the innocent ones he became full of guile, he prepared a cunning trap for the hearing of the young couple. In their simplicity they listened to his words eagerly, for he made a show of his care, but hid well his guile. On another occasion the Iscariot can instruct you in the devil’s types”. For more about Ephrem’s conception of Gen. 3, the Devil, and especially the serpent, see also S. HIDAL, Interpretatio Syriaca. Die Kommentare des Heiligen Ephraim des Syrers zu Gensis und Exodus mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Auslegungsgeschichtlichen Stellung (Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series, 6), Lund, CWK Gleerup, 1974, pp. 81–91; T. KRONHOLM, Motifs from Genesis 1–11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian with Particular Reference to the Influence of Jewish Exegetical Tradition (Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series, 6), Lund, CWK
Later in the Commentary, Ephrem argues that Satan was behind the scheme: Satan was in the serpent and spoke through the serpent to the woman. According to him, Satan was not allowed (by God) to approach humans in divine form, as he appeared in the desert to Jesus (cf. to Matt 4,1-11; Mark 1,12-13; and Luke 4,1-13). Nor was Satan allowed to approach humans in human form. Ephrem also wrote that Satan was not “permitted to send any of the angels, nor any of the seraphim nor any of the cherubim”; neither “did Behemoth or Leviathan, the giant beasts of renown, come nor did any of the other beasts nor any of the clean animals come, lest any of these be the reason that Adam and Eve transgressed the commandment”. Instead, Satan was allowed to approach the first humans as the serpent because it was utterly despised and despicable.\footnote{Ephrem the Syrian, \textit{Commentary on Genesis} 18-19, transl. BROCK (n. 162), pp. 209–211; \textit{Selected Prose Works: Commentary on Genesis} 18-19, transl. MATTHEWS, Jr. – AMAR, and ed. McVEY (n. 162), pp. 109–111. See also Ephrem the Syrian, \textit{Commentary on Genesis} 32, transl. BROCK, pp. 221–222; St. Ephrem the Syrian, \textit{Selected Prose Works: Commentary on Genesis} 32, transl. MATTHEWS, Jr. – AMAR, and ed. McVEY (n. 162), p. 121.}

\textit{A Syriac MS. on the Pentateuch in the Mingana Collection}, a Syrian compilation of various sources, offers an interesting perspective on the serpent. It refers specifically Syrian fathers (e.g. to Ephrem) and was written by an anonymous author in about A.D. 900. This source is considered Nestorian and argues that the serpent of Gen 3,1 was connected to the Devil: “With regard to ‘the serpent was subtil etc.,’ Scripture hints allegorically at the cunning of Satan, inasmuch as the beasts are ready to smite and injure man; so that we may say, that keen and cunning is the manner of his attack, and more so than all the others of the earth.”\footnote{A. LEVENE, \textit{The Early Syrian Fathers on Genesis. From a Syriac MS. on the Pentateuch in the Migana Collection. The First Eighteen Chapters of the MS. Edited with Introduction, Translation and Notes; and Including a Study in Comparative Exegesis}, London, Taylor's Foreign Press, 1951, pp. 3, 5, 27, 77. See also p. 153.} Michael E. Stone’s article \textit{Satan and the Serpent in the Armenian Tradition} (2008) be-tokens the conception of the possessed serpent (Gen. 3) as common in the Armenian tradition also\footnote{M. E. STONE, \textit{Satan and the Serpent in the Armenian Tradition}, in K. SCHMID – C. RIEDWEG (eds.), \textit{Beyond Eden. The Biblical Story of Paradise (Genesis 2–3) and Its Reception History} (Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 2. Reihe, 34), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2008, pp. 141–186, esp. pp. 147–151.}. 


Another significant Eastern Church father (in addition to Ephrem), Chrysostom (c. 347–407) handled the serpent of Gen 3, especially in his *Homilies on Genesis* (*Homilœ in Genesin*). In these homilies, Chrysostom presented that the serpent was an irrational (“brutus”) wild animal. This and other wild animals, however, did not instill fear among humans, because they were subjugated under human dominion. The serpent and other wild animals were, therefore, similar to domestic animals who recognize human dominion. Although Chrysostom called the serpent uncomprehending, he thought – just as Ephrem – that its cunning exceeded that of other animals (cf. to Gen 3,166). Because of this cunning, the serpent was a suitable instrument for the Devil. According to Chrysostom, the Devil used the serpent for its evil ends and scheme because he envied humans who still enjoyed God’s favour. Namely, the Devil had been “among the celestial powers”, but was cast down because of the wickedness of his will and his enormous malice. Chrysostom considered the serpent a suitable instrument for deceiving humans and used it so that the woman could not discern the Devil’s snare, but was instead inflated by empty hopes and imagined herself to be God’s equal if she could only taste of the forbidden fruit. The words of the serpent described in Gen 3,1 were actually the words of the Devil, who used the serpent as “some sort of instrument” and spoke through it. Chrysostom also emphasized that the Devil used the serpent in the form of an evil spirit or demon167. It important to note (in regards to Luther) an interesting detail in the descriptions of both Ephrem and Chrysostom: the natural serpent is an incomprehensible (“brutus”) wild animal, yet it still exceeds other animals in cunning.

Severian of Gabala, who lived at the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries and was known as the antagonist of Chrysostom, bears some resemblance to Ephraim and Chrysostom, with regard to the serpent. According to Severian, the serpent looked quite different before the fall than it does in the fallen world: it was a friend of humanity, even the closest of servants. However, the serpent was no friend of humans in the intellectual sense. Rather, the serpent was more like a dog who served humans through its natural moves. Severian acknowledges that neither Gen 3 nor any other part of the Bible explicitly mentions that the Devil spoke through this

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166 NIV: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”.
friendly creature. Nevertheless, Severian concludes from other parts of the Scripture (2 Cor 11.2-3; John 8.41,42 and 44) that the Devil spoke through the serpent. He also argued that Moses told the story of Gen 3 in a simple manner and therefore did not mention the Devil as the true orator. In other words, the Devil led the first humans astray by speaking through the serpent, which Adam considered very wise. Because of this closeness, the serpent was a convenient tool for the Devil. The Devil noticed the serpent’s intellect, and Adam’s high opinion of it, and therefore spoke through the serpent to make Adam believe that this friendly creature was intelligent enough to imitate human speech. John of Damascus (646–749) argued in his *Expositio Fidei orthodoxa* that the serpent enjoyed a more intimate relationship with humans than did other animals in Paradise. The Devil used this intimate relationship for his own evil ends: he made the most evil suggestion through the serpent to the first humans.

In the West, Augustine of Hippo (354–430) offered many other comments on the opening chapters (1–3) of Genesis. Augustine wrote at least five commentaries on the opening chapters of Genesis over a period of three decades. However, some of these ‘commentaries’ (*Confessiones* [397–401], *De civitate Dei* [416/417], and *Retractiones* [428]) are more like individual comments on opening chapters of Genesis and were inserted into his works that deal with larger themes. Yoon Kyung Kim suggests in his survey *Augustine’s Changing Interpretation of Genesis 1–3. From De Genesi contra Manichaeos to De Genesi ad litteram* (2006) that the most important commentary, in addition to *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, is *De Genesi ad litteram* (401–416), “in which he interpreted the creation stories, not according to the allegorical significance, but according to historical events proper”.

Augustine conceived in his earlier years an extremely allegorical interpretation of the serpent. In *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* (388/389), Augustine proposed a recondite understanding of the relationship between the serpent and the Devil. According to Augustine, the serpent signifies the Devil in Gen 3,1. The cleverness of the Devil is indicated

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170 Y. K. Kim, *Augustine’s Changing Interpretations of Genesis 1–3. From De Genesi contra Manichaeos to De Genesi ad litteram*, Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006, pp. 4–5. See also CHARLESWORTH, *The Good & Evil Serpent* (n. 134), p. 276: “Most of them are Christian and presuppose the story is about ‘the Fall of man’ who was tempted by Satan in the form of a snake. Following the equation found in Revelation 12:9, St. Augustine identified Satan with the dragon (*Hom. 36*).”

71
figurately in that Gen 3,1 calls the serpent wiser than all other beasts. In this same way, Augustine figurately interprets Paradise: it signifies blessed life (“beatam vitam”). Because of this signification of Paradise, the serpent could not be there because it “was already the Devil”, who (as an angel) had already “fallen from his beatitude, because he could not hold the truth”. Augustine acknowledges that this recondite interpretation engenders the problem of how the Devil (or the serpent as the Devil) could speak with the woman if he was not in Paradise. According to Augustine, both options are possible: 1. Eve (and Adam) were in Paradise according to the affect of beatitude (“beatitudinis affectum”), and 2. they were also in Paradise locally. Augustine favours the first option, arguing that in any case, as St. Paul suggests, the Devil approached the first humans spiritually (Cf. to Eph 2,1-2). In other words, the Devil appeared to Eve not corporally, but spiritually, in “wonderful ways”, by influencing suggestion. In the same way, the Devil approached Judas not corporally, but spiritually, by entering his heart. In other words, Augustine suggests that the Devil made spiritual suggestions to the first humans so that he could make them fall from their affect of beatitude, which is from spiritual Paradise.

However, it is reasonable to ask how the Devil could have approached the first humans and speak with them spiritually in Paradise if he had lost his affect of beatitude and was therefore not in Paradise? In addition to this uncertainty, it is evident that Augustine’s interpretation of the serpent in Gen 3 is highly figurative (or allegorical): it leaves hardly any room for a literal interpretation. It is also interesting to note that, according to De Genesi contra Manichaeos, the Devil possesses the humans (e.g. Eve and Judas) and not the serpent.

Augustine’s interpretation of the serpent is more in accordance with Eastern tradition in De Genesi ad litteram than in De Genesi contra Manichaeos. In De Genesi ad litteram, Augustine argues that the serpent was not in itself an irrational animal, but because it had an alien and diabolical spirit, it could be considered even the wisest of the animals. Behind this diabolical and excellent wisdom was Augustine’s conception of

171 NIV: “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient”.

fallen angels. According to Augustine, these “collusive prosecuting angels” (“praevaricatores angeli”) were deservingely thrown down from celestial seats in their perversity and pride. Despite this fall from celestial seats, they remain rationally superior to all animals. Therefore, when one of these fallen angels, namely the Devil, possesses the serpent in the same manner as demons possess the fortune teller, it becomes wiser than the other animals, which live an irrational life.173 Augustine’s interpretation here is evidently less allegorical than before. Through the idea that the serpent was possessed by the Devil, Augustine maintains both aspects: the literal meaning of the text (= the serpent was really a serpent) and the figurative174 idea (= the serpent is possessed by the Devil). The reason Augustine lent greater emphasis to the spiritual and allegorical interpretation in De Genesi contra Manichaeos was because he opposed the ultra-literal interpretation of the Manichees.

With regard to medieval exegesis, both the Glossa ordinaria and Nicholas of Lyra’s (1270–1349) Postilla literalis super totam Bibliam, with their references to the Church fathers, played an important role in late medieval exegesis.176 Lyra suggested that the fall occurred under God’s rule and was not the choice of the Devil (or demon) who possessed the serpent. God did not allow the Devil to beset the woman under “the polite and noble form” which would work much better as a tool of deceit her than would the form of the serpent. In other words, Lyra argued that God allowed the Devil to inhabit the serpent because under this “horrible form”, this demon was easier to discern. In this context, Lyra understands the word cunning (Lat. “calliditas”) of Gen 3,1 as referring to the demon which “appeared in the serpent”, and he equates the cunning of the serpent with

173 Augustinus, De Genesi ad Litteram Libri duodecim, ed. Migne (PL, 34), cols. 430–431. See also cols. 443–445, esp. col. 435: “Quid ergo mirum si per serpemem aliquid agere permissus est diabolus, cum daemonia in porcos intrare Christus ipse permiserit (Matth. VIII, 32)?”

174 For more on Augustine’s definitions of figurative and literal interpretations of the text, see Kim, Augustine’s Changing Interpretations of Genesis 1–3 (n. 170), pp. 55–57, 163–176, esp. p. 164: “… Augustine is not consistent in using the key terms for his hermeneutic such as ad litteram and in figura”.


the cunning of the Devil. Lyra thought that the serpent was merely an instrument of the cunning Devil.

*Glossa ordinaria* resembles Lyra’s interpretation, which argues that the evil angel, the Devil, was thrown down from heaven because of his pride. More interestingly, *Glossa ordinaria* suggests that “the devilish spirit” or “the spirit of the Devil” spoke wisely through the serpent, which was an “irrational” being. This spirit filled the serpent in the same way as it fills the fortune-teller. Moreover, the complete commented Bible published under the name of Hugh of St. Cher suggests that the Devil spoke and attacked through the serpent. These comments also suggest that the Devil sought to attack humans because he envied their corporal presence in Paradise; he endeavored to drive them away from Paradise in the same manner as he was spiritually warned to stay away from it. Other medieval scholars and commentators proposed that the serpent was possessed by the Devil. Venerable Bede (c. 672–735), for example, argued that the serpent of Gen. 3 was possessed by a diabolical spirit.

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The patristic commentators and medieval authors showed a minor difference in emphasis. Evans, for instance, summarizes this difference as follows: “Patristic commentators had claimed that Satan entered the snake either because it was the only animal he was permitted to use or because its tortuous windings accorded with his devious nature. According to most medieval authors, on the contrary, the Devil chose the serpent because it was peculiarly fitted to deceive Eve by virtue of its appearance, its ‘lady visage’." However, it is evident that Evans’ differentiation does not suit all medieval authors. Lyra, for example, though that God allowed the Devil to use the serpent, which had a horrible form, instead of some polite and noble appearance which could deceive the woman with greater ease. Evans is nevertheless correct in saying that the patristic and medieval authors differed in their emphasis. The latter authors did not emphasize the cunningness of the serpent as a proper tool for the Devil.

In summary, the idea that the Devil was possessed by the serpent was notably evident in the early Christian commentaries of both the East and the West, as well as in the medieval exegesis. It is evident that not all authors explicitly considered the serpent “possessed”. Instead, some of them argued that the Devil spoke through the serpent and used it for its evil ends. However, the idea that the Devil influences through the serpent and uses it resembles the concept of possession, where some alien force takes over its object. Therefore, one can fairly say that those authors who argue that the Devil influenced through the serpent also fall within the loose category of possession. More importantly, Luther knew the main features of this tradition (at least some of the patristic and medieval authors) and, as this article will next demonstrate, used it to develop his conception of the serpent in Gen 3.

III. RESEARCH HISTORY AND LUTHER’S EXEGESIS (1535–1545)

Not only pastors and laypersons, but also many scholars have throughout the centuries been especially keen on Luther. Even a cursory thumbing through the biographies of Luther Jahrbuch, for example, reveals the extensive amount of literature and research written on Luther every year.


Despite almost a half millennium since Luther’s death, he remains one of the giants – not only in a spiritual and historical sense, but also as an object of research. It is therefore surprising, then, how little research has explored Luther’s interpretation of Genesis chapter three, especially if one considers the salience of this chapter in the Christian tradition. Most recent surveys on Luther’s lectures on Genesis (and its third chapter) deal primarily with gender issues; Theo M. A. C. Bell, Kristen E. Kvam and Mickey Leland Mattox have all focused on the relationship between Adam and Eve in their studies\(^{183}\). There are also a few surveys that examine Genesis chapter three with a different focus. For example, Ulrich Asendorf draws interesting overall insights into Luther’s lectures on Genesis in \textit{Lectura in Biblia: Luthers Genesissvorlesung} (1535–1545), where he briefly discusses Luther’s interpretation of the fall\(^{184}\).

The most extensive and informative survey of Luther’s various interpretations of Genesis chapter three is Mattox’s study “\textit{Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs}: Martin Luther’s Interpretation of the Women of Genesis in the Enarrationes in Genesin, 1535–1545” (2003), which provides a thorough theological and historical perspective on Luther’s interpretation of Genesis chapter three. Mattox’s study includes many important insights regarding Luther’s exegesis. Mattox, for example, points out that “it would be a mistake to assume that Luther knew every work in the history of exegesis”. Luther is not an “omniscient author” who could pass judgment on other exegetes as easily through silence as through explicit disagreement, as Mattox suggests. Luther often forgot to mention his sources. However, he often referred explicitly to various antecedent authors and provided his own evaluation of them\(^{185}\).


\(^{185}\) MATTOX, “\textit{Defender of the Most holy Matriarchs}” (n. 176), pp. 8–9.
In his lectures on Genesis (1535–1545), Luther explicitly explains his conception of allegorical interpretation, which played a dominant role among the Church fathers and throughout the Middle Ages. Here, Luther criticises Origen, Jerome, Augustine and Nicholas of Lyra for their allegories and spiritual interpretations, which are not based on the historical meaning of the texts. According to Luther, one should first learn the historical meaning of the texts, and only after this can allegories serve as “an ornament or flowers of a kind” for illustrating “the history”. Luther parallels the historical meaning to dialectics, which teaches “the undoubted truth”, and allegorical meaning to rhetorics, which has to “paint” the historical meaning. In other words, the historical meaning and historical events are for Luther the foundation for allegories. As a proper and exemplary allegory Luther refers to Romans 5,14, where Paul uses Adam and the death he delivered as an allegory to Christ, who brought God’s mercy and gift to humans\(^{186}\). It seems that the historical and literal meaning of the text were for Luther nearly identical: what was written, really happened and allegories had to follow this written truth.

In addition to the historical meaning of the text, Luther emphasises in his lectures (1535–1545) that allegories must abide by the principle of *analogia fidei* (in English, “analogy of faith”). What exactly Luther meant by this principle, however, is difficult to define. Based on the context of lectures, *analogia fidei* could be described as follows: interpretation must follow the promises, the basic teaching or the consensus of the Bible (e.g. only faith provides salvation, or the serpent was moved by the Devil). In addition, following the analogy of faith in interpretation and in teaching not only embellish the literal teachings of the Bible, but, according to Luther, also consoles distressed consciences\(^{187}\). Therefore, the *analogia fidei* principle was for Luther more than merely a hermeneutical and intellectual key to biblical texts: it also healed (spiritual) emotions.

John A. Maxfield’s study *Luther’s Lectures on Genesis and the Formation of Evangelical Identity* (2008), also offers interesting insights


into Luther's manifold hermeneutical process concerning his lectures on Genesis.\textsuperscript{188} Maxfield, for example, argues that “the Reformer’s approach to the historical narrative bears resemblance to the Antiochene tradition of theoria, wherein contemplation of the text facilitates an ascent of the soul to profound spiritual understanding and experience of the divine”. However, Maxfield notes that this resemblance obscures a fundamentally different soteriology, because for Luther the word takes place in the earthly realm, for God is present in the words of the text through the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{189}

According to Maxfield, Luther’s lectures were entitled not commentaries, but \textit{Enarrationes} (“to speak, tell, or set forth in detail”), because “the Bible spoke directly to the ‘today’ of Luther and his hearers as he lectured on the sacred text”. Maxfield shows that Luther considered his Bible study, which he also recommended to his students, a spiritual discipline in his preface to his collected works of 1539. In this preface, Luther “addressed preachers and cautioned them to keep at the center of the church’s life the holy scripture and its gospel, rather than the books of theologians and especially the ‘excrees and excretals of the pope’”. Maxfield points out that for Luther, lecturing on the Bible was not only or even primarily an exercise of philology or mere grammar, as is modern historical-critical or historical grammatical exegesis of the ancient text. Rather, Maxfield proposes that for Luther, engaging the Bible is itself “a spiritual exercise in which speaker and hearer are both confronted by the word of God”.\textsuperscript{190} Luther therefore belongs much more to \textit{lectio divina} (i.e. the medieval tradition of sacred texts) than to the rising historical criticisms that began with humanism and peaked in the biblical exegesis of the Enlightenment and its 19th and 20th century heirs. In short, affective and spiritual aspects played a vital role in Luther’s exegesis – not only in sermons, but also in the lecture hall.\textsuperscript{191}

\textsuperscript{188} J. A. MAXFIELD, \textit{Luther’s Lectures on Genesis and the Formation of Evangelical Identity}. (Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 80), Kirksville, MO, Truman State University Press, 2008, p. xi.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid. p. 66. See also MATTOX, “Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs” (n. 176), pp. 22–23.
\textsuperscript{190} MAXFIELD, \textit{Luther’s Lectures on Genesis and the Formation of Evangelical Identity} (n. 188), pp. 15–16, 18. See also MATTOX, “Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs” (n. 176), pp. 10–11.
\textsuperscript{191} MAXFIELD, \textit{Luther’s Lectures on Genesis and the Formation of Evangelical Identity} (n. 188). p. 74. See also pp. 80–81; R. HAGEN, \textit{Luther’s Approach to Scripture as seen in his “Commentaries” on Galatians 1519–1538}, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993, pp. 49–66, 128, esp. pp. 49–51.
Maxfield also argues that modern scholars who criticize Luther’s exegetical works “for their length, for their focus on the edifying application of the text rather than on the meaning of the text in its original context, and for jumping from the ancient text to present concerns” have a very different concept of biblical exposition. According to Maxfield, even Luther’s longest exposition (lectures on Genesis, 1535–1545) is not exceptionally long if placed within the medieval tradition of *enarratio*.192 Just as in many of Luther’s other lectures, here he also takes a stand on some topical issue. This time he criticizes, for example, antinomianism in the Wittenberg community.193

Maxfield’s study also shows that Luther sees in Genesis and its first chapters the description of the beginning of the battle between God and the Devil and of how this battle has continued ever since. Maxfield concurs with Heiko Oberman, arguing that “For Luther, ‘history ‘sub specie aeternitatis,’ in the light of eternity’ pertains not only to the last days, but to human history from its beginning, or rather from the inbreaking of the devil’s rule in human history, which happened (Luther believed) on the day after God created Adam.”194 Therefore, the discussion between the serpent and the woman is a significant start to this history of the Church between God and the Devil. This start and history of the Church between God and the Devil also qualified all human history, according to Luther.195

IV. LUTHER’S EARLIER WORKS ON GENESIS

In addition to Luther’s lectures on Genesis (1535–1545), a few less familiar and more abridged work(s) on Genesis offer interesting perspectives on the serpent in Gen 3. Firstly, Luther delivered *Scholia in librum Genesios*, which were collected by Johannes Poliander and consist of notes and marginalia. Scholars continue to debate the precise date of these *Scholia*. They were probably delivered between 1519 and 1524. Current research suggests that they are notes from the Luther’s sermons (*Declamationes*), which he held between March 1523 and September 1524.196 These *Scholia* are con-

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194 Ibid., p. 148.
195 Ibid., pp. 147–151.
196 Mattox, “Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs” (n. 176), pp. 261–262. Mattox also provides a thorough analysis of the background of Luther’s lectures on Genesis in Wittenberg between years 1518 and 1545, pp. 259–275.
cise and offer little information on the serpent. However, they reveal a few
interesting concepts which obviously affected Luther’s later interpretations
of the serpent in Gen 3. In the notes of Scholia, Luther emphasizes the lit-
eral meaning of the text and argues that the serpent was a real serpent,
and also refers to John Chrysostom’s Homilies on Genesis, which present
this interpretation. Still, Luther evidently thought (just as did Chrysostom)
that the Devil was linked to the serpent, because according to him, the
story deals with, among other things, “Satan’s cunning.” In other words,
two important factors are already evident in these concise Scholia, which
also emerge in other versions: 1) the serpent is a real serpent, and 2) the
Devil is involved in the story. In addition, it is evident that Luther was fa-
miliar with Chrysostom’s conception of the natural serpent (Gen 3), which
became the instrument for the Devil and his evil ends. However, Luther
did not clearly argue in his Scholia in librum Genesios that the serpent was
possessed by the Devil, even though he suggested that not only the ser-
pent, but also Satan was involved in the cunningness of the serpent as ex-
pressed in Gen 3.

In addition to the natural serpent itself, it is also probable that
Luther adapted from Chrysostom the conception of the Devil who influ-
enced through the serpent. This Antiochene father had a special influence
on Luther’s exegesis, as Mickey Leland Mattox presents in his research
“Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs”: Martin Luther’s Interpretation of
According to Mattox, both Chrysostom and Luther embraced the Old Tes-
tament as the Christian present, so Luther’s exegesis so often resembled
that of his Antiochene predecessor, even though Luther rarely referred to
him.

In addition to Scholia, four other versions of Declamationes
exist in two critical editions of the published Latin and German versions of
these sermons as well as in two sets of notes: In Genesin Mosi librum sanct-
tissimum D. Martini Lutheri Declamationes, based on the notes of Georg
Rörer, and Predigten. Über das erste Buch Moses (or more precisely Über
das erst buch Mose, predigete Mart. Luth. sampt einer unterricht wie Moses
zu leren ist), based on the notes of Stephan Roth. In other words, two sets of

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197 I have not found indication that Luther would differentiate between the Devil and Sa-
tan; they are one and the same for him.
198 BLANKE e.a., Personen- und Zitatenregister zur Abteilung Schriften Band 1–60 (WA, 63),
p. 284; M. LUTHER, Scholia in librum Genesios 1519 (WA, 9), pp. 332 l. 15 – 333 l. 9, 335 l.
38–39.
199 MATTOX, “Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs”(n. 176), pp. 22–23. See also EBELING,
Evangelische Evangelienauslegung (n. 176), pp. 147–148.
notes (Rörer’s and Roth’s) served as the basis for these two critical published versions. These various versions differ from each other in their conceptions of the serpent and the Devil. To obtain an accurate picture of the variation between these versions, I will next analyze the critical editions and critical notes in detail.

According to *Predigten. Über das erste Buch Moses*, Luther defends the simple meaning of the text, stating that he has always defended this approach. Luther holds that one may not interpret or ‘instruct’ the text as one pleases. Rather, the reader should let the text instruct him or her and give glory to it. Because of his penchant for the literal meaning of the text, Luther also defends the idea that the serpent was a real and natural serpent. However, this creature could not be so wise as to comment on God’s commandments. Therefore, the serpent was “inhabited” by an evil angel, the Devil, whose understanding was above that of any animal, and even above that of any human. Luther describes the consequences of this inhabitation such that the Devil, for example, controlled the tongue of the serpent when it was speaking with the woman. The woman (sometimes Eve, as Luther suggests) in Gen 3 did not see the Devil in the serpent. She could not fear the serpent either, because she was “the lady of the world” (“ein fraw der welt”) and ruled according to Gen 1,28 (“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’”, NIV).

In *Genesin Mosi librum sanctissimum D. Martini Lutheri Declamationes* provides a more detailed description of the possession or inhabitation of the serpent by the Devil. According to this version, Luther defended the literal (or more precisely, “the simple”) meaning of Gen 3,1, arguing that the serpent was evidently a real serpent. How then did the Devil speak through this real serpent? According to Luther, the exalted words of the serpent prove that it was inhabited by an exalted spirit or an angel. Unlike a real and natural serpent, the Devil could imitate human words. However, this angel or spirit was evil, because it talked against God’s commandments. According to Luther, behind the Devil’s use of the serpent was divine providence: God permitted the nobler creature (the

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201 Luther speaks sometimes about the woman as Eve, even though this name is given to the woman only in the verse 3,20.
Devil) to use the less noble creature for his purposes and did not prohibit it to move in “flesh and blood”\(^{203}\).

Luther also explains here why the Devil appeared in the form of a serpent as well as the consequences of this appearance: if the text had simply explained that the Devil came to the first woman, the readers of Gen. 3 could not have known in which appearance (Lat. “species”) the Devil had arrived. In other words, Luther thought the text mentions the serpent instead of the Devil for good reason: this would provide the readers with more information. Here Luther evidently expects the readers of Genesis chapter three to know that the serpent was controlled by a higher being, the Devil, because the serpent could imitate human words and could commend on and argue against God’s commandments. However, the woman was unaware that it was the Devil who actually spoke with her. She feared the serpent no more than the sheep, for she was a more exalted creature than it\(^{204}\). In other words, Luther presumes that the readers of the Bible knew the true origin of the words of the serpent better than the woman did.

According to Georg Rörer’s notes, Luther defends the literal meaning (or more precisely, “the simple meaning”) of the text and argues that the first woman spoke with a real serpent. On the other hand, just as in other versions of *Declamationes*, Luther also argues here that the Devil inhabited and controlled the serpent and spoke through it. An unreasonable animal such as the serpent would have found it impossible to comment on God’s commandments. It was therefore the Devil, whom Luther describes as a violent spirit capable of imitating human words. However, the difference between this and other versions is that, according to Rörer’s notes, Luther often refers to the Devil as a “demon”. This demon (or evil angel) spoke against God’s commandments and God allowed it to move among animals. Moreover according to this version, the woman together with her man ruled over creation and was therefore unafraid of the serpent. The fall was also possible because they could not fear the presence of the Devil\(^{205}\). Stephan Roth’s notes offer no new information on these various editions and notes, but present all the main aspects concerning the


\(^{204}\) Ibid.

\(^{205}\) M. Luther, *Predigten über das erste Buch Mose gehalten 1523 und 1524: Die Ascensio- sionis post prandium*. 14.5.1523 (WA, 14), pp. 128 l. 6 – 129 l. 15.
serpent: the serpent was indeed a real serpent, but was possessed by the Devil 206.

In brief, these various versions of Declamationes differ from each other in that some of them provide more information on the serpent than do others. Of course, editors and those who wrote the notes evidently made a personal selection when compiling these versions. Despite their differences, these versions show no contradictions with regard to the serpent. Consequently, there is good reason to expect that these various notes represent the main features of Luther’s Declamationes. Based on this assumption, I have gathered key issues from the various versions of Declamationes: 1) Luther’s defense of the literal meaning of the text (i.e. the serpent really is a serpent), 2) the serpent was inhabited by the Devil, 3) the Devil was the real author and debater in the serpent, 4) the Devil in the serpent could imitate human words, 5) God permitted the Devil to work in the “flesh and blood” of the serpent, 6) Luther identified the Devil, who inhabits the serpent, as a demon or violent spirit, and 7) the woman failed to recognize or fear the Devil in the serpent.

It is also worth to noting that in all these versions of Declamationes, Luther fails to explicitly differentiate between the serpent and the Devil regarding the punishments described in Genesis 3,14 207. According to In Genesin Mosi librum sanctissimum D. Martini Lutheri Declamationes, Luther argued that the serpent receives an eternal punishment when God decrees that it must crawl on its belly. In addition to the punishment of the serpent, the punishment of the Devil may be implicitly present, because Luther also discusses Gen 3,15 208, which in Christianity is considered the Proto-Gospel, and argues that only the seed (i.e., Christ) can crush the head of the serpent that is “the kingdom of sin, death and hell”. According to Predigten. Über das erste Buch Moses, Luther explicitly argues that the seed is the only help against the Devil 209. It is, therefore, probable that, ac-

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206 M. LUTHER, Predigten über das erste Buch Mose gehalten 1523 und 1524: Collectanea in Genesim ex contione D. Martini Lutheri utcunque accepta:– 1523 (WA, 14), pp. 128 l. 31 – 129 l. 39.
207 NIV: “So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, ‘Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life’.
208 NIV: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel”.
According to Luther, the Devil will receive punishment. Luther's understanding of exactly how Gen 3,14 and 3,15 are connected to each other regarding the punishment of the serpent and the Devil becomes evident in his Lectures on Genesis (1535–1545).

V. LECTURES ON GENESIS (1535–1545)

1. Authencity and Preparations of Lectures

Scholars have long debated the authencity of Luther's lectures on Genesis. In the 20th century, Erich Seeberg and Peter Meinhold in particular questioned the authencity of these lectures and aimed to find traces of editorial “improvement” which, as Mattox suggested, would “conform to the concerns and commitments of the Philippist party in the second generation of Lutheranism, falsely attributing to Luther proofs for the existence of God, arguments for the immortality of the soul, and the justification of astrology”. In his survey, Mattox also carefully betokens that Meinhold, for example, made too far-reaching conclusions and arguments against the authencity of the lectures. Mattox also argues that Luther's lectures on Genesis clearly preserve his authentic voice “as he wished to be heard” in spite of the editorial work. In other words, Luther's lectures on Genesis are today considered a reliable source for Luther's own theological emphasis and ideas.

However, to be sure of the reliability of Luther's comments on the serpent in the edited version of his lectures on Genesis, a short analysis of Luther's own preparations, which he drafted for his lectures on the first three chapters of Genesis, may prove useful. When Luther addresses the third chapter of Genesis in his preparations, he actually analyzes only the serpent and its relationship to the Devil. In what follows, I specify some of the key issues evident in Luther's preparations.

Firstly, Luther presumes that the Devil had power over the serpent (and not over any other animal), because the serpent was “cunning to hurt” (the woman). Secondly, Luther ponders why Moses mentioned only the serpent and not Satan who spoke through the serpent. According to Luther, this was to enable readers to understand “the effective cause” (“efficacitatem causam”). By this effective cause, Luther obviously intended that

also some repeated fragments: Predigten über das erste Buch Mose gehalten 1523 und 1524: Repetitio quorumdam dictorum in 3. Ca. 1523 (WA, 14), pp. 144 l. 31 – 145 l. 35.


211 K. Drescher, Einleitung; 1911 (WA, 42), pp. IX–X.
Moses mentions the serpent so that readers could understand the instrument which produced the fall. Luther considers this intent sufficiently evident in the story without explicitly identifying the Devil as the one behind the scheme, because no irrational or vanishing creature could dispute about God’s commandments; only an “exalted spirit” (cf. the Devil) could do this. Thirdly, Luther points out that the woman harbored no fear of the serpent, because she was the ruler of the serpent and lived in the perfect cognition of God (“in perfecta cognitione Dei”). Fourthly, Luther also notes that the serpent had to be punished along with Satan (cf. to Gen 3,14), because it was (ab)used by Satan (sic!). In other words, Luther thought that the serpent had to reconcile its complicity in crime in the same manner the earth had to suffer from Adam’s sin (cf. to Gen 3,17). Luther does not ponder whether these kinds of punishments are fair. Instead, he argues that God is not the cause of sin; it is the Devil who corrupts God’s creatures.

If one compares these notions with Luther’s previous remarks on the serpent in Genesis chapter three, they evidently describe quite similar aspects: that the Devil used the serpent and spoke through it; that the woman did not fear the serpent because she was a more exalted being and so forth. Next, I will compare the contentious resemblance of (various versions of) Declamationes with Luther’s best known and most important work on Genesis: the edited version of Luther’s lectures on Genesis.

2. Luther’s Interpretation of the Serpent and its Relationship to Antecedent Authors

Luther evidently also considered the Scripture a canon which can be interpreted as a whole (cf. to Luther’s Scriptura sacra sui ipsius interpres and analogia fidei principles) while at the same time sought to preserve the literal meaning of the text. This ambiguity is also evident in the way Luther interprets the serpent. In his lectures, Luther argued that all the animals (in Paradise) had different kinds of gifts and that the serpent had “the excellent gift of cunning” (“excelluisse dono calliditatis”). The serpent also had many other abilities, some of which sound quite far-fetched to us.

214 For more on the Luther’s Scriptura sui ipsius interpres principle, see MATTOX, “Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs” (n. 176), pp. 14–18. See also HAGEN, Luther’s Approach to Scripture as seen in his “Commentaries” on Galatians 1519–1538 (n. 191), pp. 50, 57.
Luther, for example, purported that before the fall, the serpent was a small and cute animal, a very trustworthy animal that “walked on its feet just like the rooster”. Luther also says that the serpent was beautiful, blessed, good, eloquent, and attractive, and that both humans and animals lived gladly with it. He contradicts these abilities with the punishments the serpent receives after the fall: crawling on its belly and eating dust. Luther also supposes that the serpent lost most of its cunning (“astutia”) after the fall and received venom, a tail and scales instead of a beautiful look.

These remarks regarding the serpent’s various characteristics before the fall may sound rather odd, but some of these characteristics do not contradict the inner structure of the text, even though they are not explicitly mentioned. First of all, the trustworthiness and attractiveness of the serpent is plausible because in the story, the woman talks to the serpent quite confidently. Secondly, Luther’s humorous remark according to which the serpent walked on its feet before the fall “just like the rooster” is actually a plausible interpretation. Namely, later in the story (Gen 3,14), God metes out a punishment to the serpent to crawl on its belly. Therefore, according to Gen 3, it is probable that the serpent walked on its feet (or moved in some other notional manner). Thirdly, one can also consider the serpent both eloquent and attractive or, as Luther more precisely suggests, enticing. This becomes evident in the eloquent and enticing way of persuasion, when the serpent leads the woman to seek wisdom and divinity against God’s only commandment and offers God-like being (cf. to Gen 3,5).

More questionable statements in Luther’s interpretation include the smallness and cuteness of the serpent. The text shows no indication that would either confirm these statements or disprove them. In the same manner, the text does not offer clear implications as to whether the other animals or first humans lived happily with the serpent. In addition, the quality “good”, which Luther attributes to the serpent, is debatable because in Gen 3,1, the serpent is called “more crafty” (Lat. “callidior”). The Hebrew equivalent, דַּלֶּשׁ, is ambiguous: it carries both negative and positive connotations. It is, therefore, not evident that the (“more crafty”) serpent could be given an attribute “good”.

In spite of these speculative and debatable elements in Luther’s interpretation of the serpent, Luther holds a critical view of some of
the debates concerning the appearance of the serpent. Luther, for example, criticizes the debate of whether the serpent had a human face and dismisses it as ridiculous\textsuperscript{218}. However, this is not as ridiculous a question as Luther suggests. The serpent in the story can evidently speak. Because humans are the only creatures on Earth with the ability to speak (at least a language which humans can understand), it is conceivable that the mouth and face of a speaking serpent might differ from that of an ordinary snake and instead resemble human faces. This story does not fit everyday categories, however, so Luther is therefore correct in that it is impossible to provide an evident description of the serpent’s face.

The above-mentioned approach to the serpent was distinctive of Luther’s exegesis. On the one hand, Luther criticized speculations and allegories which seemed ill-suited to the biblical texts or apostolic teaching. On the other hand, Luther himself offered speculations and allegories, for example, in his lectures on Genesis which consist of approximately 2000 pages of edited Latin text. It is also fascinating how Luther connects these speculations on the appearance of the serpent to his conception of the relationship between the serpent and the Devil, whom he considers the architect (architectus) of the whole deceitful event. Luther namely proposes that the serpent becomes a victim of the Devil who possesses it. When Luther praises the cunning of the serpent, he also considers its cunning an especially suitable instrument for the Devil’s deceitful plans, along with the serpent’s goodness, beauty, eloquence, and attractiveness\textsuperscript{219}. The problem in this interpretation is naturally the fact that Gen 3 does not (at least explicitly) mention the Devil or Satan at all, but speaks only of the serpent.

When Luther handles Gen 3,14 and God’s curse to the serpent and the Devil, he argues that the serpent was “an uncomprehending animal” (“brutum animal”) possessed by the Devil. God therefore addresses his curse to the Devil, who can comprehend God’s words, rather than to the serpent. Through this approach to Genesis 3,14, Luther aims to preserve “the historical and literal meaning” of the text\textsuperscript{220}. Luther seems to be contradictory, however: first, he praises the cunning of the serpent, but later

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\textsuperscript{218} LUTHER, \textit{Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis}. 1535 (WA, 42), p. 114 l. 16. Also Nicholas of Lyra takes to his \textit{Postilla litteralis} the ideas regarding the face of the serpent with a grain. See \textit{Biblia mit Glossa ordinaria, Postilla litteralis} (n. 177), fol. f4rb: “Aliqui tamen dicunt quod ille serpens habebat faciem gratiosam et virgineam, sed hoc de Scriptura nullam habet auctoritatem et ideo primum melius videtur”.


\textsuperscript{220} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 138 (36) – 139 (5). See also ASENDORF, \textit{Lectura in Biblia. Luthers Genesisvorlesung (1535-1545)} (n. 184), p. 332.
calls the serpent uncomprehending (or even stupid, as the Latin word “brutus” suggests). Luther (of course) thought that the form of the serpent changed after God’s curses: it had lost, for example, its attractiveness and had to crawl on its belly. However, he does not mention that the fall itself or punishments following it would have corrupted the intellectual abilities of the serpent. Luther’s interpretation therefore seems contradictory. Ephrem’s and Chrysostom’s commentaries, however, which I examined earlier, offer possible insights into this contradiction, even though Luther was evidently familiar only with the comments of the latter. Both Ephrem and Chrysostom called the natural serpent both cunning and uncomprehending: it was cunning compared to other animals, but uncomprehending and even mindless compared to humans. This may also be Luther’s understanding, even though he does not rationalize or express it in his commentary.

As in his preparations, the edited text also explains that the serpent becomes the victim of the Devil and must still suffer a punishment, though God’s words of curse are directed to the Devil rather than to serpent. Luther refers in the edited text to Augustine and Lyra, and argues that one should not use an allegorical approach to Gen 3,14, as do Augustine and Lyra, who follows the former. Namely, they allegorically (or figuratively, as Augustine suggests in his *De Genesi ad litteram*) apply the nature of the serpent to the Devil so that the punishments meted out in Gen 3,14 are intended only for the Devil, who used the serpent for his evil ends. Luther evidently opposes Augustine’s (*De Genesi ad litteram*) and Lyra’s view, which leaves little room for literal interpretation of the verse. Luther suggests that here also (and not only in Gen. 3,1) one should differentiate between the serpent and the Devil so that the Devil used the serpent as his instrument and, therefore, both must suffer punishment. Luther argues that God mentions only the serpent by name, even though he speaks to Satan and metes out the punishments to the Devil especially. Luther differentiates between the punishments of the Devil and the serpent: the latter receives only a corporal punishment (it must eat dust, crawl on its belly, lose its cuteness, live in enmity with humans, etc.), and the former another kind of punishment, which becomes evident in the verse Gen 3,15\(^\text{221}\). According to Luther, this verse, which is often called the proto-Gospel, promises the Devil a cosmic punishment when Christ destroys his

\(^{221}\) NIV: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel”.

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power by crushing his head\textsuperscript{222}. Luther also rationalizes why the serpent receives a corporal punishment, even though it was merely a victim of the Devil and (ab)used by him: the serpent was used in an act of such great evil that it is punished along with the actual offender in the same manner as the subjects suffer along with the errors of their ruler\textsuperscript{223}. In other words, Luther sees that, from a human perspective, there is not necessarily any clear logic between misconduct, punishment and justice in the earthly realm. Evil is something which also distresses “innocents”.

Through his conception of the serpent possessed by the Devil, Luther succeeds in connecting the Christian (and canonical) interpretation of the text (cf. to Luke 10,17-20 and Rev 12,9) to the literal meaning of Gen 3,1-8 (i.e. the serpent really is a serpent or some sort of animal, as Gen 3,1a\textsuperscript{224} suggests). These two aspects were already present in \textit{Declamationes}, as well as in Augustine’s \textit{De Genesi ad litteram}, which Luther was evidently familiar with, when he was preparing and giving his lectures. Luther namely refers to this source in his lectures on Genesis, and the Amerbach edition of Augustine’s work was available in the Wittenberg University Library when Luther held a chair there\textsuperscript{225}. In addition, it was evident according to \textit{Declamationes}, Luther was evidently familiar with Chrysostom’s interpretation of the serpent. Luther also knew another significant Christian scholar and Eastern father, John of Damascus, and referred a few times to \textit{Expositio Fidei orthodoxa}, where Damascus argued that the Devil used this intimate relationship for his own evil ends. Although Luther was

\textsuperscript{222} \textit{Luther, Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis.} 1535 (WA, 42), pp. 136 l. 21 – 147 l. 41. Cf. to Augustinus, \textit{De Genesi ad Litteram Libri duodecin} ed. MIGNE (PL, 34), cols. 449–450: “Proinde quod serpens, cur hoc fecerit non est interrogatus, potest videri quod non ipse utique id in sua natura et voluntate fecerat; sed diabolus de illo et per illum et in illo fuerat operatus, qui jam ex peccato impietatis ac superbiae suae igni destinatus fuerat sempiterno. Nunc ergo quod serpenti dicitur, et ad eum qui per serpentem operatus est utique referitur, procul dubio figuratum est: nam in his verbis tentator ille describitur, quals generi humano futurus esset; quod genus humanum propagari tunc coepit, quando haec in diabolum est tanquam in serpentem prolata sententia”; \textit{Biblia mit Glossa ordinaria, Postilla litteralis von Nicolaus de Lyra, Expositiones prologorum von Guilelmus Brito} (n. 177), fol. f6v.

\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Luther, Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis.} 1535 (WA, 42), p. 137 l. 22-28.

\textsuperscript{224} NIV: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made”.

evidently familiar with this source, he did not explicitly refer to Damascus’ concept of the serpent (Gen 3). One can therefore conclude that, with regards to the Eastern fathers, only Chrysostom had any evident influence on Luther's interpretation of the serpent. The Eastern fathers nevertheless shared many of the same theories, which were also evident in Luther's interpretation: the friendship between the serpent and humans before the fall, the Devil speaking through the serpent and using it for his own evil purposes, and the inferior intellect of the serpent in its natural state compared to human intellect.

In addition to Augustine and Chrysostom, Luther was familiar with the *Glossa ordinaria* and Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla literalis super to-tam Bibliam* as well as the complete Bible commentary published under the name of Hugh of St. Cher, and used them in his exegetic work. As Matt tox suggests, these earlier authors also shaped Luther “as a biblical reader, suggesting the kinds of questions that ought to be put to the text, showing how his predecessors had resolved problematic passages, and, perhaps most importantly, modeling Christian ways of appropriating the Old Testament”. In spite of this, Luther did not slavishly follow earlier authors, but criticized them (e.g. Lyra) with the authority of the Scripture. Luther’s evaluation of Nicholas of Lyra, for example, is ambiguous in his Lectures on Genesis. On the one hand, he gives credit to Lyra’s way of interpreting the Bible historically and considers him one of the best interpreters of the Bible. On the other hand, he finds that Lyra too closely follows the authority of the Fathers regarding their allegorical interpretations and, for example, the Jewish anti-trinitarian interpretation of Genesis. Regarding the serpent, Luther thought, just as Lyra did, that the serpent was possessed by the Devil or influenced through the serpent. However, Luther did not concur with Lyra’s interpretation according to which the woman in Gen 3 could sense the Devil in the serpent.

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228 LUTHER, *Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis*. 1535 (WA, 42), pp. 71 l. 15–20, 167 l. 5–13, 169 l. 5–26. See also pp. 17 l. 31–32 and 67 l. 11 – 69 l. 32, which betokens Luther’s ambiguous relationship to the (Church) fathers. In addition to the Church fathers, Luther also criticized and credited the ancient philosophers, for example, in his lectures: pp. 92 l. 6 – 98 l. 27, 152 l. 16–24 and 158 l. 24–28.
In addition to Augustine, Chrysostom, and Lyra, Luther evidently knew and concurred with the so-called *Glossa ordinaria* tradition and the complete commented Bible published under the name of Hugh of St. Cher regarding the Christian paradigm of the possession of the serpent by the Devil. Although Luther was evidently familiar with these sources, he did not slavishly follow them in all things regarding the possession of the serpent. Luther deviated from these medieval sources and concurred with patristic sources in one significant matter: the latter emphasized the cunningness of the serpent as a suitable tool for the Devil – just as Luther did. Although Luther concurred more with the patristic than the medieval tradition, he also separated himself from patristic authors: for example, Luther criticized both Augustine and Lyra for failing to differentiate between the serpent and the Devil in Gen 3,14. As the next section will demonstrate, Luther also constructed his own arguments that the serpent of Gen 3 was possessed by the diabolical spirit.

3. *The Roots of Luther’s Interpretation: John 8,44 and Fallen Angel(s)*

Luther’s interpretation of the possession of the serpent by the Devil is based on his theory of fallen angels.\(^{229}\) When Luther explains Genesis 1,6 (“And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water’”. [NIV]), he argues that the Bible, and especially Genesis, handles fallen angels narrowly. Luther says that Moses “forgot” to handle two major issues in Genesis 1,6: the creation and fall of angels. Luther not only marvels here at why Moses mentions nothing about angels in Genesis 1,6, but also gives a reason for this: “Moses wrote to uneducated and untrained people”. Thus, Moses focused only on those issues which were useful and necessary (for uneducated and untrained people) to know. Because Genesis and the New Testament say little about such angels, Luther believes it is also enough for him and his listeners to know what the Bible (cf. to Gen 3, John 8,44 and Rev 20,1-2) says about angels: namely that there are good and bad angels (including the Devil), and that God created them “equally” good.\(^{230}\) Luther is careful not to make too far-reaching conclu-

\(^{229}\) By Luther’s theory of fallen angels, I do not refer to any of his systematic presentations on the subject (if there is any), but simply to what he argues about angels when he analyzes, in his lectures, the first chapters of Genesis. Note also that, in addition to his distinctions between good and fallen angels, Luther discusses cherubs and seraphs: LUTHER, *Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis*. 1535 (WA, 42), pp. 174 l. 41 – 176 17.

sions based on some of the biblical texts and even criticizes those (allegorical) interpretations which do not fit the literal meaning of the text: Luther notes that Isaiah 14 refers not explicitly to Lucifer, as some were apt to think, but to the king of Babylon.231

Because neither Moses nor the other books of the Bible offer much information regarding fallen angels, Luther argues that this omission of information opens a door to various fabricated ideas. Luther refers, for example, to the Battle of the Church,232 which describes how good angels fought against bad ones who sought to conquer divinity. He also refers to Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), who thought that Lucifer saw “in God” that a human being would be elevated in nature over the angels; Lucifer envied this happiness and fell. Luther’s relationship to these fabricated ideas is ambiguous. On the one hand, these ideas have some value, but on the other hand, he does not encourage anyone to agree with these opinions.233 Already in the section which concentrated on Luther’s antecedents, it became evident that the idea of the fall of the angels was quite common in Christianity. This idea was present, for example, in the Latin Life of Adam and Eve,234 the comments of Augustine and Chrysostom, the so-called Glossa ordinaria tradition and in the complete commented Bible published under the name of Hugh of St. Cher.

A bit later in the commentary, Luther agrees more or less with these opinions and specifies his concise doctrine of angels: just like the first humans, angels were also originally in a sort of middle stage where they were created in a stage of innocence with a chance to fall from it. If all the angels and humans had remained in this stage of innocence, they would later have been confirmed (“confirmare”) so as not to fall, as (the Church)

I describes how God created the expanse between the waters (cf. to Gen 1,6: “And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.’ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it”; NIV). The connection here between angels and Genesis 6 remains unclear. It is also notable that these verses speak of the events of the second day, when the first animals, for example, were created not until the fifth day and humans not till the sixth day (cf. to Gen 1,20-31). Thus, it seems that for Luther, angels were something essential in the created world – so essential in fact, that Moses should have mentioned something about them before the creation of, for example, the land and seas (cf. to Gen 1,9-10).

231 Ibid., pp. 18 l. 16-24, 85 l. 27-34. See KELLY, Satan a Biography (n. 140), pp. 8, 177–179, 194–196, 230, from which it becomes evident that Origen, Justin, Tertullian and Cyprian, for example, saw a (metaphorical) connection between the King of Babylon and Satan (or the Antichrist).

232 I could not identify to what source Luther is actually referring here.


fathers suggest according to Luther. Actually, good angels did not fall earlier and they cannot fall from their current being: their good status is confirmed. Still, the first humans and large number of the angels fell. When Luther focuses on fallen angels, he refers to John 8,44, where Christ says that the Devil could not hold to the truth. Luther explains that (the Church) fathers imagined a battle or a rebellion between angels such that some of the angels began to favor the most beautiful angel, who exalted himself over the others because of his particular gifts. Luther considers this “imagination” of Fathers probable because it is in accordance with John 8,44 (the Devil could not hold to the truth) and Jude 6 (evil angels left their habitation and became apostates).

This Luther’s doctrine of angels rests in the background when he explains the possession of the serpent. According to Luther, the Devil could not tolerate the creation and positions of the first humans. He also envied their hope for eternal life, which he had himself already lost, after their blissful life in Paradise. Therefore, the Devil began his contrivance in Paradise. There is one particular passage of the New Testament to which Luther repeatedly refers when he describes his idea of the possession of the serpent: John 8,44. Luther thought that John 8:44 sheds light on the third chapter of Genesis, which he considered at least in some measure to be one of the “shadowy” places of the Old Testament. According to Luther, the Devil as the liar and murderer from the beginning (John 8,44) murdered Adam and Eve “through sin” when he ascended over the divine commandment and promised them that they would be god-like if they eat from “the forbidden tree”.

According to Luther, the Devil in John 8,44 and the serpent in Gen 3 are both liars and vicious. The Gospel of John clarifies that it really was the Devil who influenced through the serpent. However, even before the Gospel of John was written, “holy fathers and prophets” (probably the patriarchs and the prophets of the Old Testament) easily saw through the illumination of the Holy Spirit that the deception in Genesis three was not the work of a serpent, but of a murderous and lying spirit:

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235 Luther, Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis. 1535 (WA, 42), pp. 84 l. 15 – 85 l. 42.
236 Ibid., pp. 84 l. 15 – 85 l. 42.
238 Ibid., pp. 112 l. 40 – 113 l. 42, 142 l. 42 – 143 l. 1, 163 l. 1-8. See also p. 62 l. 19-21, where Luther seems to admit that the Bible contains obscure verses: “Sicut testantur manifestae promissiones de vita aeterna, quas Deus nobis post illas obscuras significationes, qualis haec de requie Dei et sanctificatione sabbati est, per verbum suum revelavit”.
239 Ibid., pp. 112 l. 40 – 113 l. 42. See also pp. 18 l. 32, 141 l. 16-21, 162 l. 19-25, and 163 l. 1-8.
Moreover, the fathers realized this very thing on the basis of the following reasoning: It is certain that at that time all creatures were in perfect obedience, according to the statement (Gen. 1:31): “And God saw all that He made, and it was very good.” But here, in the case of the serpent, a spirit betrays itself who is the enemy of God and who corrupts the Word of God in order by this means to lead the innocent human being into sin and death. It is clear, therefore, that in the serpent there was something worse, something that could properly be called the adversary of God, a lying and murderous spirit, in whom there is the utmost and most awful smugness. He is not afraid to distort the command of God and to urge man on to idolatry, which he knew would result in the destruction of the entire human race. All this is truly horrible when we appraise it properly; and even now, among the papists and other sects, we see instances of a similar smugness, with which they distort the Word of God and lead people astray.

Here it becomes evident that Luther wanted to interpret Genesis chapter three in the light of the Gospel. However, he did not intend to argue that this might work other way around, so that Genesis chapter three would enlighten the Gospel. Luther is also aware that this type of approach, which reads the Old Testament through the New Testament, is disputable. The idea that the New Testament enlightens the “shadowy places” of the Old Testament was naturally problematic for the Jews. According to Luther, the Jews sought to deny the Christian approach to Genesis three and argued that the serpent in no way referred to the Devil, but to an ordinary animal. Luther argued against these Jewish interpretations using a synecdoche for clarifying why John 8,44 proved that the serpent was possessed by the Devil in Genesis three. By synecdoche, Luther means here that one could notice “under the instrument” (cf. to the serpent) the real author (cf. to the Devil). Thus, to Luther, both things are correct: in Paradise dwelled a “natural serpent” (Lat. “serpens naturalis”), and in this natural serpent dwelt the “ancient serpent” (Lat. “antiquus serpens”), the Devil, who was the real deceiver and killer of the first humans. Luther suggests that the principal meaning of John 8,44 is actually that the Devil is the cause of this

accident, just as the cause for (ordinary) murder is not in the weapon, but in the individual who uses it.\textsuperscript{241}

Luther also supports his position by arguing that John 8,44 and the third chapter of Genesis together betoken that an ordinary serpent would be unable to dispute the word and will of God, unlike Satan who did not hold the truth (cf. to John 8,44). It would have been impossible for an ordinary serpent to dispute in this way, because it was subjugated to the first humans. Here Luther probably had in mind the first creation story (see Gen 1,28) even though he does not refer to it. Because it was impossible for the natural serpent, with its natural abilities, to persuade the first humans to eat from the forbidden tree, Luther argues that the cleverness of the serpent ascends to the supernatural level. In other words, Luther thought that the serpent’s natural cleverness was inadequate to deceive the first humans; rather, the serpent had to have Satan’s cleverness, which is superior to the cleverness of humans.\textsuperscript{242}

In summary, Luther refers and clings to John 8,44 so often because he finds that this passage corroborates his interpretation: that the serpent in Gen 3 was possessed by the Devil. However, Luther is also aware that Gen 3 by itself cannot be interpreted in this way without any doubt. Luther therefore disputes the Jewish interpretation, which claims that the serpent was just an ordinary animal. According to Luther, however, the literal meaning of the text already proved that the serpent could not be merely an ordinary serpent because it was indeed cleverer than the first humans, the rulers of creation (including the serpent). Because of its cunningness, the serpent had to be possessed by a creature with higher powers than humans: hence, the Devil. Still, Luther sought to preserve the literal meaning of Genesis so that it was also referring to the natural serpent. In this way, Luther’s interpretation forms a logical and coherent system, if indeed Gen 3 can be interpreted in the light of the New Testament: the literal meaning and the possession of the serpent are not exclusive interpretations. It is also evident that Luther interprets the serpent in Gen 3 in a similar fashion to his preparations and \textit{Declamationes}: the serpent was a natural serpent, but possessed by the vicious Devil whose intellectual powers were above the natural level and exceeded animal and human intelli-

\textsuperscript{241} Luther, \textit{Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis.} 1535 (WA, 42), pp. 162 l. 22 – 163 l. 37. See also p. 109 l. 25-32.

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., p. 113 l. 34-42. See also pp. 114 l. 12: “Porro hic quoque admonemur de permissione divina, quod Diabolo permissum est invadere bestias, sicut hic invasit serpentem. Non enim dubium est verum Serpentem fuisse, in quo Satan fuit et cum Heua collocutus est” and 138 l. 36 – 139 l. 5.
gence. The edited version of Luther’s Genesis lectures (1535–1545) differentiates between preparations and *Declamationes* in the sense that it is more extensive and includes more speculative elements. Nevertheless, the edited version of Luther’s Genesis lectures, his preparations, and *Declamationes* share so many similarities that there is no reason to believe that the conception of the serpent possessed by the Devil would have constituted some sort of slip on Luther’s part or editorial “improvement”.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This article has explored in detail the ancient and medieval traditions of the possession of the serpent of Gen 3 by the Devil. This conception of the serpent influenced or possessed by the Devil likely appears for the first time in the pseudepigraph known as the *Life of Adam and Eve*. However, it is extremely difficult (and even impossible) to construct the original form of this work. In addition, the date of the original form remains debated. It is therefore probable, though not evident, that this pseudepigraph is the first source to claim that the Devil used the serpent for its evil ends and spoke through it. In addition to the *Life of Adam and Eve*, the conception of the serpent possessed by the Devil prevailed in early and medieval Christianity (e.g., in Armenian, Greek, Latin, and Syrian exegesis). This conception also dominated Martin Luther’s comments on the serpent of Gen 3. Some scholars and sources did not explicitly postulate that the serpent was possessed; rather, they argued that it became a vessel through which the Devil spoke. It is clear, however, that these scholars and sources also denoted implicitly that the serpent was possessed by the serpent, if the possession is understood in the sense that some outer force commandeers its object.

In sum, this article offered, firstly, a thorough and pioneering exegetical survey of the concept of the serpent possessed by the Devil (Gen. 3) from its origins to Martin Luther’s comments in the 16th century. Secondly, this article focused especially on Martin Luther’s comments on Gen 3 and highlighted the kinds of sources Luther used to construct his conceptions. With his conception of the serpent possessed by the Devil in Gen 3, Luther concurred with a paradigm which originated, for example, from pseudepigraphic literature (e.g. the *Life of Adam and Eve*) and from the early commentators and Church fathers.

Because the idea of the serpent possessed by the Devil was in its various forms prominent in early Christian commentaries in both the East and West, as well as in medieval exegesis, the question of whether Lu-
ther's approach brings anything 'new' to this conception deserves to be asked. Perhaps Luther's most important contribution to this tradition is that he thoroughly clarified and explained the 'logic' behind this odd-sounding conception: on the one hand, Luther sought mainly to preserve the literal meaning of the text, yet on the other hand, he also used the synecdoche approach to describe the possession of the Devil. By synecdoche, Luther meant that one could notice "under the instrument" (the serpent) the real author (the Devil), as Gen 3 and John 8,44 revealed. According to Luther, John 8,44 illuminated Gen 3 such that it also unquestionably referred to the Devil. Luther's approach here is evidently canonical and resembles his famous idea that Scripture interpreted itself or, as Vítor Westhelle suggests, "the scripture is in itself the interpreter" (*Scriptura sacra sui ipsius interpres*). However, Luther also thought that the inner structure of the text already revealed that the Devil was in the serpent: a normal serpent could not dispute the commandments of God; such a dispute required an extremely intelligent being – the Devil.

Through the conception that the serpent was possessed by the Devil, Luther could also preserve both the 'simple' meaning of the text (the serpent is really a serpent) and the Christian tradition of allegories and canonical approaches which defended the spiritual meaning of the text (the serpent resembles the Devil). In this sense, Luther's conception closely resembles Chrysostom's *Homilies on Genesis* and Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*, with which he was arguably familiar. Luther also knew medieval sources such as the *Glossa ordinaria* tradition, Lyra's *Postilla literalis super totam Bibliam*, and the complete commented Bible published under the name of Hugh of St. Cher, all of which also concurred with the prevailing Christian tradition of the serpent possessed by the Devil. Luther, however, deviated from these medieval sources and concurred with patristic sources in one significant matter: the latter emphasized the cunningness of the serpent as a suitable tool for the Devil – just as Luther did. Luther did not slavishly follow patristic sources, however. Rather, he criticized Augustine and Lyra because they failed to differentiate between the Devil and the serpent with regards to the punishment in Gen 3,14.

Jussi Koivisto, University of Helsinki

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5. Is it Possible to Choose Evil? Interpretation of the Fall in Early Lutheranism

Introduction

Genesis chapter three is one of the best known narratives in the history of Christian ideas. St. Paul, among others, refers to this story in his Epistle to the Romans (5:12–21) in which he describes how sin entered the world through one human being. Genesis chapter three has indeed been given a title “Syntiinlankeemuskertonmus” (Engl. “The story of the Fall”; verses 1–19) and “Karkotus paratiisista” (Engl. “Expulsion from Paradise”; verses 20–24) in the 1992 Church Bible (KR 1992). Although in this story the word sin is not explicitly mentioned, it can still be called “The Fall.” It describes, namely, how the first humans led by the serpent broke the only commandment of God. It is, therefore, difficult to invent a more apposite definition for the story – after all, sin (Hebr. רַעַת, Gr. ἁμαρτία, Lat. peccatum) means literally both guilt and transgression.244

Genesis chapter three is considered, for example in the western history of ideas, to be describing the tragic separation of human beings from God. Often, particularly the human being is considered as the active party in this separation: it was the human being who turned her and his back on God by eating from the forbidden tree. The current Catechism of the Catholic Church, for example, emphasizes that the original root of the Fall was in the human being. Although the Catechism on the other hand adduces that the Devil (not the serpent) enticed the first humans to be like God or to be even better than God, but nonetheless “without God, before God, and not in accordance with God,” it emphasizes human choice. It speaks about, among other things, the disobedient choice of the first humans and how a human being “chose himself over and against God,

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244 Liljeqvist 2004, p. 145; Lust, Eynikel & Hauspie 2003, p. 31; Georges 1998, p. 1526. One must also notice that the word sin is explicitly mentioned for the first time in the fourth chapter (4:7) which discusses Cain and Abel and the first killing of a brother. Furthermore, the word peccatum and its derivatives, for example, are explicitly mentioned 460 times in the Latin Old Testament and 232 times in the New Testament (see BP)! Thus sin is one of the most central concepts of the Bible. All Biblical scholars have not been satisfied with describing the whole, expressed in the verses 1–19, as “The Fall.” For example, see Räisänen 2006, p. 152 and Arnold 2009, p. 62. However, I consider “the Fall” a proper description of the story where the first humans and the serpent trespass God’s only commandment, prohibition or warning (“but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die”; NIV), and therefore experience their share of various troubles. Because of this, and due to an established practice and for the purpose of clarity, in this article this story, including verses 20–24, is described as “(The Story of) the Fall.”
against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good.” According to the Catechism, the human being misused her or his freedom in this way.\(^{245}\) The possibility to choose between good and evil exemplifies a feature of human autonomy strongly emphasized in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. A similar emphasis can be seen in the decrees of the Council of Trent from the year 1546, where Adam’s transgression is especially emphasized and where it is adduced that after baptism what remains is *concupiscencia*, or stimulus to sin, to which an individual can choose not to assent.\(^{246}\)

In the current Catechism of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Genesis chapter three is not analyzed.\(^{247}\) This is understandable, however, because the Finnish Catechism is considerably more concise than the present Catechism of the Catholic Church. Instead, the official interpretation of Genesis chapter three of (Finnish) Lutherans is based mainly on the Bible and the Book of Concord (see Church law 1:1; Church order 1:1). In the Book of Concord and also in Martin Luther’s interpretation, on which for example the conceptions of the Formula of Concord are based, human activity remains to the side and various forces, which come from outside of the human being, serve as the actual cause for the Fall. Here also inheres the crucial difference between Lutheranism and Catholicism. Unlike in Catholicism, according to early Lutherans, a human being could not choose evil, but in consequence of God’s hidden providence evil overcame the human being.

With the term early Lutherans, I refer to Luther and the Formula of Concord. However, it is good to remember that Luther’s colleague, Philipp Melanchthon was not nearly as monergistic\(^ {248}\) as Luther and did not support God’s sovereignty as rectilinearly regarding the cooperation (or the synergy) between a human being and God as Luther did. The question, as to what extent Melanchthon and his followers diverged from Luther, is not possible to examine in this article. Instead, I use as my source those documents which have been significant and have served an official position also for later Lutheranism: the Formula of Concord and the edition of Luther’s lectures on Genesis held during the years 1535–1545 (WA 42–44) to which the Formula of Concord refers in support of its opinion.

\(^{245}\) CCC (390–391, 397–398), pp. 110, 112.
\(^{246}\) CDDCT, 17.6.1546 (84–88), *Decretum de peccato originali*; *Degree concerning Original Sin*.
\(^{247}\) SELK.
\(^{248}\) For more on monergism, see Teinonen (1999, p. 215).
Luther’s Interpretation of the Fall and the Origin of Evil

Research history

*Lutherjahrbuch* journal has been issued since 1919 except for some years during the Second World War. Listed at the end of the journal are particular categories of publications relating to Luther. One category consists of studies on Luther’s theology and fields relating to it. Going through all the studies on Luther since 1919, one gets a good picture of the themes that are emphasized and repeated year after year. Luther’s conceptions of righteousness and justification belong to these repeated themes. On the other hand, it is strange that Luther’s conception of original sin or Genesis chapter three is not researched much – at least not from the point of the freedom of human choice. In addition, there are no earlier studies of the interpretation of the Formula of Concord of Genesis chapter three.

However, there are some studies which are closely related to the subject matter. For Finnish theologians probably the best known is Eero Huovinen’s study *Kuolemattomuudesta osallinen: Martti Lutherin kuoleman teologian ekumeeninen perusongelma* (1981). Huovinen’s study concentrates mainly on the immortal status in Paradise preceding the Fall, and therefore, it does not analyze Luther’s interpretation of Genesis chapter three.

In the recent past, studies on Luther’s lectures on Genesis have also touched upon his interpretations of “The Fall.” In his study *Lectura in Biblia: Luthers Genesisvorlesung (1535–1545)* Ulrich Asendorf examines Luther’s interpretation presented in his lectures on Genesis, and taking into consideration Luther’s interpretations of the later narrations of Genesis (inter alia the Flood). Asendorf posits that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not itself harmful according to Luther, but only became so when the first humans broke God’s commandment. In addition, Asendorf remarks that Luther also presents the idea in his lectures that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil could have been located in the same place as Golgatha: in this way death and damnation and life and holiness

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249 For more on Luther’s conception of sin, see Lubomir Batka’s dissertation *Peccatum radicale: Eine Studie zu Luthers Erbsündeverständnis in Psalm 51*. In this study, Batka does not refer to Luther’s lectures on Genesis and its interpretation of Genesis chapter three, but focuses on the interpretation of Psalm 51, as becomes evident from the title of his study.

250 Recently, other interesting studies regarding Luther’s Commentary on Genesis have been published. For example, see Schwanke 2004.
would have corresponded with each other. According to Luther, it is impossible to track the exact location of Paradise any longer and it may well have been located somewhere else. Asendorf also presents interesting observations from the point of view of this article. According to him, Satan perverts human understanding so that she or he will doubt the will of God. Likewise it corrupts the best will of a human being, who then becomes rebellious against God. Such corruption of intellect and will leads to the fact that the human being takes the apple from the tree and tastes it. On the basis of this, Asendorf summarizes Luther’s conception: “All evil follows from disbelief or doubt on the Word and in God.” Asendorf, however, does not examine Luther’s interpretation of the Fall further from the point of view of human activity or causality.

The latest study analyzing Luther’s lectures on Genesis is John A. Maxfield’s *Luther’s Lectures on Genesis and the Formation of Evangelical Identity* (2008). Maxfield touches upon Luther’s interpretation of Genesis chapter three when he analyzes Luther’s conceptions of the history of the church. According to Maxfield’s study, Luther “compressed all human history into the history of the church between God and the devil.” This battle between God and the Devil for the church was already begun from the first verses of Genesis chapter three.

Both Mickey Leland Mattox and Kristen E. Kvam have produced studies in recent decades, which are closely related to Luther’s interpretation of Genesis chapter three. They have focused especially on questions regarding gender and womanhood. The most extensive of these

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251 In this article, I also use such terms for Satan as the Devil (cf. German *Teufel*, Lat. *diabolus*), because according to Luther and early Lutherans they were one and the same being.

252 Asendorf (1998) speaks about the apple (*Apfel*). Luther, however, suggests in WA 42 (Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis per reverendum Patrem dominum D. Mart. Lutherum in Schola Wittembergensi, 1535/38), p. 122 (10-19) that it was a fruit that is in Latin called *pomum*.

253 Asendorf 1998, p. 334. Asendorf studies the Fall in the pages 327–346, see especially p. 334, 342. Luther’s conception that Calvary and Paradise would have been located in the same place is a geographical impossibility. For more, see Wenham (1987, p. 66) which indicates that there has been a lot of discussion about the location of Eden. According to Wenham, the less problematic theory is the one which locates the Paradise of Eden at the top of the Persian Gulf. On the other hand, a strong metaphoricality is often connected to Paradise. Also Luther connects metaphorical elements and considers that Paradise was lost and destroyed because of the Flood, although on the other hand he thinks that it was a concrete place: WA 42, pp. 66 (28)–69 (32), 74 (3)–77 (20).


255 See e.g., Bell 2005, pp. 159–184; Kvam, Schearing & Ziegler (eds.) 1999; Kvam 2004; Kvam 1992; Mattox 2003; Mattox 2009. In addition, many Luther-scholars have briefly touched on Luther’s interpretation of Gen 3, see for example Kolb 2009, pp. 106–109. Au-
In the first main chapter, which is titled “Temptation and Fall,” Mattox investigates the young Luther’s interpretation of Genesis chapter three. In this place, Mattox focuses the analysis on the manner in which Luther understood the Fall of Adam and Eve. According to Luther, Eve fell because the serpent convinced her and Adam fell because the serpent and the woman both prevailed upon him. These first humans fell prey first to doubt and from doubt to disbelief which, according to Luther, is the greatest sin. Mattox also examines especially Eve’s Fall on the basis of Luther’s lectures on Genesis (1535–1545). According to his analysis, Luther’s interpretation changes in regard to his earlier comments. The young Luther presented a view that, in spite of the serpent’s deception, Eve acted as the heretic archetype. In the lectures on Genesis the heretic archetype was, instead of Eve, rather Satan who distorted God’s word in the same manner as Arius. In addition, the older Luther does not emphasize Eve’s inferiority to Adam, but instead their equality. According to Luther, Satan led Eve to unbelief with his words in the same manner as God produces faith with His words. In regard to this, Mattox refers to the lectures on Genesis as follows: “The poison of Satan she drank with her ears; she stretched out her hand to the forbidden fruit; and she ate it with her mouth”. According to Mattox, this quotation reflects how, according to Luther, Eve was easily led to the violation of divine positive law, because she no longer had faith. However, Mattox does not develop this anthropologically interesting part further than this.

The Devil’s Poison and the Fall of the First Humans

Luther’s lectures on Genesis have had significant influence on later Lutheranism – also otherwise than what concerns the Formula of Concord. In
his study Eero Huovinen, for example, notes that this work was commonly held as Luther's theological “testament.” In addition, Luther himself was aware that this work would remain his last great work. This becomes evident, for example, from the quotation of 1535: “After this, we will explain Genesis as long as God prolongs our life so that we eventually will happily die in God’s word and deed – –.”258 Because the Formula of Concord also appreciates Luther’s lectures on Genesis, it is evident that it is a significant work for Lutheranism.

In addition to the significant status of Luther’s lectures on Genesis, they are an interesting object of research, because they will give the extensive and multidimensional description of the first phases of humanity and the world.259 Reading the lectures is occasionally a challenge because of the manifoldness and extensiveness of its themes. Luther is connected in some measure to the medieval ennarratio tradition which was typical in cloisters. To this tradition belonged extensive narration as an essential feature, as becomes evident from the word ennarratio (Engl., an explanation, oral lecturing, or an interpretation).260 The edited version of the lectures is partly headed in accordance with the medieval ennarratio tradition: Enarratio in I. Cap. per reverendum Patrem Dominum D. Mart. Lutherum in Schola Wittenbergensi, In Genesin Enarrationum Reverendi Patris Domini Doctoris Martini Lutheri, bona fide et diligenter collectarum, per Vitum Theodorum. Although the edited version of Luther’s lectures is the longest of all Luther’s works, it is not particularly extensive in regard to the medieval ennarratio tradition.261

The descriptions of the lectures on Genesis concerning the Fall of the first humans include colorful and narrative elements. Accord-

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258 Quotation from Huovinen 1981, pp. 20–23. See also Maxfield 2008 where there is an excellent and detailed introduction to Luther’s lectures on Genesis. Maxfield brings out (p. 8) the observation also made by Erich Seeberg from 1932, according to which Lutheran theology is based over and over again on the edition of Luther’s lectures on Genesis. According to Maxfield, this modern estimation describes the enthusiasm with which Luther’s lectures were published in the 16th century and the acceptance their publication received. Maxfield, however, does not indicate whether this enthusiasm was justified or not.

259 WA 42, 43 (Enavocatio, 1538/42; In Genesin Enarrationum Reverendi Patris Domini Doctoris Martini Lutheri, bona fide et diligenter collectarum per Hieronymum Besoldum Noribergensem, 1538/42), and 44 (Enarratio, 1543/45; In Genesin Enarrationum Reverendi Patris Domini Doctoris Martini Lutheri, Bona Fide et diligenter collectarum, per Hieronymum Besoldum, 1543/45). The Latin edition is approximately 2,000 pages long.

260 Georges 1998, p. 2416. Maxfield 2008, p. 23; WA 42, pp. 3 (12-14), 429 (1-3); See also Hagen 1993, pp. 49–66, esp. pp. 57–58, 64; Mattox 2003, p. 2; Maxfield 2008, p. 7: “The first volume of his Genesis lectures, entitled In primum librum Mose enarrationes, appeared in 1544 and contained Luther’s own preface and postscript; thus his acceptance of the volume was not tacit but clearly articulated.”
ing to Luther, the actual guilty one for the Fall was not the human being but Satan, who used the serpent with God’s permission as his instrument in leading the first humans to fall. “The architect” of the fall, that is Satan, possessed the serpent which, already before this possession, was referred to as the most cunning animal in Paradise. According to Luther, through this possession the cunningness of the serpent transcended above its natural level of cunning that of a sharper quality. Because the spirit of the Devil, therefore, possesses and takes over the serpent, it is no longer submitted under human dominion like the other animals of Paradise. The serpent suited the schemes of the Devil also because, according to Luther, before the Fall it was a beautiful (and even the most beautiful) little animal which, before the punishment that followed the Fall, “walked erect just like a rooster” and was fed upon the fruits of Paradise. Because of the punishment following the Fall, the serpent had to crawl and eat dust; in addition to which, its appearance became scaly and its bite poisonous.

With his interpretation, that is the serpent possessed by Satan, Luther aims to clarify how an animal submitted under human dominion (cf. Gen. 1:26) could delude and lead a human being into the Fall. For Luther, Satan was a natural explanation for the human Fall, because some parts of the Bible referred to the Devil as the serpent (e.g., Luke 10:17–20; Rev. 12:9). Luther, however, does not explicitly refer to these parts of the Bible.

According to Luther, Satan possessed the serpent, with the aid of his skilfully performed words, so that it could persuade Eve to see the tree in a sinful light. Satan caused the Fall by imitating God and countering His word. These words and a new kind of teaching led a human being into disbelief and to separation from obeying God’s commandments. According to Luther, the serpent possessed by the Devil, as it were, “painted” with his words a new and distorted picture of God so that the humans would not recognize the distortion. For Eve, therefore, it was extremely difficult to discern this kind of scheme, because the serpent possessed by

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262 Luther’s statement rings comic, but is a plausible explanation of Genesis chapter three, as it is said in verse 3:14 “So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, ‘Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.’” (NIV). In other words, crawling is the part of the punishment that follows the Fall and before this the serpent may have walked.

263 WA 42, pp. 110 (3) – 114 (11). See, especially WA 42, p. 113 (34-38): “Sed haec astucia supra illam naturalem astuciam Serpentis est, quod cum homine disputat de verbo et voluntate Dei. Hoc serpentis ex natura conditionis suae non potuit, qui fuit subditus hominis imperio. Spiritus autem, qui in Serpente loquitur, sic callidus est, ut hominem vincat, et persuadeat comedere de frugtu ligni prohibiti.”
the Devil disputed with her about the will of God and referred to “God, the congregation, and the name of God’s nation” as his authority. According to Luther, Satan did not entice these first humans into disobeying prohibitions easier to discern which would have been among other things whoring and murder. Enticement for these flagrant sins would, namely, have been so transparent that it would hardly remain unnoticed from the first humans who still lived in the state of innocent. However, the scheme, which includes a new comprehension and (mental) image of God, could only be discerned by the most acute evaluation of the spirit. As an example of the type of evaluation required, Luther mentions Christ who could, among other things, resist Satan’s temptation to jump off the pinnacle of the temple.264

According to Luther, a human being simply did not have enough spiritual capacity (that is, as acute an ability to evaluate as Christ exhibited) to resist Satan’s intelligent wiles. Luther seems to presume that other commandments were also familiar to the first human beings. However, this kind interpretation is problematic. The text of Genesis does not give references to any other commandments before the Fall except the prohibition to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Other commandments mentioned by Luther are given only in Exodus (Ex. 20:13–14), after all. On the other hand, one has to remember that, apparently behind Luther’s interpretation has been the idea according to which the first humans living in the state of innocence would immediately notice such flagrant transgressions as would destroy God’s creation. In other words, Luther probably thought that morals and the commandments attached to them were universal and timeless so that sinning was never part of God’s creation.

According to Luther’s interpretation, the Fall becomes, therefore, in a manner of speaking, outside human being through the serpent possessed by the Devil. Luther even notices that the Devil starts the debate which led to the Fall. According to Luther, in the beginning Eve was able to resist the temptation by appealing to God’s word: “We eat the fruits of the trees which are in Paradise. But, from the tree, which is in the middle of Paradise, God has commanded us not to eat or to touch so that we perhaps (forte) would not die.” (Gen. 3:2–3, Vulgate). According to Luther, one should notice from Eve’s words that she has added the word perhaps to God’s absolute prohibition and threat. After all, God’s original prohibition was: “And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from

264 WA 42, pp. 110 (3) – 112 (39). See also, WA 42, pp. 81 (33) – 82 (4).
any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” (NIV).

According to Luther, the addition of perhaps is a sign that the Devil has already evoked sinful doubts in Eve and has made her question God’s commandment. Actually, Luther understands the corruptive words of the Devil speaking through the serpent in such concrete terms that he concludes that Eve’s heart has been polluted by Satan’s poison: Sic veneno Satanae cor Heuae nunc infectum est. According to Luther, the Devil acknowledges that his speech has begun to work its influence; therefore, in a manner of speaking, he heightens his “satanic rhetoric” by saying: “You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4–5; NIV). In this way, Eve is gradually poisoned by the words of Satan and begins following Satan’s argumentation in an increasingly disarmed manner.

Satan hinders her “soul and eyes” failing to see or sense the death; in her “burns the lust of fruit” increasingly and she “thrives in this idolatry and sin.” According to Luther, in this manner, Eve’s impatience increases to such an extent that sin descends to her lower members and bursts out of the heart. If Satan had not separated Eve from the word of God, she would have been disgusted by looking at the fruit in order to eat it. Through these strong figures of speech, Luther attempts to emphasize how serious an essence-shattering transformation this was: seeing the tree in the new light was not only a matter of an opinion, but a radical transformation inside her. It was the question of the total transformation of the essence and world view to unbelief and disobedience; in addition all of her members were leavened by this unbelief and disobedience.

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265 WA 42, pp. 116 (20) – 117 (14). About satanic rhetoric, see WA 42, p. 117 (15-25). I have translated the quotation in the body type from that text of Vulgate which Luther used when he analyzed this particular verse (WA 42, p. 116 (30–33): “Cui respondit mulier: De fructu lignorum, quae sunt in Paradiso, vescimur; De fructu vero ligni, quod est in medio Paradisi, praecepit nobis Deus, ne comederemus, neque tangeremus illud, ne forte moriamur”). See also Mattox 2003, p. 44, regarding the first woman’s insertions into the commandment of God.

266 WA 42, pp. 116 (30) – 117 (33), 120 (5) – 127 (5).

267 WA 42, p. 120 (11-21).

268 WA 42, p. 123 (19-25). See also WA 42, p. 123 (4-5), from which it becomes evident that Eve would have died, if the Devil had not “closed” her spiritual eyes before she started to grasp for the fruit. The statement of this part remains (at least for me) somewhat unclear, because Luther does not explain his conception more carefully in this context.
According to Luther, Eve is eventually so poisoned by Satan’s lies that she “saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” (Gen. 3:6; NIV). The reason for the sin, however, was not the bite from the fruit. Instead, Eve saw the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the new and sinful light already before the bite: the tree was no longer a place for divine service but a place to know good and evil. The tree represented, according to Luther, receiving novel wisdom. This wisdom, however, was not true wisdom, but rather Satan’s poison which surpassed all the senses. Eve was, therefore, close to losing true wisdom, which was based on God’s word and which earlier enlightened her heart. To this wisdom belonged the knowledge of all creatures in addition to the knowledge of God. Satan’s poison, however, not only caused the lack of trust and faith towards God, but also other transgressions.\^{269}

Therefore Satan here attacks Adam and Eve in this way to deprive them of the Word and to make them believe his lie after they have lost the Word and their trust in God. Is it a wonder that when this happens, man later on becomes proud, that he is a scorners of God and of men, that he becomes an adulterer or a murderer? Truly, therefore, this temptation is the sum of all temptations; it brings with it the overthrow or the violation of the entire Decalog. Unbelief is the source of all sins; when Satan brought about this unbelief by driving out or corrupting the Word, the rest was easy for him.\^{270}

From the destruction of God’s commandment and right worship follows the engendering of sins crasser and easier to discern. The Fall occurred through “the poisoning” caused by the serpent. Luther terms this comprehensive depravity and poisoning original sin which is inherited by all mankind.\^{271}

According to Luther, Satan had, therefore, closed Eve’s eyes and heart with disbelief and with disobedience. Luther means by this distinction that Eve’s physical and spiritual eyes were shut. When Eve (and

\^{269} WA 42, pp. 116 (30) – 117 (33), 120 (5) – 127 (5).
\^{270} Translation from LW 1 (\textit{Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1–5}), p. 147; Cf. WA 42, pp. 110 (38) – 111 (3).
\^{271} WA 42, p. 112 (32-39). About Luther’s conception of original sin corrupting the entire human essence, see: WA 42, pp. 86 (17) – 87 (8).
her husband) ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their eyes were opened (cf. Gen. 3:7). According to Luther, the opening of the eyes meant the unveiling of sin which led the conscience to despair. When Eve, therefore, first looks at the tree in a new light as the consequence of the Devil’s words, her eyes are blinded by disbelief according to Luther. When Eve, in consequence of going blind, tastes the fruit, her blinded eyes are opened to the horror of sin and she is in despair until she receives a promise from God of the forthcoming seed, that is Christ, who will crush the head of the Devil (cf. Gen. 3:15).²⁷²

Although Luther’s aforementioned interpretation includes speculative elements, such as the Devil’s poison, his interpretation opens up exciting dimensions to the story. Especially interesting is the effectiveness of Satan’s (who possessed the serpent) words which concretely influence the first humans, whereby sin becomes present already before eating from the tree. This interpretation is supported by the original text (Gen. 3:6; NIV): “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom…” Sin does not, therefore, according to Genesis chapter three enter creation primarily through the deed of the first humans, that is eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but through the effective words of the serpent. These words, namely, make the first woman see the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the opposite light to that of God’s commandments: it no longer offers a certain death (as God threatened), but rather the possibility to become God-like – against God’s commandment and warning. In other words, because of the serpent’s words the woman sees the tree in an enticing and sinful light already before the actual offence and the Fall – in this sense her eyes are opened twice: through the words of the serpent (Gen. 3:6) and after eating from the tree (Gen. 3:7).

The effectivity of these words of the serpent possessed by the Devil has an interesting interface to God’s effective words – both in Luther’s lectures as in the first chapters of Genesis. Luther, namely, discusses on several occasions in his lectures how God created the world through his effective words. He, for example, describes how God’s effective words differ from ordinary talk: “Instead, God’s grammar (Grammatica divina) is something else, especially when he says: ‘Sun, shine light,’ immediately the sun

²⁷² WA 42, pp. 122 (20) – 123 (34), 142 (19) – 143 (7).
appears and shines. Thus, God’s words are realities (res), not mere words.\footnote{WA 42, pp. 17 (15–32), 19 (16–21), 23 (32–34), 25 (5–10), 31 (27–29), 35 (22) – 41 (35), 56 (35) – 59 (42), and 95 (35) – 97 (34). Cf. WA 42, pp. 63 (22) – 64 (26). See also, Beutel 1991, p. 115; Ebeling 1991, pp. 372–375.}

This effectivity of God’s words becomes evident from the first chapter of Genesis where God says something and it immediately occurs. Likewise reading Genesis chapter three carefully, it becomes evident that the words of the serpent particularly influence the woman: because of them she sees the tree in an entirely different light (see, Gen. 3:1–7). However, the difference in effectivity between the words of God and the words of the serpent is that God’s words take effect immediately, but the words of the serpent take effect with a time lag and as the consequence of powerful persuasion. The serpent seems to have some kind of role as a (perverted) demigod. Luther, however, does not himself explicitly notice or acknowledge this kind of analogy between the words of God and the serpent although he evidently emphasizes the effectivity of both God’s and the serpent’s words.

In addition, one should notice that the Vulgate, which Luther used when he lectured on Genesis, offers better support for his interpretation than the Masoretic text or Septuagint: Cui respondit mulier: De fructu lignorum, quae sunt in Paradiso, vescimur; De fructu vero ligni, quod est in medio Paradisi, praecipit nobis Deus, ne comederemus, neque tangeremus illud, ne forte moriamur (Gen. 3:2–3).\footnote{WA 42, p. 116 (30–33).} The Septuagint and the Hebrew masoretic text do not include the word perhaps (Lat. forte) like the Vulgate. The Latin addition forte is also included in all known manuscripts mentioned in the current critical edition of the Vulgate.\footnote{BHS, p. 4; BS, p. 7; S, p. 4.} This small insertion makes the words of the serpent more effective than those of the Masoretic or Septuagint text; after all, according to the Vulgate, the serpent evidently motivates the woman to doubt the commandment of God.

In addition, it is important to notice that, according to Luther (and in Genesis chapter three), in the fall of the man the role of the Devil or the serpent is not as significant as in the fall of the woman. According to Luther, the reason for the fall of the man is either the woman’s activity or self-deception which follows from the fact that God does not seem to punish the woman with death for eating the fruit. In both cases, there comes some kind of stimulus external to the man: either the fruit served by the woman or acknowledging that the threatened punishment appears not to
follow. The reason why Luther does not explain the fall of the man more extensively stems probably from the fact that in Genesis chapter three the man does not have as central a role as the woman.276

The Secret of the Origin of Evil

Luther’s interpretation, where evil comes from outside of the first woman, raises the question: is the Fall after all caused by the human being herself, God, or the Devil? An answer to this question is difficult to discover from Luther’s lectures on Genesis, because Luther wants to avoid too much speculation regarding the origin of evil. However, some conclusions can be made from Luther’s lectures.

Regarding the origin of evil, for Luther it seems to be basically enough to know that evil has slithered into the world for hidden reasons and that God has allowed the Devil to “go” into the serpent (cf. Genesis chapter three).277 Luther refers to The Book of Job (cf. Job 9:3, 19, 32; 34:10–17; 40:2) in his lectures on Genesis and states as follows:

Now here, too, a sea of questions arises. Inquisitive people ask why God permitted Satan to tempt Eve. Furthermore, why Satan waylaid Eve through the serpent rather than through a different animal. But who can supply the reason for the things that he sees the Divine Majesty has permitted to happen? Why do we not rather learn with Job that God cannot be called to account and cannot be compelled to give us the reason for everything He does or permits to happen? Why do we not likewise register a complaint with God because the earth does not produce plants and because the trees are not green throughout the year? I am fully convinced that in Paradise there would have been perpetual spring without any winter, without snow and frosts, such as we have today after sin. But these are all things under the divine power and will. To know this is enough. Besides, it is wicked curiosity to investigate these problems in greater detail. Therefore let us, who are clay in His hands, cease to discuss such questions. Let us not sit in judgment on our God; let us rather be judged by Him. Hence the answer to all such inquiries must be

276 WA 42, p. 136 (1-20).
277 WA 42, p. 114 (12-15).
only this: It pleased the Lord that Adam should be tempted and should test his powers.278

Luther, therefore, leaves the origin of evil as a secret; a human being can only trust that God has seen this to be good. Luther does not evidently want to speculate with this matter much, probably because those texts, which belong to the canon of the Bible (or more precisely to Luther’s canon, that is, to the Masoretic text and to the New Testament), do not give a direct answer to the meaning or origin of evil. They even represent the idea that it is impossible for a human being to know such a thing. This becomes evident, in addition to Genesis chapter three, for example from God’s closing speech in The Book of Job (38–41). Because Luther does not want to answer the question as to why an Almighty and good God allows evil in His Creation, his interpretation of Genesis chapter three is not worth examining too straightforwardly as the problem of theodicy.279

As the quotation proved, according to Luther, the presence of evil by God’s permission is a fact, to which a reason is not even really allowed to be pondered.280 Luther, therefore, emphasizes a conception according to which a human being that is God’s creature should not judge or condemn her or his Creator, but trust that God knows things better than she or he and that God ultimately acts on the behalf of human beings. This kind of view is typical of Luther’s theology. Luther, just like Job (cf. Job 38–42), could be referred to as a theological determinist281 who can find consolation and a final answer in unquestioned trust of God’s dominion. The task of the human being is to submit oneself to God’s will and trust that He wants the best for human beings.282

However, Luther’s idea of the origin of evil is not that austere. The last sentence of the quotation seems to refer to the idea that Adam had some sort of chance to test his strength with God’s permission. Luther, however, does not adduce Adam’s training of his strength because he would emphasize Adam’s autonomy or liberty. Instead, from the quotation

279 About the problem of theodicy, see for example Vainio 2005, p. 486. About the problem of theodicy in the history of ideas, see Dalferth 2008, pp. 38–76, and about pondering theodicy and the origin of evil regarding Luther, see Bayer 2008, pp. 177–218.
280 See also, WA 42, p. 114 (12–13): “Porro hic quoqu admonemur de permissione divina, quod Diabolò permissum est invadere bestias, sicut hic invasit serpenth.”
281 For more on (theological) determinism, see Teinonen 1999, p. 67.
282 Cf. WA 18 (De servo arbitrio, 1525), pp. 600–787; WA 40 [Dr] (In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius ex praelectione D. Martini Lutheri (1531) collectus 1535; [Annotationes Martini Lutheri In Epistolam Pauli ad Galatas], 1535, pp. 131 (21) – 132 (16). See also Bayer 2008, p. 194.
it becomes evident that Adam’s test of strength is part of God’s plan. In the initial state and before the Fall the will and the understanding of the first humans were good and healthy. In other words, they understood, willed and believed everything that God wanted and said. This perfect cognizance (cognitio) was followed by the cognizance of inferior things (e.g., knowledge of every creature).\textsuperscript{283} God wanted to test these abilities given to human beings. Luther, therefore, uses Adam mainly as an example and as an analogy of the mortification of sinful flesh, as becomes evident from the continuation of the previously presented quotation:

So it still is today. When we have been baptized and brought into the kingdom of Christ, God does not want us to be idle; He wants us to use His Word and gifts. For this reason He allows us weak beings to be sifted by Satan (Luke 22:31). Thus we see the church, which has been cleansed by the Word, still exposed to continual danger. The Sacramentarians rise up; so do the Anabaptists and other fanatical teachers, who greatly trouble the church with their various temptations. In addition, there are internal troubles. These God allows to happen this way, not because He has decided either to abandon the church or to want it to perish; but, as Wisdom says (Wisd. 10:12), those conflicts befall the church and the godly that the church and the godly may prevail and learn by experience itself that wisdom is more powerful than everything else. Here there is another question. Perhaps it can be discussed with less danger but with greater profit. It is: “Why does Scripture make this account so obscure? Why does it not rather state directly that the angel who had fallen entered the serpent, was speaking through the serpent, and deceived Eve?” But I answer: “This account is so obscure in order that all things might be held over for Christ and for His Spirit, who was to shed light throughout the entire world like the midday sun and to open all the mysteries of Scripture.” Because this Spirit of Christ was in the prophets (1 Peter 1:11), the holy prophets understood such mysteries of Scripture.\textsuperscript{284}

In this quotation, Luther makes an analogy between Genesis chapter three and the church of his time. As it was previously discovered, Luther’s lec-
tures on Genesis chapter three are colored by the battle between God and the Devil over the church. According to Luther, Satan’s task was to test Adam and the first church in Paradise. In the same manner, God’s opponent tested the church in the 1530s, when Luther thought that different heresies (e.g. Anabaptists) threatened the church purified by reformation. After all, he stated in his preface that was added to the edited version of his lectures on Galatians: “Who would not see that to Anabaptists belong not possessed people, but demons themselves who are possessed by worse demons?” In other words, according to Luther, Satan continued the testing of the church through the appearance of various heretics over the time, also after the events disclosed in Genesis chapter three.

Especially interesting are those parts of the quotation referring to places, where Luther considers why Genesis chapter three does not reveal the actual cause and mystery of evil, but remains, as it were, a veiled secret. According to Luther, only the Spirit of Christ (that is the Holy Spirit?) can give an answer to the question regarding the origin of evil. Luther, however, does not exactly reveal the answer which the Spirit of Christ gives. He implies, instead, where the answer can be found: from Christ and his Spirit through which the prophets could understand the mysteries of the Scriptures. According to Luther, the Spirit of Christ gave (to the prophets) the understanding that Christ Himself is the light and brightness of Scriptures, also regarding Genesis chapter three. In this context, Luther interprets the Bible in a Christ-centered manner: also the arrival of evil into the world and the mystery relating to it refer somehow to Christ, and this can be discerned only through the understanding which the Spirit of Christ gives. Here, Luther does not explain further what the connection is between Christ and Genesis chapter three.

In sum, it can be concluded that Luther evidently wants to avoid the idea that an Almighty and good God would be evaluated and judged by human beings for letting evil enter the world; instead, human beings have to place themselves under God’s supervision and judgement, according to Luther. However, he strives to give some answers to the meaning of evil. First of all, evil can test the church and its members. Sec-


286 Luther’s exegetical tool box is remarkably more manifold than the mere *Was Christum treibt* principle. For example, see Koivisto 2009, p. 252.
ondly, the coming of evil into the world through the serpent possessed by
the Devil remains in some measure always as a mystery, but through the
understanding given by the Spirit of Christ it is possible to understand that
it is somehow related to Christ.

The Perspective of the Formula of Concord

The Beginning of the Book

Many books of the Evangelical-Lutheran Confessions consider original sin.
In these books is repeated without exception (mostly the anti-Pelagian) the
conception that original sin has corrupted a human being so that she can-
not be justified by her own strength.287 The most extensive and thorough
explanation of original sin is in the Formula of Concord (1577). This doc-
ument has a special meaning for this article as regards original sin: it often
refers to Genesis chapter three and Luther's interpretations of it.288

In his historical introduction, which is situated at the begin-
ing of the Finnish translation of the Evangelical-Lutheran confessions
(1998), Kauko Pirinen has described the development which led to the
birth of the Formula of Concord. Pirinen argues that Lutheranism started
to fragment after Luther's death. For safeguarding the doctrinal unity,
many Lutheran regional churches (Ger. Landeskirche) published the col-
lections of doctrinal documents (corpus doctrinae). This development,
however, threatened to fragment by scattering Lutheranism to “more or
less diverging religious communities.” Pressure for a common confession
also created the ambition of “crypto-Calvinists,” that is, the Reformed
community joined to the Augsburg Confession, to infiltrate the Reformed
doctrine of the Eucharist into Lutheranism. In addition, several Lutherans
wished for the same kind of unity and clear confession which Catholics
had established in the Council of Trent. The last of the Lutheran confes-
sions, the Formula of Concord, aimed for Lutheran unity and was the last

287 For example, see BK, pp. 53 (Die Augsburgische Konfession), 145–157 (APOLOGIA
288 An interesting novelty regarding the Formula of Concord is the well-known Melanch-
thon- and Luther-Scholar, Timothy Wengert’s book A Formula for Parish Practice: Using
the Formula of Concord in Congregations (2006). In his book, Wengert utilizes both his
theological expertise and experiences as a pastor of a congregation. Because of this practi-
cal and theoretical combination, he has entitled the chapter regarding original sin with
humorous nuance as “But Babies Are So Cute!” The Original Problem with Human Be-
ings.”
of the confessions, subscribed in different stages in 1577, and consisting of two different parts: the summary established by Jacob Andrea (Epitome) and the comprehensive explanation (Solida declaratio). I will examine both parts, but will focus especially on the latter part where the themes regarding the Fall are defended, inter alia, with Luther's lectures on Genesis.289

Original Sin Beyond Human Control and Sanctification in the Development which Led to the Formula of Concord

In order to understand the Formula of Concord's interpretation of Genesis chapter three and the central conceptions related to it, that is original sin, the poison of the Devil, and the abolition of evil, it is important to briefly explain what kind of development was behind these conceptions in early Lutheranism. Jari Jolkkonen examines the conceptions of early Lutheranism in his article "Verta vaativa Jumala? Synti- ja sovitusoppi valistuksen kritiikin puristuksessa" (Engl. “A Bloodthirsty God? The Doctrine of Sin and Redemption under Enlightenment Criticism;” 2007). In his article, Jolkkonen observes that the Augsburg Confession (1530) and the Smalcald Articles disassociated themselves from “the kind of scholastic (especially William Ockham’s and Gabriel Biel’s) conceptions where sin was made superficial by considering it the mere absence of original righteousness (privatio iustitiae originalis) or an incidental thing which can be abolished by the natural abilities of the human being, ‘just like the paint can be abolished from the wall by scratching.’” Jolkkonen also describes how soon after Luther’s death, the so-called Flacian Controversy emerged in Lutheranism. It started from Matthias Illyricus’ conceptions according to which original sin is the actual nature and substance of a human being. Thus, the Formula of Concord, according to Jolkkonen, disassociated itself both from Pelagian optimism (=sin is the privation or accidens of original righteousness) as well as from the Manichaean290 “ultra-pessimistic conception

289 In this context, I used the Finnish translation as my source, because this article was addressed to a Finnish audience. However, I checked the validity of the factual content from the original text regarding the central quotations (see BK, Formula Concordiae: Epitome, pp. 772–776, 843–866) and referred to The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church 2000 (henceforth abbreviated as BC).

290 The Formula of Concord (Formula of Concordiae) can be translated in Finnish both as Sovinnon kaava and Yksimielissyden ohje. In the Finnish version of this article I have used the term Yksimielisyden ohje which I consider a better equivalent. Jolkkonen and the Finnish translation of the confessions of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church (ELKTK) call Manichaen in Finnish manikeolaiset; instead, in the Confessions of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church the German form Manichäi and the Latin form Manichaeos is used. In
of the human being” (=sin is the actual essence of a human being). In this
respect, Jolkkonen comes to note that “public cant about the Lutheran
negative or pessimistic conception of human being is one-sided... Even as
fallen the human being remains the image of God.” According to Jolkkon-
en, Manichaean pessimism also drifts into the contradiction with the Old
Testament’s positive belief in the Creation in a Gnostic manner.291

According to Jolkkonen, the Smalcald Articles written by Luther and belonging to the Lutheran Confessions argue that for a human
being renewed by the Holy Spirit it is not impossible to do good. Jolkkonen,
evidently, wants to emphasize also that the Lutheran conception of a
human being is determined by the positive idea according to which the
Holy Spirit and God's grace sanctify a human being and help her in the
fight of faith.292 When, in addition to Jolkkonen’s article, Luther’s Large
commentary on Galatians (1531/1535) is analyzed, which is developed ap-
proximately at the same time as many significant Lutheran confessions,
Luther’s conception of the renewal of the Holy Spirit becomes evident. In
this commentary, Luther regarded as astonishingly positive the abilities of
the human being, renewed by the Holy Spirit, to do good although at the
same time he thought that in the Christian remains, in addition to a re-
newed essence, the sinful essence which the Holy Spirit cleanses until the
end of one’s life.293 God’s sovereignty also becomes evident in the manner
in which He sanctifies a human being. In his Commentary on Galatians
(1535), which is based on his lectures given in 1531, Luther notes the fol-
lowing:

A new creation, by which the image of God is renewed (Col.
3:10), does not happen by the sham or pretense of some sort of
outward works, because in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor
uncircumcision counts; but it is “created after the likeness of
God in righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:24). When works are
performed, they do indeed give a new outward appearance,
which captures the attention of the world and the flesh. But they

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the Finnish version of this article, I have used primarily the form manikealaisuus which is
nowadays the more established form.

291 Jolkkonen 2007, pp. 352–353. About privation and evil, for example, see Dalferth 2008,


293 In the Large Commentary on Galatians, Luther also presents his understanding about
the real holiness of a Christian as, for example, Tuomo Mannermaa has depicted it in his
research In ipsa fide Christus adest: Luterilaisen ja ortodoksisen kristinuskonkäsityksen
do not produce a new creation, for the heart remains as wicked and as filled with contempt of God and unbelief as it was before. Thus a new creation is a work of the Holy Spirit, who implants a new intellect and will and confers the power to curb the flesh and to flee the righteousness and wisdom of the world. This is not a sham or merely a new outward appearance, but something really happens. A new attitude and a new judgment, namely, a spiritual one, actually come into being, and they now detest what they once admired. Our minds were once so captivated by the monastic life that we thought of it as the only way to salvation; now we think of it quite differently. What we used to adore, before this new creation, as the ultimate in holiness now makes us blush when we remember it. Therefore a new creation is not a change in clothing or in outward manner, as the monks imagine, but a renewal of the mind by the Holy Spirit; this is then followed by an outward change in the flesh, in the parts of the body, and in the senses. For when the heart acquires new light, a new judgment, and new motivation through the Gospel, this also brings about a renewal of the senses. The ears long to hear the Word of God instead of listening any longer to human traditions and notions. The lips and the tongue do not boast of their own works, righteousness, and monastic rule; but joyfully they proclaim nothing but the mercy of God, disclosed in Christ. These changes are, so to speak, not verbal; they are real. They produce a new mind, a new will, new senses, and even new actions by the flesh, so that the eyes, the ears, the lips, and the tongue not only see, hear, and speak otherwise than they used to, but the mind itself evaluates things and acts upon them differently from the way it did before.294

The renewal of the Holy Spirit is, according to Luther, completely the work of God who really transforms a human being. This transformation does not derive from the “imitation” of sanctity based on self-righteousness. In this sense, a consistent idea is formed from Luther’s conceptions. According to this idea, on the one hand, Luther strives to confess human sinfulness and impossibility to do good without the renewal of the Holy Spirit

294 Translation from: LW 27 (Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 5–6), pp. 139-140. Cf. WA 40 II [Dr] (In epistolum ad Galatas Commentarius, 1535: [Druck]), pp. 178 (16) – 179 (15).
and, on the other hand, give the glory to God for the renewal evoked by the Holy Spirit, just as Jolkkonen states.\textsuperscript{295} A human being is not only led by evil, but also by good. This becomes evident in an especially illustrative manner from Oswald Bayer’s study \textit{Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation} (2008), according to which, in his book \textit{De servo arbitrio}, Luther presents the suggestion that a human being is like an animal which is ridden by either God or the Devil. In this manner, the human will, to the core, is directed by greater powers than the will itself.\textsuperscript{296} In spiritual matters, a human being is like a rag doll which is controlled by higher powers. Regardless of this straightforward theological determinism, the question of how evil commandeers a human being was not completely black and white among early Lutherans. Especially the rejection of the Manichaean heresy was challenging in the light of Genesis chapter three and original sin.

Was Luther Manichaean?

In the Formula of Concord at the beginning of the chapter, which focuses on original sin, the Augsburg theologians noticed an emerging struggle as to what original sin actually was. Especially problematic were the views of some theologians, according to which for example the nature was corrupted by sin even to the extent that there was no difference between nature (cf. essence) and original sin. Those theologians, who undersigned the Formula, considered it dangerous that sin could not be separated from God’s creation and image which remained even in a sinful human being. Therefore, the Formula emphasizes that human nature and original sin should be separated from each other in the same manner as “the body that is leprous and the leprosy on or in the body are not one and the same thing.”\textsuperscript{297}

As regards the topic of this article, this differentiation includes interesting and problematic features from which the Formula of Concord also seems to be conscious. It rejects, among other things, namely, that kind of Manichaeanism and such heresies according to which “even after the fall human nature is originally created pure and good but that Satan infuses and mixes original sin (as something essential) into this nature

\textsuperscript{295} Jolkkonen 2007, pp. 352–354. Cf. to WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 131 (21) – 132 (16). About the renewal of the Holy Spirit and about the process, which it causes, in the young Luther’s theology, see Juntunen 1996, p. 408.


\textsuperscript{297} BC (\textit{Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration}), pp. 531–542.
from the outside, as poison is mixed with wine.”298 This statement criticizes the conception that a human being would be created without any sin after the Fall, as Adam and Eve were created originally in Paradise, and only “afterwards” would original sin corrupt a human being. In the Formula of Concord, therefore, the idea that every human being is born sinful after the Fall is the position that is defended. In this sense, the Formula of Concord does not differ from Luther’s viewpoint.

On the other hand, however, the Formula of Concord condemns another form of Manichaean error: “For although in Adam and Eve this nature was created pure, good, and holy at first, sin did not invade their nature through the fall, as the Manichaeans raved, as if Satan had created or made some essential evil and mixed it with their nature.” Would not this and Manichaean error, according to which Satan pours out and mixes up an essential original sin from outside in the same manner as poison is mixed with wine, however, undoubtedly resemble Luther’s interpretation of the contamination in Eve’s heart caused by Satan’s poison? Does, then, the Formula of Concord condemn its paragon, that is, Martin Luther’s interpretation of Genesis chapter three, when it condemns the Manichaean heresy? 299 Was “crazy” Luther Manichaean, as Johann Eck implied in the year 1527?300

It is interesting that the Formula refers many times to Luther’s conception of original sin as poison and leprosy. The part, which analyzes original sin, even ends at a quotation taken from Luther’s lectures on Genesis: “We are poisoned by the venom of original sin from the soles of our feet to the hairs on our head because it befell us in this perfect nature.”301 It is, therefore, evident that those theologians, who prepared and signed the

298 BC (Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration), p. 536.
299 BC (Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration), p. 536. Pirinen 1998, p. 25 argues that the Formula of Concord was understood as the commentary of the Augsburg confession. In addition, the Formula of Concord understood Luther's doctrinal and polemic writings directive in the interpretation of the Augsburg Confession. However, in the Augsburg confession nothing is mentioned about serpent’s poison, but stated as follows (BC, The Augsburg Confession–Latin Text, p. 53): "Concerning the cause of sin they teach that although God creates and preserves nature, nevertheless the cause of sin is the will of those who are evil, that is, of the devil and the ungodly. Since it was not assisted by God, their will turned away from God as Christ says in John 8:44, ‘When [the devil] lies, he speaks according to his own nature.’” Cf. to Bayer 2008, p. 195. See also Wengert 2006, pp. 19–20, from which it becomes evident that Manichaeanism became an important theme in the development, which lead to Formula of Concord, par excellence because of Flacius who was accused of Manichaenism.
300 Eck, 1527, fol. K1r.
Formula, knew Luther’s conception of Satan’s poison which infected Eve and later also other human beings.

Scrutinizing more precisely some of the Formula’s passages and distinctions indicate that Luther’s conceptions regarding the poison infused by Satan differ from the Manichaean conceptions. First of all, in the Formula, original sin is called a defect, injury, and failing in order to resist Manichaean “heresies.” The Formula of Concord invokes Augustine who “consistently speaks in this way: original sin is not the nature itself but an *accidens vitium in natura* (that is, a contingent lack and defect in nature).” Theologians, who prepared the Formula of Concord, thus wanted to resist a Manichaean conception according to which human nature would have been exterminated or changed into some other substance because of original sin. In the Formula of Concord another quotation from Augustine is used: “in his many writings against Manicheans, Augustine, along with all faithful teachers, after serious deliberation, condemned and rejected the expression, ‘peccatum originis est substantia vel natura’ (that is, ‘original sin is the nature and essence of the human being’).” From this point of view it is evident as to why original sin is called a defect, injury, or failing: it is for the purpose of protecting human essence and sin from mixing with each other. 302 Neither did Luther think that the human being as the image of God would change after the Fall into some other substance to the effect that human nature would be destroyed. 303 In fact, the destruction of human nature would mean that an individual would no longer be a human being, but some other creature instead. It can be concluded, therefore, that Luther did not represent Manichaeanism in this respect.

Secondly, the authors of the Formula of Concord resist Manichaeanism (and possibly also scholasticism) with their own distinction between substance and *accidens* (=an incidental thing). They have probably known the scholastic differentiation between substance and *accidens* which emphasizes the facileness of sin and dependence on the natural abilities of human being. According to this conception, sin that is *accidens* can be removed through the natural abilities of the human being, “just like the

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302 BC (Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration), pp. 537: “To be sure, original sin has contaminated and corrupted all of human nature like a spiritual poison and leprosy, as Luther says, so that in our corrupted nature no one can show or prove what is unmistakably human nature and what is original sin -- According to Holy Scripture, both propositions must and can be considered, taught, and believed as distinct from each other.”, 541, 542: “Later, on Genesis 3: ‘We are poisoned by the venom of original sin from the soles of our feet to the hairs on our head because it befell us in this perfect nature.’” Cf. WA 42, p. 122 (37–39).

303 See, for example, WA 42, p. 124 (4–17) where Luther speaks about the corruption of human nature, not about its destruction.
paint can be abolished from the wall by scraping.\textsuperscript{304} The distinction of the Formula of Concord, however, differs from the scholastic distinction. In the former distinction, the separation between nature and both good and bad qualities relating to it is what is emphasized. In addition, the Formula of Concord represents the much more radical opinion of sin than the scholastics: it should be perceived and recognized that “the horrible, dreadful, inherited disease corrupting their entire nature is above all actual sin and indeed is the ‘chief sin.’” In the Formula of Concord, therefore, original sin is not understood as the kind of quality or \textit{accidens} which would corrupt only some temporary qualities of human nature. The Formula of Concord argues instead that human nature does not preserve some kind of goodness or strength in spiritual matters because of original sin. In other words, according to the Formula of Concord, \textit{accidens}, that is sin, corrupts human nature or substance in a much more radical manner than what the scholastics thought. Regarding the distinction between substance and \textit{accidens} the Formula of Concord refers, in addition to Augustine, to the other Church Fathers (Eusebios, Ambrosius, Kyrillos, and Basileos) and to Luther who argues in his explanation for Psalm 90: “Whether we call original sin a quality or a disease, it remains true that the greatest evil is this: to be a victim of eternal wrath and death and not even to realize one’s terrible lot.”\textsuperscript{305}

Because, according to the Formula of Concord, it is impossible to liberate oneself from original sin by human powers, it emphasizes the influence of the Holy Spirit as the sole subject which can liberate a human being from sin.\textsuperscript{306} Therefore, it condemns the writings of the “new” Manichaeans where, among other things, it is maintained that “original sin is baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, is sanctified and is saved.” According to the Formula of Concord, these conceptions do not distinguish between sin and the human being clearly enough. Sin is not, therefore, part of humanity, because God washes, cleanses and sanctifies a human being making her free from sin. The Formula of Concord invokes the authority of Scripture for supporting this viewpoint.\textsuperscript{307}

\textsuperscript{304} Jolkkonen 2007, p. 352.
\textsuperscript{306} BC (\textit{Formula of Concord: The Epitome}), pp. 487–492; BC (\textit{Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration}), pp. 534: “this inherited defect is so huge and abominable that it can be covered and forgiven in God’s sight in those who are baptized and believe only for the sake of the Lord Christ. Only the new birth and renewal of the Holy Spirit can and must heal this deranged, corrupted human nature. This renewal only begins in this life; it is finally completed in the life to come.”, 539.
\textsuperscript{307} BC (\textit{Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration}), p. 539.
In the summary of the Formula of Concord (*Epitome*), the consistency of the Manichaean argumentation is questioned in the following manner:

It is therefore good to note the different definitions of the word “nature,” through which the Manichaeans conceal their error and lead many simple people astray. For sometimes it means the essence of the human being, as when we say, “God created human nature.” Sometimes, however, it means the good or bad quality embedded in a thing’s nature or essence, as when it is said: “It is the nature of the snake to bite,” and, “It is the nature or quality of the human being to sin; thus human nature is sin.” Here the word “nature” does not mean the substance of the human being but rather something which is embedded in that nature or substance. Concerning the Latin words *substantia* and *accidens*, since they are not biblical terms and are words unfamiliar to common people, they should not be used in sermons delivered to the common people, who do not understand them; the simple folk should be spared such words. But in the schools and among the learned these terms are familiar and can be used without any misunderstanding to differentiate the essence of a thing from that which in an “accidental” way adheres to the thing.\(^{308}\)

The Formula of Concord adheres, therefore, to the distinction between substance and *accidens*, because Manichaeans inconsistently used the word “nature”: they interpreted it occasionally as human essence (cf. substance), and sometimes as good or bad character (cf. *accidens*) clinging to a human being. In the Formula of Concord and according to Luther human nature and the abilities connected to it are separated from original sin. Substance and *accidens*, therefore, operate as additional concepts through which it is possible to attain a difference between the conceptions of Luther and the Manichaeans.\(^{309}\)

Thirdly, in the Formula of Concord it is stated that “original sin is not something in and of itself,” in other words it cannot be separated


\(^{309}\) See also, for example, BC (*Formula of Concord: The Epitome*), p. 490: “Luther calls this original sin ‘nature-sin’, ‘essential sin’, but not in the sense that the nature, person or essence of the human being in and of itself is original sin, without any distinction between the two. Rather with these expressions he made clear the difference between original sin, which is embedded in human nature, and other sins, which are called actual sins.”; BC (*Formula of Concord: The Epitome*), p. 537.
from human nature such that “as if the nature were pure, good, holy, and uncorrupted in God’s sight but only original sin, which dwells in this nature, were evil.” With this conception, it is hoped that one could avoid such an opinion according to which original sin would not transform a human being to what is truly evil, but would remain somehow a quality completely detached from human nature. The purpose is evidently to condemn the kind of “error that Augustine attributes to the Manichaeans” whereby sin is not par excellence performed by the human being corrupted by original sin itself, but some other alien element in the human being. Regardless of the distinction between original sin and human nature, the Formula of Concord pursues the opinion that original sin also becomes an intrinsic part of the human being and, thus, as if inherently her/his own sin. Hence, a human being can neither transfer sin and consequential guilt somehow detached from her/him or her/his essence.

From the descriptions of Luther’s lectures on Genesis, it became evident that the poison infused by Satan influences harmfully both the spiritual and psychophysical functions. Luther neither transfers the guilt of sin solely outside the human being, although he emphasizes the Devil as the cause of the Fall. Thus, neither Luther nor the Formula of Concord, represent the kind of Manichaean opinion whereby sin would be something detached from human nature. Neither does Luther represent the kind of conception that a human being would be innocent, based on the events of Genesis chapter three. The topic of the origin of evil, in any case, will return in the next subchapter.

According to the aforesaid it can be established that Luther does not represent the kind of Manichaean heresy which the Formula of Concord condemns. Although Luther’s expressions of a spiritual toxin infused by Satan (through the serpent) verbally resembles Manichaean formulations condemned already in the early church, to a certain extent he is,
however, conceptually far from them. In addition, Luther explicitly condemns Manichaean heresies in his Genesis-commentary.\(^{312}\)

It is also important to remember that Manichaeanism was once a very diverse and far-flung movement, which began spreading from Mani’s sermons in Mesopotamia during the third century, and its existence ceased piecemeal in South-East China after the fourteenth century.\(^ {313}\) Manichaeanism also influenced, among other things, the young Augustine’s thinking.\(^ {314}\) Manichaeanism, described by the Formula of Concord, especially indicates that form of Manichaeanism which Augustine described and criticized after his conversion to Christianity.\(^ {315}\) There is no reason to more carefully analyze the question as to what measure Manichaeanism, as described by the Formula of Concord, corresponds with the true main characters of this movement. In this context, it is also not meaningful to differentiate Luther’s more specific relationship to Manichaeanism. One should notice, however, that the Augustinian-Lutheran tradition has had to define its doctrine of sin specifically in the context of its relationship to Manichaeanism, which included similar phrases as, for example, in Luther’s interpretation of Genesis chapter three.

Luther’s conceptions and those to be found in the Formula of Concord, regarding the invasion of evil into humanity, are quite similar. Neither of these conceptions represent the kind according to which a human being could choose evil as an autonomous subject. Rather, Satan’s poison, that is original sin, is automatically part of every individual – the part of Adam and Eve and their offspring. In this manner the interpretation of both, the Formula of Concord and Luther, differ from such Pelagian conceptions which regard the abilities of a fallen human being with overly optimistic expectations.\(^ {316}\)

\(^{312}\) WA 42, p. 159 (7–16).
\(^{313}\) BeDuhn 2000, pp. IX–X.
\(^{314}\) Kim 2006, p. 22: “Augustine himself was deceived by these Manichean tricks and spent nine years what is called a hearer.” Berg 2010, p. 1: “From his nineteenth year onwards, and for nine years at least, Augustine was one of the adherents of the religion of Mani. Furthermore, he dedicated no less than one third of his literary output to the refutation of the teachings of his former co-religionists. This means that Manichaeism must be treated as a highly important and, to a certain extent, even a determining factor in Augustine’s life and work.”
\(^{316}\) BC (Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration), pp. 532, 534–535.
The Origin of Evil

Finally, I will scrutinize the Formula of Concord's conception of the origin of evil. In the summary of the text, among other things, it is explicitly stated that: “the devil cannot create a substance but can only corrupt the substance, which God has created.” In this manner, the Formula of Concord does not seem to represent the kind of dualism where God and the Devil are equal. The Devil, for example, cannot create a substance like God. Instead, the Devil can corrupt human nature. This becomes evident in the explanation of the Formula (Solida declaratio):

God will also be honored when his work and creation are correctly distinguished from the devil’s work, through which human nature has been corrupted. – – God is not a creator, author, or cause of sin. Instead, by the instigation of the devil, “through one human being, sin” (which is a work of the devil) “came into the world” (Rom. 5:12; 1 John 3:8). To this day and in this state of corruption, God does not create and make sin in us, but along with human nature, which God still in this day and age creates in human beings, original sin is transmitted through carnal conception and birth from father and mother through the sinful seed. – – For original sin does not come from God. God is not a creator or author of sin. Nor is original sin a creature or handiwork of God; rather it is the devil’s work.

The purpose of this statement is to deny the opinion whereby God would be held ontologically responsible for the origin of sin. The document, namely, emphasizes that original sin emanates from the Devil and that it proceeds straightforwardly after the Fall. The Devil has, therefore, caused original sin or provoked human nature in Paradise in such a manner original sin is as if transferred or generated through the Devil into human nature. After the first humans in Paradise were infected by it, original sin is transferred in procreation to all later generations. Original sin, therefore, transfers genetically.

In spite of this, the Formula of Concord does not give a detailed answer to the question of why God allowed sin enter the world. A systematic answer to this question is impossible at least in the light of

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318 BC (Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration), pp. 532–533, 538.
Genesis chapter three. Still, the Formula of Concord, gives some kind of an answer to the problem of evil:

Here upright Christian hearts should remember the indescribable goodness of God, that God does not cast such a corrupted, perverted, sinful massa immediately into the fires of hell. Instead, out of it God makes and fashions human nature as it now is, so tragically corrupted by sin, so that he might cleanse, sanctify, and save it through his dear Son. On the basis of this article the distinction becomes incontrovertible and clear.\textsuperscript{319}

Although the quotation implies that the purpose of God’s plan was specifically the glorification of and salvation received through the Son, it does not answer the question as to why sin entered the world with God’s permission. The quotation also emphasized God’s goodness and mercifulness towards a sinner. In addition, the quotation seems to imply that a human being cannot judge or evaluate God, who spares a sinner from destruction and, among other things, purifies her from sin. The Formula of Concord, therefore, repeats the four same elements regarding the origin of evil, just as in Luther’s interpretation:

1) A human being cannot judge or accuse God of having given the opening to original sin in the world.\textsuperscript{320}
2) As the one who evoked evil, which became evident in the Fall (at least ontologically), it is the Devil (cf. Satan) who deserves this role.
3) Regarding the secret origin of evil, creation of a coherent system, which could be explicated so that every human being understands it, is really not the point. Although in Luther’s thinking this kind of thought is emphasized, on the other hand he aspires to give some answers to the meaning of evil: a) evil can test church and its members and b) the arrival of evil into the world through the serpent possessed by Satan remains an unexplained secret to the natural understanding, but one can find an answer to it through the illumination of Christ’s Spirit.
4) These three factors are not impediments to believing in God’s goodness.

\textsuperscript{319} BC (Formula of Concord: The Solid Declaration), p. 538.
\textsuperscript{320} On Luther’s conception of original sin, also see WA 47 (Predigten des Jahres 1539: Puriﬁcationis Mariae D. M. L.), pp. 661 (29) – 666 (20).
Epilogue: Does Evil Take Over A Human Being?

In this article, I have analyzed first of all the interpretations of early Lutheranism on Genesis chapter three and the Fall. My aim was to prove that the interpretations of early Lutheranism differ substantially, for example, from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. According to early Lutherans, evil or the poison of the serpent possessed by the Devil, that is original sin, takes over a human being by God’s secret permission. Instead, the Catechism of the Catholic Church depicts a human being as much more of an autonomic subject in the Fall. According to this interpretation, the human being, for example, chooses itself over God. Based on my research results, here lies the difference between Lutheranism and Catholicism: Lutherans emphasize God’s sovereignty, whereas Catholics emphasize human autonomy regarding their interpretation of the Fall.\(^{321}\)

In fact, God’s sovereign activity and the effectivity of “the Devil’s poison” are special characters according to which Lutherans do not differ just from the notions of Catholics, but also from the doctrines of other churches. For this reason God’s sovereignty is one of the most central themes of Lutheranism, if not the most central. The emphasis of God’s sovereignty is closely related to Luther's doctrine of justification, where God is the subject of both the forensic and effective justification from beginning to end.\(^{322}\)

In addition to the doctrine of justification, God’s sovereignty emphasized by Luther also includes the theologies of creation and evil. According to Luther, God, namely, sovereignly creates and sustains the world and for some unknown reason (at least from the human perspective) allows evil to slither into the world. On the basis of my reading of several of Luther's works, I have come to the conclusion that he often experienced God’s sovereignty as consoling. In fact, Luther reminisces in his Large Commentary on Galatians that his teacher, Johann von Staupitz, stated that he was consoled by the idea that “this our doctrine of grace gives all the glory and all only to God.” This idea also consoled Luther himself.\(^{323}\)

\(^{321}\) For example, see WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 131 (21) – 132 (16)


\(^{323}\) WA 40 I [Dr], pp. 131 (21) – 132 (16): "Sic memini D. Staupitium, tunc summum virum et Vicarium ordinis Augustiniani, inicio causae meae ad me dixisse: Hoc me, inquit, consolatur, quod haec doctrina nostra gratiae totam gloriaem et omnia soli Deo tribuit, hominibus nihil. Deo autem (id quod luce clarius est) nimium gloriae, bonitatis etc. attribui non potest. Sic tum me consolabatur."
And yet, these aspects of God's sovereign and theological determinism in Luther's theology have been constructed on the basis of relatively sporadic references. In what measure, then, Luther's theology as a whole can claim to be permeated by theological determinism requires further clarification, and notably, extensive source material. Moreover, the research regarding the relationship between morality and human guilt, as with other difficult themes related to determinism, is beyond the scope of this present work, and so must be postponed.
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6. God and Evil in Luther's De servo arbitrio

Introduction

Martin Luther's various conceptions implying that God is the author of evil have emerged as one of the most difficult matters in Lutheranism. Erasmus, for example, accused Luther in 1523 of making God the origin of evil.324 Similarly Melanchthon's Loci was also accused of making God the cause of evil and author of sin by the Roman Catholic theologian Johannes Cochlaus in 1525, who placed Melanchthon in the same category as the ancient Manicheans whom Augustine had opposed. Melanchthon responded to these accusations positively in the sense that he attempted to avoid precisely those “Stoic” conceptions which might lead to thinking of God as the cause of evil.325 In addition to Melanchthon, many other Reformers (e.g. Chemnitz, Chytraeus, and Selnecker) strove to avoid any suggestion that God could be responsible for evil. This was important, for example, regarding their papalist adversaries and parishioners. In addition to these strategical and practical reasons, the conception of God as the author of evil was in itself something avoidable according to them.326

This avoidance becomes evident also in the Formula of Concord which condemns the Manichean and Stoic heresy according to which all things occur necessarily (omnia, quae fiunt, necessario fieri) and “that the human being does everything by compulsion; that the human will has no freedom or capacity to practise outward righteous-


ness and genuine decency in any way and to avoid outward sin and vice; or that it is compelled to perform evil outward deeds, such as indecency, thievery, murder, etc.\textsuperscript{327}

Although it was not its purpose, this condemnation in the Formula of Concord seems to hit on Luther's \textit{De servo arbitrio} (henceforth abbreviated as the DSA), where he argues that all things occur inevitably \textit{(inaevitabiliter; cf. inevitabiliter)}\textsuperscript{328} or necessarily.\textsuperscript{329} Luther also implies in the DSA that even sin occurs in the fallen Creation inevitably or necessarily.\textsuperscript{330} These radical approaches seem to make Luther a “Stoic” or a “Manichean” heretic who straightforwardly considered God as the origin of evil. It is evident that the DSA was not an easy work for early Lutherans, who were accused of considering God as the origin of evil.

Modern Luther-scholars have also struggled with Luther’s conceptions expressed especially in the DSA regarding the relationship between God and evil. Robert Kolb, for example, noted that “Troublesome for most of his disciples and many thereafter were those passages in which Luther’s affirmation of God’s lordship seems to make him responsible for evil.” According to Kolb, Luther sometimes gave the impression that God is responsible for evil, but he always conditioned such statements to make certain that the underlying trust in God’s goodness would adhere “in spite of the affirmation of his unqualified lordship even over evil”.\textsuperscript{331} Although Kolb’s study is comprehensive and excellent in many respects, he does not give an exact picture about the relationship between God and evil in the DSA. In addition to Kolb, there are also other modern Luther-scholars who have discussed or studied issues regarding God and evil in Luther’s theology.\textsuperscript{332}

\textsuperscript{327} BK:902–903 (74). Translation from THE BOOK OF CONCORD. THE CONFESSIONS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH. Eds. Kolb and Wengert (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000) 558 (74). See also BK:778.8. Cf. to Kolb, \textit{Bound Choice} 173 n. 325; WA 18:747.21–27, where Luther argues that he does not speak about coercion, when he speaks about immutable necessity \textit{(de necessitate immutabilitatis)}.

\textsuperscript{328} WA 18:711.27–30.

\textsuperscript{329} See e.g. WA 18:615.31–33; 616.13–617.22; 636.23–30; 670.25–26; 692.1–16; 693.28–36; 699.15–17; 736.27–33; 772.36–773.7.

\textsuperscript{330} WA 18:627.3–10; 671.12–14; 676.4–677.16; 682.4–7; 693.30–36; 705.14–26; 709.21–22; 710.3–8; 711.7–30; 712.1–19; 752.12–15; 753.28–33. See also 688.27–690.8; 694.9–14; 736.6–33.

\textsuperscript{331} Kolb, \textit{Bound Choice} 53 n. 325. See also 31–32, 62–66.

Going through these various studies reveal that there is still a lack of detailed analysis regarding the exact relationship between God and evil in the DSA, although many Luther-scholars have been interested in this issue. The relationship between God and evil in the DSA needs clarification which is the aim of this article.

This article will, therefore, examine whether Luther in the DSA really considered God to be the origin of evil, of which Lutherans were accused in the sixteenth century. God as the origin of evil is examined, for example, in the light of biblical narrative. After all, the DSA was about the correct biblical interpretation regarding human freedom. In the DSA, it varies as to how God is involved in evil in the Fall of the angel(s), in the Fall of the first humans, or in the fallen world. I will argue that Luther considered that God was involved much more actively in evil in the fallen Creation than in the Fall of the angel(s) and first humans. Through this distinction, Luther could avoid considering God straightforwardly as the origin of evil as this article will suggest. However, the idea that God is closely involved in evil in the fallen Creation naturally raises questions regarding God’s exact relationship to evil.

Therefore, this article also aims to explain different facets of the relationship between God and evil: an omnipotent God’s influence on evil; God’s ubiquity even in evil; the hidden God; and the problem of evil. In the Conclusions, I will bring these aspects together and

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333 E.g., see Alfsvåg The Identity of Theology 3 n. 332.

334 The Fall of the angels is not as explicit a concept as the Fall of the first humans in the Bible. However, there are more implicit references to the Fall of the angels (e.g., Luke 10:18) or at least insofar as Luther and other ancient, medieval, and early modern theologians thought.
examine how Luther understood God’s exact involvement in evil and what kind of intellectual challenges this matter posed for Luther.

The Origin of Evil

Luther’s basic belief (even in the DSA) was that God is by nature always good and that humans are by nature evil in the fallen world. The goodness of God is, however, beyond human comprehension. Humans cannot evaluate or judge God or his works. Although God’s goodness is beyond human comprehension, “faith and spirit” believe that God is good even if all humans would be damned. In fact, God’s goodness was for Luther a matter of faith. Human reason without faith would consider God good only if He would save all people. Luther did, therefore, consider God’s goodness as self-evident and something which could not be questioned. For this reason, he was careful not to explicitly claim God as the origin of evil. Because Luther also thought that all things occur inevitably or necessarily (as was mentioned in the introduction), he had to construct such arguments in the DSA so as to prove that God, who necessarily executes all things, is not the origin of evil.

For properly understanding Luther’s thought of God’s involvement in evil, it is necessary to acknowledge that this involvement varies according to three different stages of the Fall in biblical narrative: the Fall of angel(s), the Fall of first humans and the world in its fallen phase. First of all Luther did not discuss much in the DSA with regard to the first chapters of Genesis and the Christian ideas of the Fall of some of the angels. He presented only a few more or less enigmatic ideas regarding these issues. Luther, for example, clearly denied that God would have created the will of Satan as evil. Instead, God “discovers” (invenire) it as being evil (cf. to Luke 10:18). The will of Satan became evil when he deserted God and sinned. In other words, Luther denied that God would be the creator of evil and has actively caused Satan’s

335 WA 18: 670.6–8; 677.1–4; 707.32–708.23; 710.31–711.19
338 In the DSA, Satan (Lat. satan) and the Devil (Lat. diabolus) are one and the same being for Luther.
Fall. Still, Luther did not answer the question as to why God allowed Satan, along with some of the angels, to Fall.  

The reason for Luther’s enigmatic expressions regarding the Fall of the angels, lies in the fact that the Bible does not give clear answers for why God allowed some of the angels to fall. Concerning the Fall of the first humans, Luther only said that the Devil conquered them through mere temptation already before he ruled over them. It is evident that he referred to Genesis chapter three, where the serpent leads the first humans into sin. However, he did not answer the question as to why God allowed the first humans to fall. Luther thus blamed the Devil – instead of God – for the Fall of the angels and the first humans, but did not answer why God allowed this to occur.

Concerning the third phase of the Fall, the world in its fallen phase, Luther is much clearer regarding God’s involvement in it. Luther argued that in the fallen world, humans are born evil by nature and that it could not be otherwise, because they are born from impious seed. In other words, the ontological evilness is an inherent quality of humans. According to Luther, God does not sin, although he forms and increases these impious seeds. Instead, ontologically good God forms and increases human beings from a sinful seed just like a craftsman does a statue out of corrupted wood. Luther also avoids giving the image that God would create sin in human beings.

Luther illustrates this through an example of an evil inn-keeper:

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340 WA 18:675.34–37. See also 786.10–14.


342 WA 18:710.8–35; 711.20–38. Cf. Sammeli Juntunen, Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther in den Jahren von 1510 bis 1523 (Schriften der Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft 36; Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1996) 167–174, where he describes young Luther’s conception regarding creatio continua. For Luther, God’s continuous creation meant the creation of good things. One prominent feature for Luther was that he (unlike Ockham) thought that creatio continua also meant the continuous Creation of spiritual life (p. 168).
Let no one suppose, therefore, when God is said to harden or to work evil in us (for to harden is to make evil), that he does so by creating evil in us from scratch. You must not imagine him like an evil-minded innkeeper, full of wickedness himself, who pours or blends poison into an innocent vessel, which itself does nothing but receive or suffer the malignity of the blender. That is the way people seem to imagine that man in himself is good, or at least not evil, and that he suffers an evil work at God’s hands, when they hear it said by us that God works in us good things and bad, and that we are subject by sheer passive necessity to God’s working; for they do not sufficiently consider how unceasingly active God is in all his creatures, allowing none of them to take a holiday. But anyone who wishes to have any understanding of such matters should think as follows. God works evil in us, i.e., by means of us, not through any fault of his, but owing to our faultiness, since we are by nature evil and he is good; but as he carries us along by his own activity in accordance with the nature of his omnipotence, good as he is himself he cannot help but do evil with an evil instrument, though he makes good use of this evil in accordance with his wisdom for his own glory and our salvation.\textsuperscript{343}

Luther’s example of the evil inn-keeper bears an interesting analogy to Luther’s lectures on Genesis (1535–1545), where he describes the serpent of Genesis chapter three as possessed by the Devil. This possessed serpent infuses his sinful “poison” (or sin) through corruptive words to the first humans.\textsuperscript{344} If God were understood as an evil inn-keeper, he would, therefore, according to Luther’s later theology resemble the Devil. If someone understands God in this way, it would also mean, according to the quotation, that the individual is herself good (or not evil) and suffers “an evil work at God’s hands” which is not, according to Luther, true. In this quotation, Luther does not, however, answer who or what pours (or has poured) evilness into human beings – although later in his career he argued that it was the Devil.


It is also important to remember that, in his lectures on Genesis, Luther described how the first humans were infected by sin. In the quotation, Luther focused on humankind in its fallen status and argued that in the fallen Creation humans are evil by nature and that God does not create evil in them from scratch or pour “poison” that is evilness into them. In the fallen Creation human beings are, therefore evil by nature and God uses evil beings “in accordance with his wisdom for his own glory and our salvation.”

In sum, God did not actively cause the Fall of the angels or the first humans. Therefore, God was not the origin of evil for Luther. However, in the fallen world, where everything is corrupted, God works according to His goodness. Therefore, it would be a misinterpretation to argue that God is the ontological origin of evil according to Luther. It would also be an exaggeration to argue that God is the causal origin of evil, because Luther emphasized the fault of Satan regarding his Fall and also that of the first humans. However, it is of course difficult to precisely evaluate God and the causality of evil, because Luther used such enigmatic expressions regarding God’s involvement in the Fall of Satan and the first humans. Next, I will focus more on the issue of how Luther understood God’s actual involvement in evil in the fallen world, because Luther gave much more information on this issue than he did about the Fall of some of the angels (including Satan) and first humans in the DSA.

An Omnipotent God’s Influence on Evil

Luther often defined God as omnipotent in the DSA. The word omnipotence literally means a “potency” to do everything. However, in the DSA God’s omnipotence meant not only the abstract potency to do everything, but also God’s omnipotent and real actions in His Creation. Luther, for example, described God’s power and influence over (the fallen) Creation especially through his conception of the movement of divine omnipotence (motu divinae omnipotentiae), and in the DSA defines God’s omnipotence as follows: “Omnipotentiam vero Dei voco non illam potentiam, qua multa non facit quae potest, sed actualem illam, qua potenter omnia facit in omnibus, quo modo scriptura vocat eum omnipotentem.” In other words, according to Luther, God’s omnipotence re-

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345 WA 18:709.22–26; 715.18–716.1.
fers in the Bible to God’s actuality in the world and not to various theoretical possibilities which he could execute. Therefore, Luther’s conception of God’s omnipotence comes close to what Karl Holl called the *Alleinwirksamkeit* or *Allmacht*. In the DSA, however, Luther, is not interested in exact philosophical distinctions between God’s omnipotence, *Alleinwirksamkeit* and *Allmacht*. And as the Latin quotation suggests, Luther’s conception of God’s omnipotence can be attributed to its theological or Biblical rather than its philosophical nature.

When Luther examined the relationship between God and evil in the DSA, God’s omnipotence was at the heart of the matter. Luther, namely, thought that Satan and ungodly men are caught up in the movement of God’s divine omnipotence and are moved by it necessarily. In this movement of divine omnipotence they are the instruments of God. God’s omnipotent appropriation (*raptus*) is seen, for example, in Satan’s evil will which God appropriates and moves in any direction he wants. God’s omnipotent appropriation, however, does not change the evil will of Satan, but works according to its own nature. Therefore, God does not cause evil or infuse evil in Satan, but only uses him according to his own nature.

In addition, God’s omnipotent movement and appropriation provoke evil men not to remain idle, but to “continually err and sin,” because they act according to the kind of person they are. In other words, God uses evil beings as his instruments in the same manner as a craftsman would use his deteriorated tools. Through the instrumental conception of evil Luther tried to preserve the essence of God as good. For Luther the fault, namely, is rooted in those who are wicked and not in God, because the former are by nature evil and the latter is by nature good. Luther did not here evaluate goodness, evilness and guilt through causal or moral, but rather ontological definitions. The fault is not,  

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350 WA 18:711.2–19.
351 WA 18:709.21–36.
therefore, in the craftsman, that is, in (an essentially good) God, but rather in the instruments, who are by nature evil and therefore also guilty.\textsuperscript{352} Here again, Luther tried to avoid giving the impression that God could be considered as the origin of evil, although He is Almighty.

God does not omni potentely move creatures without any aim. An omnipotent God uses ontologically evil instruments for His own ends. This use is based on His wisdom. Through His wisdom, God uses erring and sinning for the promotion of His own glory and “our salvation.” The wise actions of an omnipotent God are based on His effective word. For defending this argument, Luther referred to 2 Sam 16:11, where David permitted Shimei to curse him. The reason David gave his permission was that he remembered the fact that God had only to speak and it was done (Psalm 33:9), which means that God does everything by his eternal word. According to Luther this example proved that divine action and omnipotence impelled the evil will of Shimei to curse David, who thought that he deserved this curse. In other words, this cursing occurred, because an omnipotent God commanded with his eternal word Shimei, who was already evil and inflamed against David, to act according to his evilness against David.\textsuperscript{353} In sum, God omnipotently directs evil beings for his own ends through his eternal word.

God’s omnipotence in evil beings is also closely connected to His foreknowledge and the necessity of all things. Luther argued that God has not only known beforehand, but has also preordained (\textit{praediventum}) and predestined future events which He necessarily executes. What God foreknows will happen necessarily and He wants and plans what He foreknows. Foreknowledge, the necessity of all things, preordination, predestination and God’s eternal and infallible will are, therefore, all aspects of an omnipotent and Almighty God who does as He pleases. If God, namely, would not know beforehand what would happen and also influence all things according to his plans, He would not be a true but, rather, a false God. Luther called this false god a “ridiculous god”, who is disappointed when his uncertain foreknowledge fails. For Luther God’s certain foreknowledge deviates radically from human foreknowledge, which can fail.\textsuperscript{354}

\textsuperscript{352} WA 18:709.21–36. Cf. to Steinacker, “Luther und das Böse” 142–143 n. 332. See also WA 1:367.11–14.
\textsuperscript{353} WA 18:711.2–19.
\textsuperscript{354} WA 18:615.12–30; 617.19–22; 619.16–25; 716.11–717.39; 718.8–719.35; 772.38–40; 786.3–7. See also 618.11–619.15; 622.3–6; 719.36–720.2; 724.28–726.13. See also Brosché, \textit{Luther on Predestination} 17, 19, 88–95, 121 n. 339.
Without belief in God’s necessary foreknowledge and His inevitable actions, the Christian faith would also be corrupted, according to Luther. It is evident that Luther’s emphasis on God’s certain foreknowledge and necessity in all things were not just part of his rhetoric against Erasmus, but essential or even the most essential parts of Christian faith. Without God’s sovereign abilities, it would also be impossible to believe in His consoling promises and, on the other hand, fear his threats. Without belief in God, who necessarily knows and executes His promises, also salvation would be lost, according to Luther. 

An interesting (and classical) example regarding God’s foreknowledge is Luther’s interpretation of Jesus’ betrayal by Judas. According to Luther, God knew that Judas would betray Jesus and this betrayal took place necessarily. Because, for Luther, God’s omnipotence meant his actuality in his Creation, it is not surprising that Luther thought that God’s foreknowledge necessitates concrete events in it. God’s foreknowledge is, namely, firmly connected to God’s omnipotent movement in Creation: foreknowledge and omnipotent movement require each other in Luther’s train of thought. Therefore, Judas or any other creature cannot do or change their willing against God’s foreknowledge. Judas betrayed willingly and this active willing was “God’s work” (opus Dei), because Judas – just like other creatures – was under the influence of God’s omnipotent movement. God did not cause betrayal by forcing Judas into betrayal against his will; instead he omnipotently influenced in Judas the active willing according to his evil nature. Judas and the betrayal of Jesus is, therefore, a model example of how God uses evil instruments according to their nature for His own purposes without forcing them to act against their evil nature and will.

One can ask how it is possible that God, who knows all things beforehand and even preordains them, is not actively causing evil or is not the origin of evil. Is Luther’s argumentation contradictory? Not nec-

essarily. For Luther God’s foreknowledge and preordination did not mean that God would have straightforwardly influenced evil or should be considered as the (ontological) origin of evil. In other words, God could have ordained all things so that He would not be the actual (or ontological) origin for evil. In fact, Luther emphasized in the DSA that God is not the ontological origin of evil: he does not pour evilness into innocent creatures as it was said earlier.

In sum, God’s foreknowledge (and preordination and predestination), His eternal word and his omnipotent movement were firmly connected to each other in Luther’s train of thought: God omnipotently influences even in evil beings through his eternal word and knows (and ordains) beforehand what will happen. Luther also said that all things (e.g., evil) occur according to God’s foreknowledge. However, Luther avoided giving the impression that God is the origin of evil or at least he denied that God should be considered as the ontological origin of evil. For avoid giving this impression, Luther argued that God only directed evil beings, like Judas, according to His foreknowledge and omnipotence, but did not actively want or cause the evilness that is in their nature. This – of course – raises the question: Why would the omnipotent God, who knew and ordained everything beforehand, allow Satan and the first humans to fall? Luther did not give straightforward answers to this question, but I will return to this question at the end of article, where I examine more the problem of evil in the DSA. However, before examining more carefully the problem of evil, it is necessary to understand how God works and is present in evil.

God’s Ubiquity – even in Evil

Luther’s view of God’s influence even in the impious should be understood – in addition to his understanding of God’s omnipotent movement – in the light of God’s ubiquity (or omnipresence). According to Luther, the Scripture testifies that God is everywhere and fills all things (Jer. 23:24) and this demonstrated that God is always with a Christian and hears her. This doctrine of God’s ubiquity served above all consolative purposes for Luther: without God’s ubiquity, it would be impossible to pray to God in a “horrible” place (e.g., thrown into prison or into a sewer
by a tyrant). Because of God’s ubiquity, Christians can talk to their Lord even in the worst of places.

Luther also argued in the DSA that because of His ubiquity and omnipotence God is even present in evil beings. Luther took from Augustine the idea that God operates both good and evil “in us.” The conception of God’s ubiquity in this form prompts the question as to how God, who is ontologically good, could be present even in evil beings, as Luther argued. Does this not mean that His goodness blends in with an evil nature or is corrupted by it? Does not a good God turn evil when he is so closely involved in evil? Luther did not give a clear-cut answer to these questions. It is possible, however, to draw some conclusions.

First of all, it is important to understand how Luther defined the essence of evil being in the DSA. The most important place regarding this issue is where Luther denied the idea that Satan and ungodly humans are “nothing” (nihil). Because they are creatures of God, they have a nature and will which, however, are corrupted. Evil creatures are not corrupted to the extent that they would lose their created nature.

Sammeli Juntunen has done a thorough study on Luther’s conception of nihil (Engl. nothing, Ger. nichts). Juntunen compares Luther’s conceptions from the years 1510–1523 to antecedent tradition: ancient philosophers, Plotinus, early and medieval Christian theologians, and to Luther’s teachers. Juntunen suggests that Luther’s conception of nihil as an expression of the total ontological dependence of the Creation and human beings on God is in line with the western philosophical-theological tradition (e.g., Plotinus, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventure, Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler and Johann von Staupitz).

362 Juntunen, Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther 405 n. 342.
Has Luther, therefore, changed his conception of *nihil* in the year 1525 when he defends the idea that evil beings are not *nihil*? This is not the case. Namely, already in his earliest writings Luther thought, according to Juntunen, that although sinners and evil beings without a connection to the Son of God should be considered *nihil*, as regards mercy, they still have their *esse natura*, that is, they exist in their (created) nature. However, this “natural” being is only being in guilt. In other words, regarding *esse gratia* (=exist in grace), an evil creature is *nihil*, but regarding *esse natura* (=exist in nature) even an evil being is something.363 Luther’s earlier conceptions are well in line with his views in the DSA, where Luther defended the idea that even evil beings have something regardless of their evilness: their created nature.

Because evil beings are, in spite of their corruption, still creatures of God, Luther described in the DSA how God directs them. According to Luther, these evil creatures are not “less subject to divine omnipotence and activity than all other creatures and works of God.” Because God moves and drives “all in all,” he necessarily acts and moves also in Satan and ungodly humans. Luther here used the metaphor of a horseman who is riding with an injured horse: 364

It is like a horseman riding a horse that is lame in one or two of its feet; his riding corresponds to the condition of the horse, that is to say, the horse goes badly. But what is the horseman to do? If he rides such a horse alongside horses that are not lame, this will go badly while they go well, and it cannot be otherwise unless the horse is cured. Here you see that when God works in and through evil men, evil things are done, and yet God cannot act evilly although he does evil through evil men, because one who is himself good cannot act evilly; yet he uses evil instruments that cannot escape the sway and motion of his omnipotence. It is the fault, therefore, of the instruments, which God does not allow to be idle, that evil things are done, with God himself setting them in motion.365

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Therefore, God’s ubiquity does not mean that the essence of God is somehow poisoned or corrupted by evil beings. Although God works “in and through evil men,” He does not turn from good to evil. The reason for this is that God, who is something very different by nature or by His being compared to His Creation, preserves His good nature or being, although He does influence them from the inside and does not just direct them from the outside. In other words, God can be and is present even in evil beings without being corrupted by their sinful nature or sinful deeds.

Although God’s goodness is not corrupted through His presence in evil beings, Luther thought that God could even entice them into evil without being evil or sinful Himself. Luther thought that God could entice evil, for example, by hardening the heart of the Pharaoh of Exodus. This occurs, when evil ones are concentrated on their own glory, wealth, works, wisdom, power and so forth and participate in the movement of divine omnipotence as evil beings and without God’s Spirit. If someone resists their concentration and desire for these things, they will become furious and direct their rage against their adversary. According to Luther, this is also the reason why the world (that is, evil people) has such a strong fury against the Gospel of God\(^{366}\) which condemns its desire for glory, wealth, wisdom and things in which the world trusts. In other words, evil beings necessarily sin and make mistakes according to their evil nature. On the other hand, an omnipotent and good God cannot change his omnipotent movement because of these evil beings. Therefore, an omnipotent God inevitably moves within evil creatures according to their nature until He corrects them through His Holy Spirit. However, when God does not interfere through His Holy Spirit, the evilness of evil beings is enticed when they confront the Gospel which condemns their own wisdom, righteousness, evil desiring

\(^{366}\) It is difficult to define exactly what Luther meant by the Gospel (Lat. *evangelium*) in the DSA. Two most obvious candidates are: the good news about Christ’s salvific work and the New Testament (or the whole Scripture). See, e.g., WA 18:608.9–609.3; 610.13–19; 654.37–655.10; 757.36–758.1. On the other hand, Luther defines the Gospel as a counterpart to the law (Lat. *lex*), WA 18:663.14–15: “Verba autem Dei dico tam legem quam Evangelium. Lege exiguntur opera, Evangelio fides.”; 693.20–694.1: “Nam in novo testamento praedicatur Evangelion, quod est alid nihil, quam sermo, quo offertur spiritus et gratia in remissionem peccatorum per Christum crucifixum pro nobis impetratam, iudicium gratiae misericordia Dei patris, nobis indignis et damnationem merentibus potius quam aliquid alium, favente. Cf. WA 18:667:1–4: "Item, quadruplicem gratiam fingis, ut etiam Philosophis quando fidei et charitatem tribuas. Item, triplicem illam legem, naturae, operum, fidei, fabulam scilicet novam, ut convenire vehementer asseras Philosophorum praeccepta Evangelicis praeceptis.” See also Alfsvåg, *The Identity of Theology* 97–102 n. 332.
and so forth. Sometimes their evilness is enticed to the extent that they are hardened.367

This kind of God’s enticement and hardening can be so powerful that it causes even possession: “The hardening of Pharaoh by God, therefore, takes place as follows: God confronts his badness outwardly with an object that he naturally hates, without ceasing inwardly to move by omnipotent motion the evil will which he finds there; and Pharaoh in accordance with the badness of his will cannot help hating what is opposed to him and trusting in his own strength, until he becomes so obstinate that he neither hears nor understands, but is possessed by Satan and carried away like a raving madman.” In short, God influences evil beings from the inside, because they are still His creatures, but at the same time God can put essentially good obstacles for them to stumble over, so that they become possessed.368

Did God, then, act wickedly when he hardened and even caused the possession of Pharaoh? The answer to this question is negative. Luther, namely, thought that God’s obstacles, which cause hardening and even possession in some people, are essentially good (e.g., the Gospel). In other words, it is God’s goodness which some individuals cannot stand and, therefore, they are hardened. However, does not God act wickedly when He allows these evil people to become hardened (though the hardening occurs through good instruments)? Not necessarily. Luther, namely, denied that God would be the ontological origin of evil, or created them evil as was suggested in this article earlier. Therefore, God is not responsible for what His good gifts work in evil beings, though this may feel or seem to be contradictory with His goodness and omnipotence. What is more important is the fact that God uses hardening and other forms of evil for His glory and our salvation. In other words, God entices or hardens evil instruments through essentially good obstacles for higher goods. In addition, he can also liberate evil individuals from their evilness through His Holy Spirit.369 Therefore, the hardening of some individuals does not jeopardize God’s goodness in Luther’s train of thought, though this may raise questions as to why God acts to way He does.

God is, according to Luther, present in his Creation also in another mode of being: as the Holy Spirit. God can, namely, inhabit individuals in a peculiar mode: the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit.

367 WA 18:710.1–714.37.
369 WA 18:710.1–712.38.
Luther described in the DSA how a corrupted being participates in the movement of divine omnipotence until she is renewed by the Holy Spirit: “God cannot intercept His omnipotence on account of that aversion, and the ungodly human being cannot alter her aversion. It thus happens that she perpetually and necessarily sins and errs until she is set right by the Spirit of God.” Until an individual is “set right” by the Holy Spirit, he lives under the realm (regnum) of the Devil because, for Luther, either God or the Devil inhabits the human heart or will and only the “finger of God” can exorcize the Devil. God’s sanctifying presence in the Creation is a continuous struggle with Satan’s reign. Only the Holy Spirit can transfer and liberate individuals from the realm of the Devil to the realm of God.\(^{370}\)

When individuals are renewed by the Holy Spirit, they still participate in the movement of the divine omnipotence just like (totally) evil individuals. However, they have a new ontological status: they participate as new and renewed beings. However, these renewed individuals have not yet been liberated totally from original sin.\(^{371}\) These renewed beings are just beginning to be righteous and members of the kingdom of God. Luther, here, also briefly discusses the cooperation between God and the human being. He argues that God moves every creature: both evil creatures and those who are renewed by the Holy Spirit. Renewed individuals are cooperating with God so that they follow God and influence with Him according to their God-given virtues. In other words, these renewed individuals are moved by God: therefore, they are not autonomous colleagues with God, but more like his instruments, which God uses according to their individual gifts. In other words, even in cooperation between the renewed individual and God, the latter is the true subject who causes this cooperation from start to finish. As regarding evil beings, God influences from within them outside His (merciful) kingdom and without His saving mercy.\(^{372}\)

\(^{370}\) WA 18:658.23–27; 710.1–8; 711.20–27; 750.11–15; 753.28–35; 774.22–30; 782.27–783.2; 786.7–20. See also 627.3–10; 710.25–30; Juntunen, Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther 413 n. 342.

\(^{371}\) WA 18:753.28–35; 786.7–14. Although Luther here speaks about renewed being, it is evident that Luther does not mean that an individual is perfectly good and righteous by nature, but such persons “live partly in the flesh and partly in the Spirit” (partim carnem, partim Spiritum habent), which means that they are partly sinners and partly righteous,” as Tuomo Mannermaa explains in Christ Present in Faith. Luther’s View of Justification, ed. and intr. by Kirsi Stjerna (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005) 58–59.

\(^{372}\) WA 18:753.12–754.17. Luther explains his idea of cooperation between God and the human being more clearly in his Sermo de duplici iustitiae (1519), WA 2:145.1–152.12.
Therefore, God is the subject of both: evil and renewed beings, and He does with them as He pleases. Although Luther made, in this manner, detailed distinctions regarding God’s omnipotent movement and presence in evil beings, he did not try to make an all-inclusive theory of God and evil as the next chapter asserts.

The Hidden God

For Luther, some things in God are inscrutable and unknown. He has hidden some of His aspects from humans. Therefore, God who is beyond His revealed aspects is unknown to human intelligence. Luther, for example, argued that God cannot be evaluated by human means and is beyond human comprehension. Actually, this unknown aspect of God is one of God’s characteristics for Luther: if humans could analyze whether or not God acts righteously, it would no longer be God’s divine justice, but merely human justice measured in accordance with human standards. Therefore, one cannot accuse God of being unjust or that He condemns unjustly those who are and remain ungodly and cannot help themselves. God’s justice belongs partly to His divine majesty and therefore remains unknown to human comprehension, according to Luther. He emphasizes this difference between God and humans by posing rhetorical questions: “What is human being compared with God? How is it possible to compare our ability with His ability? What is our strength compared with His powers? What is our knowledge compared with His wisdom? What is our substance next to His substance? In sum, what is our all compared with His all?”

Many scholars have referred to Luther’s conception of a hidden God (Deus absconditus). According to Fredrik Brosché, these scholars have discerned at least two different meanings: 1. “The God who hides His love and grace beneath a present experience of wrath and damnation in the human conscience”; 2. “The God whose election to eternal salvation, and to rejection now and in the future lies concealed.” Both of these ideas are related more or less to matters regarding salvation and predestination; Brosché is concentrating especially on the latter one. Brosché, for example argues that his analysis has confirmed the theory that Luther’s conception of the hidden God implies a theoretical doc-

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trine of the double predestination. However, a human being cannot know, on the basis of speculation, the specific predestination – it is a matter of the hidden God.374

I think that Brosché is on the right track; Luther did come close to the idea of double predestination in the DSA, although he did not explicitly promote it.375 In the DSA, Luther, for example, differentiated between God’s proclaimed and inscrutable will. According to God’s proclaimed will, He does not want the death of a sinner, but according to His inscrutable will He wants the death of a sinner. While Luther himself evaluated God’s inscrutable will in this manner, he emphasized that one should not scrutinize this aspect of God but rather “fear and adore” it. In other words, individuals should focus on those places in the Bible (cf. 1. Tim. 2:4) which emphasize that God wants all humans to be saved. Luther also emphasized that, according to God’s proclaimed will, the reason for perdition is the human will which is corrupted by sin:


recte dicitur: si Deus non vult mortem, nostrae voluntati imputandum est, quod perimus. However, it is impossible for humans to know why God does not (always) renew and correct sinful human will through the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{376}

Earlier in this article, I argued that according to Luther those individuals, who do not believe in God, would consider Him righteous only when He would save all people. Is this not contradictory with Luther’s statement that one should focus on those places of the Bible according to which God wants all humans to be saved? When one examines more carefully Luther’s arguments regarding this issue, it becomes evident that this is not the case. The difference lies in the attitude towards God. Those, who do not believe or trust in God, would consider God good, if He would not harden or judge anyone to damnation, but would be merciful towards every individual and save all people. The problem in this attitude is the fact that it wants to master God instead of submitting itself under the mastery of God. In other words, the attitude to master God in this manner is blasphemy. However, when God Himself promises that He wants all humans to be saved and an individual believes this promise, it is not blasphemy, but faithfulness towards the word of God and His revealed will. This kind of true faith would even consider God good, even if nobody would be saved. Therefore, the difference lies in the attitude of an individual: true faith considers God good in every situation and trusts Him, but sinful human reason considers God good, only when He acts according to its standards.\textsuperscript{377} Therefore, Luther is not contradictory with his own statements regarding the salvation of all people.

We can conclude that the dichotomy between God’s proclaimed and inscrutable will proves that, for Luther, the idea of double predestination belonged to God’s inscrutable will. Because this inscrutable will belonged to the hidden (and majestic) God, it was unknown to humans and something they should only fear and adore without trying to understand through analysis. Therefore, Luther did not construct a clear and evident doctrine of double predestination from which individuals could draw some conclusions regarding their own negative destiny.\textsuperscript{378} Instead, humans should focus on God’s proclaimed will which promised salvation to all.

\textsuperscript{376} WA 18:685.14–686.13; 782.27–783.2. See also 689.18–30; 690.9–30.
\textsuperscript{378} See also WA 18:694.9–14.
Although Luther suggested that one should not focus on the hidden judgments regarding salvation, the matter seemed to distress Luther and he focused on it perhaps even more than he wanted. The (false) idea that God, who is praised as merciful and good, seems to reject, desensitize, and condemn people, as if He would be delighted of great and eternal “sins and tortures” of these miserable beings, had offended, according to Luther, many remarkable men. He admitted that even he himself had felt this as “the depth and abyss of despair” (profundum et abyssum desperationis) in such measure that he had wished that he would not be a human being. This kind of \textit{Predestinationsanfechtung}\textsuperscript{379} was for Luther not only an essential part of Christian spirituality: it was also human and universal. It was typical for all humans to think of God as Almighty and directing the course of things. Luther’s argument regarding the universality of \textit{Predestinationsanfechtung} is questionable. However, it evidently was a serious issue for him. In spite of its seriousness, Luther learned, according to his own words, to cope with this distressing feeling when he understood that this feeling was necessary and close to mercy.\textsuperscript{380}

It would have been interesting to know when this occurred, but unfortunately Luther did not mention it. What is more interesting is that anxieties and their coping mechanisms occur necessarily and without any true human freedom, according to Luther.\textsuperscript{381} Luther’s radical ideas on this form of necessity or inevitability of evil raises – naturally – the problem of evil which is explored in the chapter that follows.

\section*{The Hidden God and the Problem of Evil}

Luther-scholars have usually studied Luther’s conception of the hidden God in matters regarding predestination.\textsuperscript{382} However, for Luther the idea of a hidden God touched also on the classical problem of evil according

\textsuperscript{379} (\textit{Predestinations}anfechtung) was a prominent theme in Luther-research, especially between the 1930s and 1970s. For example, see Paul Bühler, \textit{Die Anfechtung bei Martin Luther} (Theologische Dissertationen Bd. 3; Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1942) 59–61; Rost, \textit{Der Predestinatiansgedanke in der Theologie Martin Luthers} 133–175 n. 349; Erich Vogelsang, \textit{Der angefochtene Christus bei Luther} (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 21; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1932) 80–87. For more on Luther’s conception of predestination, see Brosché, \textit{Luther on Predestination} n. 339.

\textsuperscript{380} WA 18:719.4–35.


\textsuperscript{382} Foster, \textit{God Hidden or Revealed?} 115–140 n. 374.
to which it is difficult or even impossible to logically connect God's goodness and omnipotence to the evilness of the world. In the DSA, his focus is especially in proving God's omnipotence and goodness; and he presumes the evilness of the world as a matter of fact.\footnote{Cf. Otto, Verborgene Gerechtigkeit n. 357. See also Kolb, Bound Choice 19, 21 n. 325.} Next I will analyze some of the key aspects in the DSA regarding Luther's ideas which touch upon the problem of evil.

First of all, Luther speculated in the DSA as to why God does not stop His omnipotent movement in the wills of the impious, leaving them in the condition of evil and even enticing them into becoming still more evil. According to Luther, these kinds of questions indicate that one would wish \textit{(optare)} that God would no longer be God and that, furthermore, He should cease being God so that the evil ones would not become yet more evil. Luther said that it is impossible to say why God does not change those evil wills which he moves, because this is a matter of divine majesty. In the same manner, it is impossible to say why Adam fell and why humans became infected by this sin instead of preserving Adam or creating other humans from a seed which was purified from sin. In other words, humans cannot evaluate God's will because He is the ultimate being who has no comparison. If His will could be evaluated, it would mean that there is someone who is an even more perfect creator than He is. Good is good, simply because (the good) God wants it to be so, even though it may not seem to be good for humans.\footnote{WA 18:712.19–38; 729.7–730.15. Cf. Friedrich Hermanni, “Luther oder Erasmus? Der Streit um die Freiheit des menschlichen Willens,” in Der freie Wille und der unfreie Wille. Philosophische und theologische Perspektiven (Friedrich Hermanni & Peter Koslowski eds.; München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2004) 172–173; Härle, “Die unvereinbarkeit des Determinismus” 13 n. 332.}

These characteristics of divine majesty and a hidden God are an intellectual heritage of William of Ockham and Gabriel Biel. Ockham and Biel, whose ideas Luther knew, had discovered in the Old Testament a Creator who holds all things in his hands and who has claimed responsibility for all that happens in his Creation.\footnote{Brosché, Luther on Predestination 74–75, 121–122 n. 339; Kolb, Bound Choice 28–30 n. 325.}

Although Luther allowed “God be God”\footnote{Cf. to Philip S. Watson, Let God be God! An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Muhlenberg Press, 1950).} and said that humans cannot answer “why?” questions, he certainly flirted and speculated especially with God's intentions regarding his work in evil human be-
This flirtation and speculation occurs especially at the end of the DSA, where Luther touches on the problem of evil and distinguished between three different types of intellectual lights: the light of nature (lumen naturae), the light of mercy (lumen gratiae), and the light of glory (lumen gloriae). According to the light of nature, it remains unclear why the good is taken into anxieties and evil flourishes. The light of mercy can solve this problem: God's righteousness will correct the injustices of the earthly life, because the unjust will be punished and the righteous will be rewarded. In spite of this, it remains unclear in the light of mercy, why God damns one who cannot do anything other than sin and be guilty before Him. For Luther, both of these inferior lights decide that the individual is not to blame, but rather an unjust God. Through these lights it is not possible to comprehend God in any other manner than that He imputes and crowns some individuals, in accordance with mercy instead of merits, and damns other individuals who are not more ungodly than others, but perhaps even less. However, the highest form of comprehension, the light of glory, sees things in another way than through these inferior lights. Through the light of glory, an individual can comprehend that God, whose judgment is in this life is one of “incomprehensible justice”, proves to be the most righteous. However, for Luther such light belongs to an eschatological reality unlike the two inferior lights which are present already in this life. A human being, namely, receives the light of glory in the future fulfillment where God appears in all His glory.

Although the light of glory belonged to eschatological reality, it bears an interesting relationship to faith in Luther's train of thought. Although an individual receives the light of glory in the future fulfillment and sees through it that God is the most righteous, she can already in this life believe that the light of glory will reveal God’s (hidden) plan in the future life. In short, through faith already in this life one can trust that God will prove to be righteous. Because for Luther faith and hope were closely connected to each other and especially hope directed to future fulfillment, it is not far-fetched to presume that the future light of glory (and understanding God through it) is not only the object of faith,

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387 See also Brosché, Luther on Predestination 131–132 n. 339; Grislis, “Articles in Celebration” 1–2 n. 348.
388 WA 18:785.12–38. For more on the three different lights, see Reinhuber, Kämpfender Glaube 186–233 n. 341. See also Kolb, Bound Choice 21–22 n. 325; WA 18:784.1–34.
but also hope. It is, therefore, evident that for Luther the problem of evil was not solved until the eschatological fulfillment – in this life this future state can only be believed in (and hoped for).

Conclusions

This article suggested that Luther understood God’s involvement as being much more active in the fallen world than in the Fall of the angels and the first humans. Rather than God, it was Satan whom Luther considered actively causing both: his own Fall and the Fall of the first humans. God only permitted these falls, but did not actively cause or was not ontologically involved in them. The reason for Luther’s reluctance to analyze in detail the reasons for and descriptions of Satan’s Fall or the Fall of the first humans was the fact that the Bible, which was the foundation of his arguments against Erasmus, did not give much information on these issues. On the other hand, by leaving the question partly open as to how and why God allowed Satan and the first humans to fall, Luther could safeguard his arguments regarding the necessity of all things, foreknowledge, God’s omnipotence (or Allwirksamkeit) and goodness, etc. Namely, if Luther had stated that God actively caused both of the falls, then it would have been evident that he considered God as the origin of evil.

As regards the world in its fallen state, Luther understood God’s involvement as being much more active than in Satan’s Fall or the Fall of the first humans. For this reason, most of this article focused on examining how Luther considered God’s involvement in evil in the corrupted Creation. One obvious reason for Luther’s extensive explanations on this issue was the fact that the Bible gives more information on God’s involvement in the fallen Creation (e.g., the Pharaoh of Exodus) than regarding Satan’s Fall or the Fall of the first humans.

Regarding Creation in its fallen state, Luther thought that God omnipotently controls all created beings and is present in evil beings

without being corrupted by their evilness. Luther thought that even Satan and ungodly men are caught up in the movement of God's divine omnipotence and are moved by it necessarily. If God does not renew evil beings through His Holy Spirit, the evilness of evil beings is enticed when they confront the Gospel which condemns their own wisdom, righteousness, evil desiring and so forth. However, it is not God's fault that evil beings hate and resist His good gifts (e.g., the Gospel), because He does not create evilness in evil beings, who are evil by nature and born from impious seed.

More importantly, Luther defended God's goodness by arguing that God coordinates evil beings and their enticement for evil for higher goods. Luther defined these higher goods as God's glory and "our salvation." In addition, God liberates some individuals from their evilness through the Holy Spirit. Although Luther tried to justify God's actions in this manner, His goodness was first and foremost an ontological issue for him. In other words, Luther was not so keen on defending God's goodness as a causal or moral issue. It is also important to remember that the dispute between Luther and Erasmus was about the correct biblical interpretation of human freedom and not a philosophical debate about God's goodness.

Luther, however, was aware that his arguments regarding the necessity of all things, God's omnipotence (or \textit{Allwirksamkeit}) and goodness also led him to the classical problem of evil: Why does a good and omnipotent God allow (human) suffering? Luther tried to solve this classical problem with the following arguments:

1. God's creatures cannot question His righteousness. God is simply so much higher a being that, for example, His strength, wisdom and many other majestic abilities go beyond human comprehension.

2. God will prove to be the most righteous only in future fulfillment. In this life, an individual can only believe that God's righteousness will occur.

In the introduction, I mentioned that Robert Kolb spoke about "unqualified lordship even over evil" regarding the DSA. This statement responds quite well to some of Luther's enigmatic expressions regarding the origin of evil. Kolb's focus was not on examining the relationship between God and evil in the DSA and, therefore, his cursory statement is understandable. This article has hopefully thrown more light onto the
complex theme regarding the relationship between God and evil. This article has shown that Luther had to navigate very carefully, especially in two different arguments: God is not the origin of evil and all things occur as the omnipotent God decrees. Luther managed to do this without severe logical problems though his argumentation would have needed further clarification.

It is also interesting to acknowledge that Luther’s emphasis that all things (including e.g., evil, anxieties, and coping mechanisms in anxieties) occur necessarily or inevitably appears to contradict the Formula of Concord, which denied the idea that a human being is compelled to do evil. However, there is not such a severe contradiction between Luther and the Formula of Concord as may first appear. Both, namely, denied that a human being is compelled to do evil against his or her will; instead, a sinful human being sins willingly. However, there was a minor difference in emphasis between Luther and the Formula of Concord. Unlike the Formula of Concord, in the DSA Luther favored the expression that all things occur necessarily. In spite of this difference in emphasis, Luther was not such a “Stoic” or a “Manichean” heretic who straightforwardly considered God as the origin of evil. Therefore, we can conclude that suspicions, according to which Luther or early Lutherans would have considered God straightforwardly as the origin of evil, are overly simplistic and do not grasp highly detailed descriptions presented in the DSA.
7. Conclusions

7.1. Luther’s Idea of Inevitable Evil

The aim of this dissertation was to analyze Luther’s understanding of inevitable evil. To achieve this purpose I used several methods: systematic concept and argumentation analysis, reception critical approaches, and source critical methods. In addition, Luther’s ideas were examined in the historical context of his time and connected with the history of doctrines and ideas.

An examination of Luther’s idea of the inevitability of evil began in the introduction, which showed that Luther explicitly spoke, on the one hand, about God’s inevitable punishment for and anger over sin, and on the other hand, about His inevitable forgiveness of sins because of His beloved Son. In other words, in Luther’s view human beings have deserved inevitable guilt and punishment for their sins, but Christ has carried this inevitable guilt and punishment on behalf of sinners. In addition, the introduction explained Luther’s understanding of “eternal and inevitable” tribulation, which differs from common anxiety and causes the most severe tribulation in the immortal part of the soul. In this form of tribulation, which is not experienced by everyone, an individual struggles with despair and the feeling of eternal death or hell. The inevitability of this kind of tribulation means that it is something an individual cannot avoid when it occurs.

The introduction also contained a sub chapter on Luther’s understanding of necessitas, which is almost synonymous with inevitabilis. Luther referred to necessity to sin in many of his works. However, by necessity to sin he did not mean that sinning occurs because of compulsion and against the will of a human being. Instead, sin has been an inherent quality and an inclination for evil ever since the Fall of the first humans. In other words, humans necessarily and willingly sin without God’s saving power and the intervention of the Holy Spirit who purifies an individual from sin.

As the articles of this dissertation have shown, the inevitability of evil was also implicitly present in Luther’s central works. It is not necessary to enumerate in detail all the new research results of every individual article, because they can be found in the concluding remarks of each article. However, the following is a presentation in brief of each article’s most important research results regarding the inevitability of evil:
1. Article one suggested that in the future scholars should concentrate more on Luther's interpretation of individual Biblical passages; this concentration would probably open up new insights on Luther’s theology. This hypothesis was tested in the following articles.

2. Article two showed that Luther considered that harmful bewitchment in all its forms (physically, spiritually, and affecting the five human senses) took over an individual without her or his consent. Liberation from spiritual bewitchment and bewitchment of the five human senses (especially hallucinations) was not possible through one’s own powers, but through healing spirituality (praying, pastoral care).

3. Article three demonstrated that there exists an ancient, medieval, and early modern exegetic tradition regarding one of the best known Biblical texts, Genesis chapter three, which modern Biblical scholarship was unaware of or reluctant to refer to. According to this tradition, the serpent mentioned in Genesis chapter three was possessed. Luther was also part of this tradition, as was, for example, Armenian, Greek, Latin, and Syrian exegesis. Luther’s personal contribution to this tradition was the clarification and explanation of the “logic” behind this odd-sounding conception. He did this, for example, by using the synecdoche approach for explaining the possession of the serpent. According to Luther, the serpent became the victim of the Devil, who possessed it and used it for his evil wiles. Because the serpent became a victim of the Devil in this way, it can be said that evil (inevitably) took over the serpent. Luther in fact called the Devil the architect (architectum) of the whole deceitful event. On the other hand, as the fourth article suggested, it is important to remember that in Luther’s view God permitted this architect to work his evil wiles. It is, therefore, evident that the serpent became an inevitable victim in accordance with the architect’s plan, and God permitted this evil architect to execute his plan.
4. Article four confirmed, among other things, that the interpretations of early Lutheranism on Genesis chapter three differ substantially, for example, from the tradition of the Catholic Church. According to early Lutherans, the “poison” of the serpent possessed by the Devil takes over a human being through God’s secret permission. By this “poison” Luther meant the original sin which the Devil infused in the first woman. Instead, the tradition of the Catholic Church depicts the human being as much more of an autonomic subject in the Fall.

5. Article five showed that Luther thought that God did not actively or ontologically involve in Satan’s fall or the fall of the first humans, but only permitted Satan to cause these two falls. He did not discuss much on these issues in the DSA, but focused instead on God’s involvement in evil in the already fallen Creation. One obvious reason for this was the fact that the Bible gives more information on God’s involvement in the fallen Creation (e.g. the Pharaoh of Exodus) than regarding Satan’s fall or the fall of the first humans. What regarded the Creation in its fallen state, Luther understood God’s involvement much more active than in Satan’s fall or the fall of the first humans. Luther interpreted the Bible so regarding Creation in its fallen state that God omnipotently directs all of His Creation including evil creatures. The reason for this was that evil beings did not cease to be God’s creatures in spite of their evilness. However, Luther argued that God does not move these creatures aimlessly, but uses them for His own glory and “our salvation.”

In the DSA, Luther argued that all things, including sin, occur inevitably or necessarily. The necessity and inevitability of evil (e.g. the betrayal of Jesus by Judas) did not mean that God would have straightforwardly influenced evil or should be considered as the ontological origin of evil. In fact, Luther denied that good God in any way could be considered as the active cause or ontological origin of evil. This is logically possible, if one thinks that God could have ordained all things so that He would not be the actual or ontological origin for evil. Although Lu-
ther did not present this argument for supporting his views, he was aware that he had to navigate in the DSA carefully especially in two different arguments: God is not the origin of evil and all things occur as the omnipotent God decrees. Luther managed to do this without severe logical problems though his argumentation would have needed further clarification.

We can conclude that the hypothesis presented in the first article was confirmed by articles two to five. Focusing on Luther's interpretation of the individual Biblical texts opened a new perspective on his theology of evil. Articles two to five made evident that Luther actually considered evil in its various forms as being an inevitable part of the Creation and human life according to the Biblical texts. Therefore, it is possible to give an affirmative answer to the title of this dissertation: "Is Evil Inevitable for Creation and Human Life?" Luther also deemed that liberation from various forms of evil, including sin, possession, and bewitchment, was only possible through pastoral care or spiritual healing orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. These are the most important research results of this dissertation.

This dissertation did not aim at giving an all-embracing definition of Luther's notion of evil. However, it aimed to show that inevitability is one attribute which can be added to Luther's idea of evil. It was an important attribute, if one considers the sources which included this idea: The De servo arbitrio, Large Commentary on Galatians, and Lectures in Genesis, all sources belonging to Luther's most important works. The significance of inevitable evil in Luther's works becomes more evident if one also considers how it was related to central theological themes: the Fall of the serpent and mankind; God's sovereign rule over Creation; the structure of the world; various human dysfunctions (including hallucinations and anxieties). There are good reasons, therefore, to suggest that the idea of inevitable evil was not some peripheral idea for Luther, but a prominent part of his theology.

Some themes need further clarification, especially those based on the research results of individual articles. The first of these is closely related to Luther's understanding of the problem of evil, which was treated especially in the third, fourth and fifth articles. The problem of evil here refers to Luther's ideas on the fall of Satan and humankind. Luther did not give clear answers to why God allowed Satan (along with certain other angels) and the first humans to fall – or more precisely: Luther indicated that these are questions to which a clear answer is impossible. Because the dif-
ferent articles brought out different aspects of this theme, the next sub chapter attempts to construct an overview of Luther's thoughts on the problem of evil, which emerged because of his idea of the inevitability (or necessity) of evil.

Another theme needing further clarification is Luther's reference to Augustine. The third and fifth articles clearly show that Luther had adapted significant ideas from Augustine. Sub chapter 7.3. will examine how (the Augustinian friar) Luther related Augustine's ideas and differed from them regarding the themes of this dissertation. At the end of the conclusions, some research themes which were closely connected to this dissertation and which need further clarification will be presented.

7.2. Luther and the Problem of Evil: How Satan Fell and Why God Let Satan and Humankind Fall?

Three articles of this dissertation (3–5) examined the Fall of Satan, certain other angels, and humans. According to these articles, Luther gave a detailed explanation of how the Devil with the permission of God orchestrated the Fall of humankind. The Devil, with skillfully chosen words, persuaded Eve to see the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in a sinful light. Especially the fourth article illustrated what a shattering change the Fall was for humankind according to Luther. The foundation for Luther's detailed description lies in Genesis chapter three, which depicts how the Fall occurred.

In comparison, Luther described the Fall of Satan and certain other angels in far less detail, the reason for this being that the Bible does not say much about them, and Christian ideas concerning them originate mainly from later traditions. The third article suggested that Luther took a somewhat neutral approach to various traditional Christian explanations regarding the fall of angels. In other words, Luther was aware that various Christian theories on the fall of angels were speculative. However, because some Biblical passages implied to the fall of angels, he offered his own theories based on these Biblical passages. According to Luther, John 8:44 showed that the Devil could not hold the truth and Jude 6 that evil angels left their habitation and became apostates. Because of these two Biblical passages, Luther considered it possible that the Church fathers were on the right track when they argued that there was a battle or a rebellion between angels, with the result that some of the angels began to favor the most beautiful angel, who exalted himself over the others because of his particu-
lar gifts. In short, despite the various Christian traditions, Luther was careful to restrict his arguments involving the fall of Satan and certain other angels, because of the lack of Biblical evidence.

The fifth article of this dissertation also offered some perspectives on Luther's understanding of the fall of angels, according to which he denied that God had created the will of Satan as evil. The will of Satan became evil when he deserted God and sinned, and God discovered it as being evil. In other words, Luther denied that God was the creator of evil and had actively caused Satan's Fall. Instead, God permitted both the first humans and Satan (along with certain other angels) to fall; we can, therefore, conclude that, according to Luther, Satan fell because he deserted God and sinned.

In other words, Luther explicitly denied that God would have actively caused his fall. Luther did not theorize on how this idea could have been connected to his idea of an omnipotent God, who necessarily and inevitably executes all things and knows everything beforehand. In short, the exact manner in which God was involved in the fall of Satan remained more or less a mystery for Luther — just as it is in the Biblical texts (cf. especially in Gen. 3).

In sum, Luther explained HOW the fall of humankind and the fall of angels occurred. However, he was more careful in explaining WHY God allowed these two falls to occur. Below are some of Luther's reflections on the WHY questions presented in the articles of this dissertation:

1) A human being cannot judge or accuse God of having opened the door to original sin in the world. It is impossible to say why Adam fell and why humans became infected by this sin instead of preserving Adam or creating other humans from a seed which was purified from sin. In other words, humans cannot evaluate God's will because He is the ultimate being who has no comparison. If His will could be evaluated, it would mean that there is someone who is an even more perfect creator than He. Good is good, simply because (the good) God wants it to be so, even though it may not seem to be good according to sinful human standards.

2) Luther, however, presented two views on how one can find some sense in evil, which slithered into the world and corrupted it: a) evil can test the church and its members. b)
the arrival of evil into the world through the serpent possessed by Satan remains an unexplained mystery to our natural understanding, but we can find an answer to it through the illumination of Christ’s Spirit, which can provide an understanding, for example, that the arrival of evil referred in some way to Christ. Luther’s expressions on this issue were very enigmatic.

3) At the end of the DSA, Luther distinguished between three different types of intellectual lights: the light of nature (lumen naturae), the light of mercy (lumen gratiae), and the light of glory (lumen gloriae). Only through the light of glory can an individual comprehend that God, whose judgment in this life is one of “incomprehensible justice” (incomprehensibilis iustitiae), proves to be the most righteous in eschatological fulfillment. In addition, Luther thought that an omnipotent God uses evil beings “in accordance with his wisdom for his own glory and our salvation.” In other words, Luther though that God permitted evil for executing His good aims.

In spite of their differences, all these reflections on the why-questions, or to the problem of evil, refer to one important issue: Luther’s unconditional trust in God’s goodness. For Luther God was good no matter what (sinful) human beings may have thought about Him. Only the righteous could comprehend God’s goodness in a world which is full of evilness. For Luther, an omnipotent God was not a tyrant nor did He fail when He let evil enter the world. Evil did not hinder God from executing His good plans. These reflections on the problem of evil receive further evidence from one of his Table talks. Although the authencity of the Table talks are debated, this particular table talk, dated between 11 and 19 June 1540, is well in line with much of the material presented in this dissertation, and therefore probably authentic:

Somebody asked [Martin Luther], “Is the hardening of the heart in the Scriptures to be taken literally or figuratively?” The doctor replied, “Literally, but not actively, because God doesn’t do anything that’s bad. Yet his omnipotence does everything, and

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390 For more of the problematic nature of these talks, see: Beyer 2005, pp. 347–353.
as he finds man, so he acts on him. Pharaoh was by nature wicked; God acted on him, and Pharaoh continued to be wicked. His heart was hardened because God didn’t hinder Pharaoh’s ungodly plans by his Spirit and grace. Why God didn’t hinder them is not for us to ask. This ‘why’ destroys many souls when they search after that which is too high for us. God says, ‘Why I am doing this you do not know, but ponder my Word, believe in Christ, pray, and I will make everything turn out well.’ If God should be asked at the last judgment, ‘Why did you permit Adam to fall?’ and he answered, ‘In order that my goodness toward the human race might be understood when I gave my Son for man’s salvation,’ we would say, ‘Let the whole human race fall again in order that thy glory may become known! Because thou hast accomplished so much through Adam’s fall we do not understand thy ways.’ “There is a threefold light: that of reason, that of grace, and that of glory.”391

Tabletalk No. 5071: “He Hardens the Heart of Whomever He Wills”

Between June 11 and 19, 1540

The quotation actually summarizes many of the important themes of this dissertation: such as God’s omnipotent movement, which moves evil beings according to their evil nature. Luther’s responses to the why-questions and the problem of evil are similar to statements made in this dissertation. He warns, for example, that why-questions regarding the reason for evil have destroyed many souls, because human beings do not possess the ca-

pacity to understand why God allows evil to occur. The human task is to believe in Christ and pray. If one does this, God will make everything to turn out well. The conversation quoted here was probably meant for consolation (probably for the “somebody” who was mentioned in the beginning of quotation). The distress caused by the problem of evil, can be overcome with simple measures: believe in Christ and pray.

Probably the most interesting part of the quotation is the ending, in which Luther refers to the threefold light: reason, grace, and glory. It is probable that Luther here had in mind the threefold distinction which he had made 15 years earlier in the DSA, where he distinguished between threefold intellectual light: nature, mercy, and glory. The most interesting of these lights regarding the problem of evil and the scope of this dissertation was the light of glory. As mentioned earlier, Luther suggested in the DSA that through the light of glory an individual can comprehend that God, whose judgment in this life is one of “incomprehensible justice,” proves to be the most righteous in future fulfillment (or in the last judgement). Luther also seems to refer to the light of glory when he speaks about the last judgement. However, the DSA and this quotation differ in this: in the DSA Luther emphasized that God would prove to be the most righteous in the last judgement or eschatological fulfillment; in the quotation 15 years later Luther argued that God would prove to be honourable and good.

In the quotation, Luther is rarely outspoken regarding his solution to the problem of evil – probably, because the context was much more informal than in the DSA. Luther’s answer to the problem of evil in this Table talk was that God let Adam fall so that His goodness towards humankind could be known in Christ and His salvific self-sacrifice. In other words, Luther suggested that (an omnipotent) God allowed the Fall to occur, because through Christ’s salvific sacrifice humankind could genuinely comprehend how much God cared for humans. It is also interesting that this answer and God’s goodness expressed in Christ’s sacrifice pleased humans to such a decree that they asked God to let humankind fall once again so that God’s glory would become known. The reason for this plea is that in the last judgement human beings realize how much God has accomplished through Adam’s fall. In spite of this joyful attitude towards Adam’s fall, however, Luther implies that humans still do not fully understand His ways or His glory. In other words, in the last judgment humans

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392 See also Brosché 1978, pp. 63–64.
understand God’s goodness, but they do not fully understand God’s ways or glory.

7.3. Luther’s Interpretation of the Bible and his Connection to the Augustinian Tradition

The articles of this dissertation suggested that Luther’s way of interpreting the Bible was a mixture of independent scholarship and the influence of antecedent authors. He did not simply copy ideas from other sources (such as the glossa ordinaria tradition), but examined them critically. Luther’s attitude towards Augustine is a good example of this. As an Augustinian friar, he knew Augustine’s ideas well. He referred to Augustine in a positive manner and adapted his ideas, one being that God operates in us both good and evil. On the other hand, Luther criticized Augustine’s views as being too allegorical or spiritual, if these views seemed to be contradictory to the literal meaning of the Biblical texts.

Augustine’s theology has significantly influenced Western theology. Since Luther is often considered to be part of the Augustinian tradition, it is best to briefly examine how Luther concurred with and differed from Augustine regarding (inevitable) evil. This is important for a more accurate image of how independent and original the ideas of (inevitable) evil Luther drew from the Biblical texts were. We will first look at some of the similarities, and then at some of the differences.

Luther and Augustine have similar perspectives on at least two approaches to evil: 1. evil as a mental disorder (cf. anthropological evil; Chapter 1.1.), and 2. evil as a world order directed by God (cf. ontological evil; Chapter 1.1.). As to the first similarity, Augustine deemed the effect of evil as obscuring the understanding and impeding the working of the mind, which was why heretics could not argue correctly. He also stated that demons could cause, for example, phantasticum, a phantasy of man’s mind, which could cause projections in which a human being was thought to have another form, or he himself was convinced that she or he had this form (the form of a beast for example). This resembles Luther’s ideas of fascinare, which could cause, according to him, hallucinations and heretic images. Both Luther and Augustine, therefore, believed that evil (or de-

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394 On criticism of the dominance of this Augustinian tradition in Fitzpatrick 2010, pp. 66–82.
395 Evans 1982, pp. 36, 90, 108.
mons or Satan) – in one form or another – were the reason for mental-spiritual disturbance. In fact, when Luther examined *fascinare* in Galatians 3:1 in 1516, he explicitly referred to Augustine’s *Regula*: “fixing eye’ this is a bewitcher or illusionist, because to be a bewitcher is to fix an eye and thus hurt by fixing it.”\textsuperscript{396} In spite of this similarity, it is important to remember that Luther also referred to many other sources for constructing his interpretation of *fascinare* in Galatians 3:1, and especially in 1530s drew independent conclusions about it.

In regard to the second similarity, evil as a world order directed by God, Augustine claimed that even minor events and details of the construction of creatures in the universe were governed by the divine power and divine government in the universe. Instead of impersonal fate, Augustine believed in divine providence.\textsuperscript{397} Such ideas are similar to those Luther presented in the *De servo arbitrio* concerning an omnipotent God (see fifth article) who has preordained everything, knows everything beforehand, and (actively) controls everything in the fallen creation. In addition, both Augustine and Luther maintained that fallen angels or demons had power in the fallen world only when it was delegated to them. In other words, they are controlled by God, because they are still God’s creatures – in spite of their wickedness. According to both, God can use the Fall and fallen angels for His own good purposes.\textsuperscript{398}

This second similarity between Augustine and Luther on God’s government is not entirely a coincidence. Luther, namely, considered in the DSA that Augustine (in addition to Wycliffe and Valla) was completely on his side.\textsuperscript{399} In addition, as the fifth article of this dissertation has shown, Luther evidently concurred with Augustine’s idea that God operates both good and evil in us. However, to what decree these ideas of divine providence in the DSA originated from Augustine is difficult to confirm, because Luther rarely referred to Augustine in this work and used other sources, including pagan ideas of fate as well. In addition, one should also bear in mind that the dispute between Luther and Erasmus was (mainly) on the correct interpretation of the Bible and not so much about the correct interpretation of Augustine.

\textsuperscript{396} For more on this issue, see the third article.
\textsuperscript{397} Evans 1982, p. 92. See also p. 169
\textsuperscript{398} Evans 1982, pp. 96, 106–107; the fifth article of this dissertation.
\textsuperscript{399} Luther, on the other hand acknowledged that also Erasmus considered Augustine to be on his side. In spite of this, Luther’s opinion was that Augustine supported only him, and not Erasmus. See WA 18, pp. 640 (2) – 641 (1).
When comparing Augustine and Luther we should remember the difference between Augustine’s earlier and later production. Augustine emphasized in his anti-Manichean works, from his earlier production, the freedom of the will. Later, when he confronted the Pelagians he had to modify his ideas in order to preserve the importance of God’s grace. Pelagians, namely, argued that if the will is the cause of sin, then by an act of will a man can return to good and there is no need for divine assistance or grace. In his anti-pelagian writings, Augustine argued that after Adam’s sin humans could no longer turn their will towards God and allow God to enable them to do good. Humans could only turn their will away from God, towards nothing, and do only evil. Divine intervention alone could turn the will towards good. Thus also Augustine thought that evil was in some measure an inevitable part of human life after the Fall. Augustine’s anti-Pelagian (and later) ideas were close to Luther’s (reformatorical or mature) ideas according to which there is a lack of human freedom and autonomy in regards to evil.\footnote{Evans 1982, pp. 112–118, 122. See also Brosché 1978, p. 65.}

In Augustine’s later years, his ideas on God’s foreknowledge were closer to Luther’s ideas than his earlier conceptions. Augustine argued in De libero arbitrio, among his works from earlier years that God’s foreknowledge does not cause necessity in those cases in which man’s will is exercised. In those cases God’s foreknowledge does not annihilate human power or freedom. Here Augustine’s approach differs from Luther, who in the DSA explicitly argued that if God knows and preordains everything, there cannot be freedom of choice for any creature. Later in his career, however, Augustine’s ideas approached Luther’s. Augustin, namely, argued that God has an active role in bringing about what he foreknows.\footnote{Evans 1982, pp. 117–118; WA 18, p. 786 (1-20).}

In spite of the many similarities especially between the mature Augustine and the mature Luther, their approaches to evil differed. Luther could sometimes describe evil as \textit{privatio boni} as did Augustine and other representatives of the Augustinian tradition.\footnote{WA 7, p. 111 (4-11); WA 42, p. 86 (27-30); WA 43, p. 200 (21-23).} On the other hand, Luther did not want to interpret original sin or the Fall as \textit{privatio boni}.\footnote{See especially the introduction and the fourth article of this dissertation. About Luther’s reluctance to refer to evil as \textit{privatio boni}: WA 39 I, p. 126 (6-8).} In this Luther differed from Augustine who used \textit{privatio boni} idea to prevent worries about God being responsible for evil. Mathewes summarized this idea of Augustine as follows: “If evil is the lack of being, then God cannot have willed evil, because God’s will is precisely what is not evil, and evil is
precisely the lack of accordance with God’s will.” Instead of privatio boni, Luther avoided the problem with other arguments, as suggested especially in the fifth article. One such argument was the idea that God permitted Satan to fall, but did not actively want or cause it. Although Luther did not use privatio boni in this argument, it is not conceptually far from Augustine’s ideas: both Luther and Augustine argued that God has not actively caused or wanted evil.

More than Augustinian privatio boni idea, Luther, for example, used strong expressions of original sin in the context of the Fall. As the fourth article in this dissertation has shown, Luther described, for example, how the first woman was poisoned (=polluted by sin) by Satan. The idea of sin or evil as poison resembled some Manichean ideas of an evil substance. This was brought out in the fourth article. Augustine, however, did not use images of sin as poison in his commentaries on Genesis.405

Although Luther used poison – like the Manicheans (at least according to the Formula of Concordiae) – for describing (original) sin, he was conceptually closer to Augustine than to the Manicheans. The fourth article of this dissertation, namely, made clearly evident that Luther did not concur with the Manichean dichotomy of good and evil, but differed from it significantly. Unlike the Manicheans, both Luther and Augustine differentiated between nature and the evil which had corrupted nature. The Manicheans, on the other hand, claimed that there were only good and evil substances as such.406

In regard to the biblical arguments for evil, Augustine and Luther both agreed and disagreed. Both, for example, considered John 8:44 to refer to the first chapters of Genesis. Luther, however, considered Isaiah 14 to refer explicitly to the king of Babylon instead of Lucifer, while Augustine considered it as referring to the fall of Lucifer. In other words, Luther took a much more literal and careful approach to Isaiah 14 than allegorically (or figuratively) oriented Augustine.407 As the fourth article points out, Luther also criticized Augustine’s interpretation of Genesis 3:14, which did not differentiate between the allegorical and literal meaning of the

404 Mathewes 2001, p. 76. See also pp. 77–81; Evans 1982, pp. 148–149.
405 PL 34, cc. 171–486. For more on Augustine’s idea of the origin of evil, see: Burns 1988, pp. 9–27.
406 Nisula 2010, p. 155. The fourth article of this dissertation explains Luther’s relationship to Manicheanism on this issue more carefully. See also WA 1, p. 224 (13–29); Nisula, pp. 139–153, esp. pp. 146–147, from which it becomes evident that Augustine could sometimes use Manichean images and themes on evil.
407 Evans 1982, p. 100; third article of this dissertation.
text. In sum, Luther emphasized the literal meaning of the text more than Augustine, who made straightforward allegories of them.

On the other hand, it is important to remember that Luther also interpreted the Bible allegorically or figuratively according to Augustinian tradition. Augustine thought that there were a number of higher (and non-literal) senses of scripture. In the Middle Ages, this idea developed into the hermeneutical device called *quadriga*. This device included, in addition to literal sense, three spiritual approaches to the Bible: allegorical (concerns what is believed), anagogical (concerns what is hoped for), and tropological (concerns moral conduct). Luther thought that both allegories and the entire *quadriga* method could be used as an exegetical tool. However, unlike Augustine, Luther emphasized that all spiritual interpretations (e.g. allegories) should follow the literal sense (or the historical sense) of the Scripture.\(^\text{408}\)

It is also important to remember that for Luther historical and literal senses were almost identical. Luther on the one hand lived in a pre-modern era, in which the Bible was one of the most reliable sources of historical events. Therefore, interpreting the Bible literally also meant admitting their historical truthfulness. He, for example, thought that the days mentioned in Genesis chapter one really meant days as we understand them, although he admitted that we may not be certain that we understand them properly. Here he opposed Hilarius’s and Augustine’s interpretation according to which the world was not created in six days, but all at once. In addition he opposed Augustine’s allegorical interpretations of days and emphasized that instead of allegorical interpretations one should admit one’s ignorance regarding the meaning of days.\(^\text{409}\) This is a model example of how Luther wanted to follow a more literal interpretation of the Bible and be more cautious than Augustine regarding allegories.

Augustine and Luther also differed other ways as biblical interpreters. Luther was more of an academic exegete than Augustine, who, instead of focusing on detailed exegetical work, was more at home with problems to which he could bring his knowledge of Scripture to bear in finding solutions. Also, Luther’s translation of the whole Bible affirms that he was more at home with academic and detailed exegesis than Augus-


\(^{409}\) WA 42, pp. 4 (26) – 5 (32).
On the other hand, it is important to remember that both gave sermons on Biblical texts and used creative Biblical solutions for various problems.

In sum, Augustine’s various works and ideas were part of Luther’s framework when he developed some ideas regarding the inevitability of evil (the idea that God operates both good and evil “in us”). In spite of this, he did not follow Augustine slavishly, but considered the Biblical texts as a higher authority than Augustine. Luther was willing to criticize Augustine, especially when he thought that his allegorical interpretations went too far and were in contradiction with the literal meaning of the Biblical text.

In the same way as Luther was critical towards Augustine’s too allegorical or figurative approaches, he criticized Erasmus in the DSA for interpreting Biblical passages tropologically when it was unnecessary or even contrary to the literal meaning of the text. One reason for Luther’s critical attitude towards unnecessary tropes was that they were the instruments heretics used to make the Scripture fit their own opinions. Luther allowed the use of tropes only when the context of Biblical texts demanded it or in cases, where the literal interpretation was against the article of faith.

Therefore, we can conclude that Luther was much more careful than Augustine or Erasmus in making spiritual interpretations (cf. *quadriga*-method) of Biblical texts. Luther thought that overly spiritual interpretations of the Bible might blur its original meaning. This happens, for example, when the interpreter compels the Biblical texts to support his favored ideas instead of submitting herself or himself to its transforming message. In other words, for Luther the true, clear, and original message of the Bible was a serious issue. Only a humble reader, who is concerned with understanding the clear message of the Bible, can find in the Biblical texts Christ and salvation from the whirl of inevitable evil and sin.

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410 Evans 1982, pp. 60, 119. The difference between Augustine and Luther also becomes evident when one compares their works: Luther produced and was focused much more on commenting individual Biblical books and verses than Augustine who focused more on thematic issues. Cf. Evans, pp. xii–xiii to Aland 1970, pp. 432–436.


412 Alfsvåg 1996, pp. 147, 161–162.

7.4. Further Research Questions

Although this dissertation presented an extensive and detailed description of Luther's idea of inevitable evil, especially in the context of the Biblical interpretation, it does not mean that all the aspects of inevitable evil in Luther-research have been clarified. Many questions remain unanswered or did not receive full attention in this dissertation. In the following list, I have enumerated some subjects which would require further research:

1. What other forms of evil (diseases, wars, hell) did Luther consider inevitable?

2. Luther's exact relationship with determinism and fatalism.

3. What did Luther think about determinism or fatalism in the Bible?

4. Luther's conception of Manicheanism and criticism against this movement. Did Luther consider Manicheanism in a similar manner as Augustine? Did Luther and FC consider Manichean ideas correctly?

5. What were Luther's precise thoughts about evil as privatio boni, and what was its relationship to his conception of evil as nihil?

6. Because evil was inevitable in the Fallen Creation and only God could liberate one from inevitable evil, how did this occur through the theological virtues of faith, hope and love?

7. Which one interpreted the Bible and the Augustinian tradition correctly regarding the relationship between human choice and evil: Luther or Erasmus?

I hope to return to these questions in future studies.
Sources, Translations, Dictionaries, and Literature

Abbreviations


CDDCT  Canones et Degreta Dogmatica Concilii Tridentini/The Canons and Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent. A. D. 1563.


NIV  New International Version (Bible).


WA  D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtauagabe. Weimar 1883–.

Sources in Alphabetical Order


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1498  *Biblia mit Postilla von Hugo de Sancto.* I. Basel.

1502  *Biblia mit Postilla von Hugo de Sancto Caro.* 7, Basel, 1502.


1527  Eck, Johannes, *Enchiridion Locorvm communium aduersus Lutteranos,* Ab auctore iam quarto recognitu[m] et tribus locis auctum, à pluribus mendis Calcographi emunctum. Ingolstadtii.
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Sources According to Abbreviations


BK Konkordienformel. – FORMULA CONCORDIAE Gründliche [Allgemeine], lautere, richtige und endliche Wiederholung und Erklärung etlicher Artikel Augsburgischer Confession, in welchen ei Zeither unter etlichen Theologen derselbigen zugetan Streit vorgefallen, nach Unleitung Gottes Worts und summarischen Inhalt unser christlichen Lehr beigelegt und verglichen (pp. 735–1100):

**SUMMARISCHEN BEGRIFF DER STREITIGEN ARTIKEL** zwischen den Theologen Augsburgischen Konfession, in nachfolgender Wiederholung nach Anleitung Gottes Worts christlich erklärt und verglichen./EPITOME ARTICULORUM, de quibus controversiae ortae sunt inter theologos Augustanae Confessionis, qui in repetitione sequenti secundum verbi Dei praescriptum pie declarati sunt et conciliati. 29.5.1577. pp. 767–827.

**ALLGEMEINE, LAUTERE, RICHTIGE UND ENDLICHE WIEDERHOLUNG** und Erklärung etlicher Artikel Augsburgischen Konfession, in
wölchen ein zeither unter etlichen Theologen Streit vorgefallen, nach Anleitung Gottes Worts und summarischen Inhalt unser christlichen Lehre beigesetzt und verglichen. SOLIDA, PLANÆ AC PERSPICUA REPETITIO et declaratio quorundam articulorum Augustanae Confessionis, de quibus aliquandiu inter nonullos theologos eidem adductos disputatum fuit, continens earum controversiarum ad normam et analogiam verbi Dei et compediariam Christianae nostrae doctrinae formulam et rationem, decisionem atque conciliationem. pp. 829–1100.

BK (Schmalkaldische) ARTIKEL CHRISTLICHER LEHRE, so das hätten sollen aufs Concilium zu Mantua oder wo es sonst worden wäre, überantwort werden von unsers Teils wegen und was wir annehmen oder nachgeben künnten oder nicht etc. Durch Dokt. Martin Luther geschrieben. Anno 1537. ARTICULI CHRISTIANAE DOCTRINAE, qui a nostris concilio, si quod vel Mantuae vel alibi congregandum fuisset, exhibendi fuerant indicantes, quid recipere, concedere vel recusare possemus et deberrum. Scripti a D. Martino Luthero. Anno 1537. pp. 405–468.


PG 33 Diodorus Tarsensis, Fragmenta ex Catenis: In Genesin.

PG 53 Chrysostom, Homiliae in Genesin.

PG 56 Chrysostom, Spuria.

PG 56 Severianus de Gabala, Homilia de serpente.
Severianus de Gabala, *Homiliae VI in mundi creationem.*

S. P. N. Joannis Chrysostomi, Archiepiscopi Constanapolitani, *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Galatas.*

Theodoretus, Cyrensis Episcopus, *Quæstiones in Genesim,* 458.

Gennadius Patriarcha, *Ejusdem fragmenta in Genesin.*

Procopius Gazæus, *Commentarius in Genesin.*


ANNO DOMINI CCCCX. RUFINUS AQUILEIENSIS PRESBYTER. Rufinus Aquieleiensis: HISTORIA MONACHORUM SEU LIBER DE VITIS PATRUM AUCTORE RUFINO AQUILEIENSI PRESBYTERO.

Hieronymus Stridonensis, *Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Galatas in libri tres.*

Augustinus, *De Genesi ad Litteram Libri duodecim.*

Augustinus, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos in libri duo.*

Augustinus, *De gratia Christi.*

Venerable Bede (Lat. Bedae Venerabilis or Beda), *Hexameron, sive libri quatuor in principium Genesis, usque ad nativitatem Isaac et electionem Ismaelis.*

Walafrid Strabo (Lat. Walafridus Strabus), *Omnium pars prima sive opera theologica, Glossa Ordinaria: LIBER GENESIS. Hebraice dictus BERESIT, id est IN PRINCIPIO; Graece ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ, id est GENERATIO.*
Bernard of Clairvaux (Sancti Bernandi Abbatis Clariæ-Vallensis): *In adventu Domini.*


*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*


*Asterisci Lutheri adversus Obeliscos Eckii, 1518:* ASTERISCI LVThERI ADVERSVS OBELISCOS ECKII. MARTINVS LUTHERVS VENCELAO LINCO ECCLESIATI NVRBERG. ECCLESIÆ, vere Theologo, suo in Domino fratri.

Decem Praecepta Wittenbergensi predicata populo per P. Martinum Luther Augustianum, 1518.

*DE VOTIS MONASTICIS MARTINI LVThERI IVDICIVM,* 1521.


Disputatio Heidelbergae habita, 1518.

Sermone aus den Jahren 1514–1517: SERMO LUTHERI. In Natali Christi, A. 1515.

Eyn Freyheyt des Sermons Bebstlichen Ablas und gnad belangend Doct. Martini Luther wider die vorlegung, ßo tzur schmach seyn und desselben Sermons ertichtet, 1518.
Questio de viribus et voluntate hominis sine gratia disputata 1516: Sub eximio viro Martino Lutherio Augustiniano, artium ac Theologiae magistro, proxima die Veneris hora Septima quaestio subscripta disputationur.

Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute, 1518.


In Epistolam Pavli ad Galatas M. Lvytheri Commentarivs, 1519.

Scheda adversus Iacobum Hochstraten: MARTINVS LVTERVS PIO LECTORI S., 1519.

Sermo de duplici iustitia R. P. M. L., 1519.

WA 3 Dictata super Psalterium, 1513/15 (Ps. 1–84).

WA 4 Dictata super Psalterium, 1513/15 (Ps. 85–150).

WA 5 Operationes in Psalmos, 1519–1521 (Ps. 1–22).


WA 7 ASSERTIO OMNIVM ARTICVLORVM M. LVTERI per Bullam Leonis X. novissimamdamnatorum.

Das Magnificat Vorteutschet und außgelegt durch D. Marti-num Luther Aug.

D. MARTINI LVTERI RESPONSIO EXTEMPORARIA ad articulos, quos Magistri Nostri ex Babylonica et Assertionibus eius excerpserant, quos venienti Wormatiam obiicerent tanquam haereticos.

Grund und Ursach aller Artikel D. Martin Luthers, so durch römische Bulle unrechtlich verdammt sind. 1521.

Randmerkungen Luthers: [Zu den Sentenzen des Petrus Lombardus], 1510.


WA 14 Predigten über das erste Buch Mose gehalten 1523 und 1524: Collectanea in Genesim ex contione D. Martini Lutheri utcunque accepta: —

Predigten über das erste Buch Mose gehalten 1523 und 1524: 6. Die Ascensionis post prandium.

Predigten über das erste Buch Mose gehalten 1523 und 1524: 7. Dominica Exaudi, 1523

Predigten über das erste Buch Mose gehalten 1523 und 1524: Repetitio quorundam dictorum in 3. Ca., 1523


WA 15 Predigten des Jahres 1524: Dominica post Nativitatis Maria Luth.

Wider den neuen Abgott und alten Teufel, der Weißen soll erhoben werden. 1524: Widder den newen Abgott.

WA 17 I  Predigten des Jahres 1525: Dominica Ante Decollationis Io- 
hannis. Luth:

Predigten des Jahres 1525: Dominica Ante feria Bartholomei.

Predigten des Jahres 1525: Sacrificia veteris testamenti prefi- 

WA 17 II  Roths Festpostille 1527. Sermo in dedicatione templi habitus 
per D. M. Euangeliun Lucae. 19.

WA 18  De servo arbitrio. VENERABILI VIRO DOMINO ERASMO 
ROTERDAMO. MARTINUS LUTHER, GRATIAM ET PACEM 
IN CHRISTO.

Wider die himmlischen Propheten, von den Bildern und Sak- 
rament II, 1525.

WA 19  Schreiben an Johann Herwagen: Sermon von dem Sakrament 
(Rörer), 1526.

WA 20  Predigten des Jahres 1526: Dominica VI. Mat. 5. Luth.

Predigten des Jahres 1526: Dominica XXIII. quae erat 11. No-

Predigten des Jahres 1526: Luth. 5 dominica Lucae XXVIII. de 
coelo.

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WA 22  Crucigers Sommerpostille. (Fortsetzung von Band 21.): Am 
XXIII. Sontag nach Trinitatis, Epistel. Coloss. I.

Crucigers Sommerpostille. (Fortsetzung von Band 21.): Euangeliun 
des XXVI. Sontags nach Trinitatis. Matth. XXV.
WA 24 In Genesin Mosi librum sanctissimum D. Martini Lutheri Declamations.

Uber das erst buch Mose, predigete Mart. Luth. sampt einer unterricht wie Moses zu leren ist.

WA 25 Epistola ad Philemonem, 1527.

In Esaiam Scholia ex D. Mart. Lutheri praelectionibus collecta, 1532.

WA 26 Vom abendmal Christi, Bekendnis Mart. Luther. [Druck], 1528.


Predigten des Jahres 1528: Post prandium.

WA 28 Predigten über das fünfte Buch Mose, 1529: A prandio. [Dominica XXVI].

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WA 29 Predigten des Jahres 1529: Dominica Oculi.

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WA 31 II  Die ersten 25 Psalmen auf der Koburg ausgelegt, 1530.

Scholien zum 118. Psalm. Das schöne Confitemini. 1529: [Handschrift].

WA 32  Predigten des Jahres 1530: Dominica XXII. Euang: ex cap. 18. Matth:


WA 34 II  Predigten des Jahres 1531 (Zweite Abteilung): A PRANDIO. Eph. 6.

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WA 38  Annotationes in aliquot capita Matthaei: [Druck], 1538.
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WA 39 I  Die Disputation de homine: Das Disputationsfragment, 1536.


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WA 40 I  In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius ex praelectione D. Martini Lutheri collectus. [1531] 1535: Beigaben zur Einleitung, 1911.

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WA 40 I [Hs] In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius ex praelectione D. Martini Lutheri collectus. [1531] 1535: Annotationes Martini Lutheri In Epistolam Pauli ad Galatas, 1531.

WA 40 I [Dr] In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius ex praelectione D. Martini Lutheri collectus. [1531] 1535: [Annotationes Martini Lutheri In Epistolam Pauli ad Galatas], 1535.

WA 40 II [Dr] In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius 1531 (1535): [Druck].

WA 40 III Vorlesung über die Stufenpsalmen, 1532–1533: In XV Psalmsgradium.


WA 42

Εἰς Γένεσιν, 1535


WA 43

Genesivorlesung (cap. 8–30) 1538/42: [Enavocatio].


WA 44

Genesivorlesung (cap. 31–50). 1543/45: [Enarratio].


WA 45


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WA 46 Auslegung des ersten und zweiten Kapitels Johannis in Predigten 1537 und 1538: Das Erste Capitel.


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WA 50 Vorrede zu Confessio fidei ac religionis baronum ac nobilium regni Bohemiae, 1538.


Von den Juden und ihren Lügen, 1543.


WA 55 II Neuasgabe der 1. Psalmenvorlesung II: Luthers Scholien, 1513/1515.

WA 56 Diui Pauli apostoli ad RomaNOS EPISTOLA: Die Glossen, 1515.
Diui Pauli apostoli ad RomaNOS EPISTOLA: Die Scholien, 1515.

WA 57  Diui Pauli Apostoli ad Galathas Epistola: Die Glossen, 1516.

Diui Pauli Apostoli ad Galathas Epistola: Scholien, 1516.


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WA 63  BLANKE et al., Personen- und Zitatenregister zur Abteilung Schriften Band 1–60.


Translations in Alphabetical Order


Translations According to Abbreviations


BC  Formula of Concord. A THOROUGH, CLEAR, CORRECT, and Final Repetition and Explanation of Certain Articles of the Augsburg Confession on Which Controversy Has Arisen for a Time among Certain Theologians Adhering to This Confession, Resolved and Settled according to the Direction of God’s Word and the Summary Formulation of Our Christian Teaching (pp. 481 – 660):


[The Solid Declaration] A GENERAL, CLEAR, CORRECT, and Definitive Repetition and Explanation of Certain Articles of the Augsburg Confession, Concerning which Controversy Has Arisen for a Time among Certain Theologians, Here Resolved and Settled according to the Direction of God’s Word and the


LW 26 Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1–4. Translated by Jaroslav Pelikan. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Walter A. Hansen.


LW 33 Career of the Reformer III: The Bondage of the Will. Translated by Philip S. Watson in collaboration with Benjamin Drewery.

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