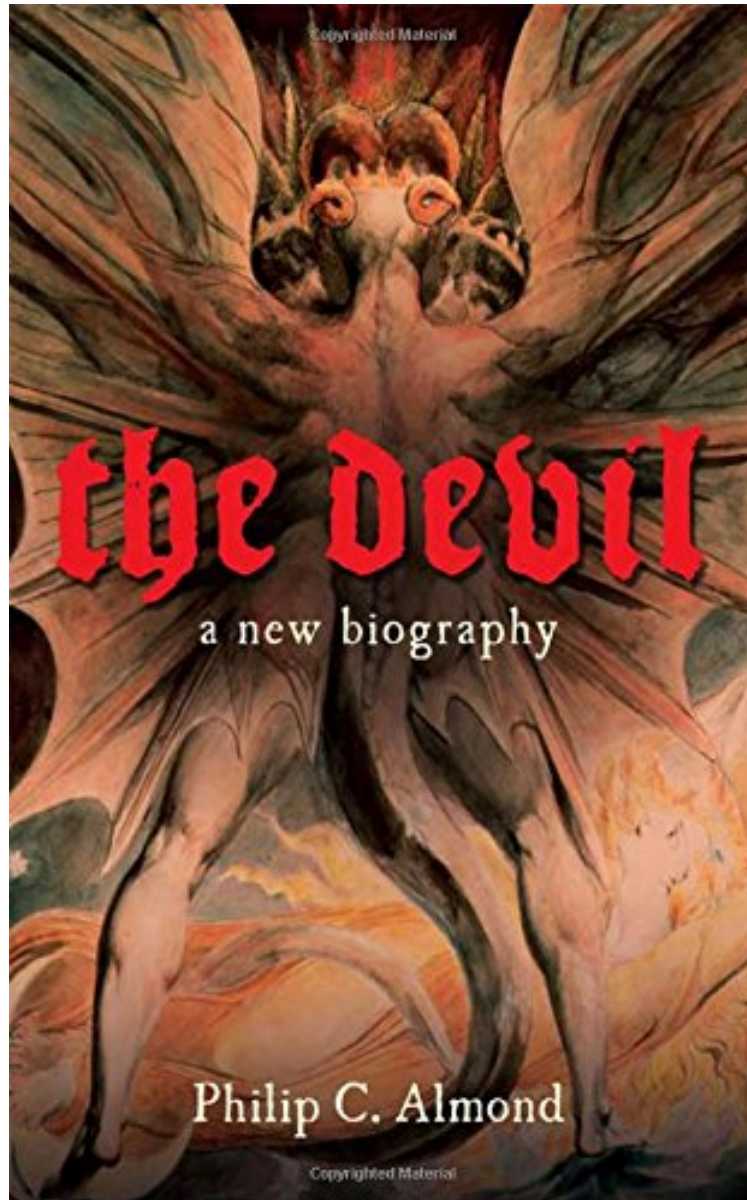


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The Devil: A New Biography

Philip C. Almond

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Philip C. Almond : The Devil: A New Biography before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Devil: A New Biography:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great in depth study of the prince of darknessBy jokerjonjGreat in depth study of the prince of darkness. From all prospectives. A great study tool for anyone in ministry.11 of 11 people

found the following review helpful. Not a light book-it is an academic book but very interesting. By Celia The book is not really a biography rather it is about the history of thought about the Devil from the beginning of Christianity until about two hundred fifty years ago when according to the author he became much less important in Western culture. While, I learned a lot from this book it not the easiest book to read. It is intended to be a scholarly book and it is put out by an academic publishing company. Some of the Wests greatest theologians, religious leaders and philosophers tried to understand the nature of the Devil. Also in Demonology as any other aspect of study there are contrasting points of views. An example of a belief that has been of subject of controversy in Demonology is whether than Devil is purely spiritual or whether he has a corporal existence. However, until I read this book I really had no idea of whom the Devil was. Of course, I knew he was a supernatural force of evil and I read about him in literature. I played the Devil in school in play The Devil and Daniel Webster but I did not know about his origins. I was raised in a very liberal Reform Jewish environment where I was told that Jews did not believe in angels, demons/Satan and miracles. According to this book, the Devil/Satan/Lucifer was an angel who turned against God. Before the world and humans were created God and Angels existed. Lucifer/Satan turned against God of his own free will and choice evil. About a third of the angels sided with Satan. These angels became demons. There was some controversy in early Christianity whether the Devil could ever repent but most demonologists seem to think this was not possible. Demons floated throughout the air and could possess humans. Many Christians thought the serpent who tempted Eve was Satan in the Old Testament. The book describes Satans role in the New Testament much of which I did not understand since I am not that familiar with the New Testament since I am not Christian. However, I learn that Christians believed that during Christs second coming Satan and his followers will be sent forever to hell. Nowadays when people speak of demonizing ones political opponents it is usually meant as a metaphor and not meant to be taken at face value. However, the early Christians felt that Devil working through opponents of Christianity and this where the idea of "demonizing" the opposition started. Magic slowly becomes connected to Satan. St. Augustine believed that all magic was the work of the Devil. If my understanding of the book is correct Thomas Aquinas and some later Christians said the Devil was only involved in magic if Satan was called to assist with the magic being performed. Satan worshiping starts developing in about the twelve century. Then the book describes how witches were understood by the Catholics and later by the Protestants. Witches originally could either be male or female but in time were seen as mostly female. Witches were believed to have made a pact with Satan and renounced Christianity as part of their agreement with Satan. Witches were believed to kill children and then smear the childrens fat onto an object so they could fly. The Devil was believed to have had sex with the witches. There are some pretty hot sex scenes described between the Devil and the Witches. There was controversy on whether the Devil could have sex with men. Early Demonologists felt that since the Devil was a fallen angel he still possessed some angelic traits. Therefore, he would not want to commit sodomy (i.e. anal and non-reproductive sex). However, later Demonologists disagreed and felt the Devil could be bisexual. Again there was various controversies about Witches and their nature. When the Reformation came to Europe there were Protestants and Catholics have differing ideas about how to handle both Witches and persons who were possessed by the Devil. Even though most Protestants at the start of the Reformation believed in the Devil, the Reformation contributed to an intellectual climate where the belief in Devil could be challenged. Many Protestants believed miracles stopped happening after the year 300 (this belief in part was to undercut the authority of the miracles of the Catholic Church). With this questioning of miracles and a stronger belief in science major thinkers such and Spinoza and Hume started to question the existence of the Devil. I was a bit disappointed that the book stopped at 1700 because I was left with many questions about what happened to the Devil after that time. How did Witches become acceptable in childrens stories? The early description of Witches seem to me to be for only for Adults. How did magic become acceptable as childrens entertainment? Also the author left me the impression that Devil was like the Greek or Roman Gods; no one believes in him now. I dont think this is true. The Devil has standing in some Christian Churches and in Boston I know there are some Devil worshiping societies. I wished the author could give some kind of roundup of the Devils present standing in the world. Thus, I the book *The Devil: A New Biography* has some highly interesting materials it is an academic book and not a light or easy read. 0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Academic book we are studying on Wednesday nights at our ... By Seasoned with Grace Academic book we are studying on Wednesday nights at our church. Our pastor is also a professor and finds unique studies for us.

"Although the Devil still 'lives' in modern popular culture, for the past 250 years he has become marginal to the dominant concerns of Western intellectual thought. That life could not be thought or imagined without him, that he was a part of the everyday, continually present in nature and history, and active at the depths of our selves, has been all but forgotten. It is the aim of this work to bring modern readers to a deeper appreciation of how, from the early centuries of the Christian period through to the recent beginnings of the modern world, the human story could not be told and human life could not be lived apart from the life of the Devil. With that comes the deeper recognition that, for the better part of the last two thousand years, the battle between good and evil in the hearts and minds of men and women was but the reflection of a cosmic battle between God and Satan, the divine and the diabolic, that was at the heart of history itself." from *The Devil* Lucifer, Mephistopheles, Beelzebub; Ha-Satan or the Adversary; Iblis or

Shaitan: no matter what name he travels under, the Devil has throughout the ages and across civilizations been a compelling and charismatic presence. In Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, the supposed reign of God has long been challenged by the fiery malice of his opponent, as contending forces of good and evil have between them weighed human souls in the balance. In *The Devil*, Philip C. Almond explores the figure of evil incarnate from the first centuries of the Christian era. Along the way, he describes the rise of demonology as an intellectual and theological pursuit, the persecution of witches of women believed to consort with the Devil and his minions, and the decline in the belief in Hell and in angels and demons as corporeal beings as a result of the Enlightenment. Almond shows that the Prince of Darkness remains an irresistible subject in history, religion, art, literature, and culture. Almond brilliantly locates the life of the Devil within the broader Christian story of which it is inextricably a part; the demonic paradox of the Devil as both God's enforcer and his enemy is at the heart of Christianity. Woven throughout the account of the Christian history of the Devil is another complex and complicated history: that of the idea of the Devil in Western thought. Sorcery, witchcraft, possession, even melancholy, have all been laid at the Devil's doorstep. Until the Enlightenment enforced a disenchantment with the old archetypes, even rational figures such as Thomas Aquinas were obsessed with the nature of the Devil and the specific characteristics of the orders of demons and angels. It was a significant moment both in the history of demonology and in theology when Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677) denied the Devil's existence; almost four hundred years later, popular fascination with the idea of the Devil has not yet dimmed.

"What we can find here is a serious look through the ages at our choices to not just personify evil, but make it a central, even necessary, part of the culture. Almond creates a readable, if not comfortable, journey to that regard. Clearly, the devil is not dead, even if modern thought has him in assisted living." Thomas Whitaker, U.S. Catholic Magazine (June 2016) "The book's greatest strength is Almond's ability to present complicated theological and philosophical debates with clarity and in an engaging style. The sweeping scope of the work is admirable. It will be of great interest to a broad readership, both within and beyond academia." Jason Coy, Speculum (July 2016) "By the time the reader has reached the final page of Philip Almond's (presumably unauthorised) biography, one is possessed by a curious and wholly unexpected sensation that of sympathy for 'the Devil.'" Jonathan Gornall, The National (May 2014) "Almond's contribution to the Devil's bibliography is welcome in particular because he makes it clear just how tenuous the Christian theory of evil is, and how much it potentially undermines the power and goodness of God; the commander of all things evil is a dangerous concept for monotheistic religion, complicating the already difficult problem of the existence of evil in a world created by an overwhelmingly good deity." Noel Rooney, Fortean Times (October 2014) "Almond has accomplished an impressive feat in compressing the long and complicated life, or lives, of the Prince of Darkness into a clear, coherent, and engaging narrative. For students and general readers, this is an excellent introduction to the Devil's story, and scholars will find it a valuable synthesis as well." The Medieval "Almond's biography carves out of the mass of works related to the diabolical a carefully delineated history that is both scholarly and accessible and that contributes to the intertwined fields of Christian theology, magic, witchcraft, and demonology. . . . Almond's careful overview of the Western perspective of the devil provides a valuable and highly readable explanation for one of the most bizarre and devastating ideas in Western history." Gary K. Waite, H-Albion (January 2015) "With its understanding that the devil is best understood through his history, with its many stimulating and illuminating obiter dicta. . . . with its up-to-date bibliography, and with its understanding of the moral importance of the devil as at least a metaphor of real evil as opposed to treating the subject as merely a literary topos, Almond's book is a welcome addition to the subject." Jeffrey Burton Russell, The Catholic Historical (Summer 2015) "Philip C. Almond's new book is a triumph. With humor and charm, it proceeds accessibly from the earliest Jewish writings on demons to eighteenth-century attempts to challenge the belief that Satan was active in human affairs. Angels, giants, demoniacs, witches, and divines fill its pages, and the breadth of research informing the book is impressively broad. Yet the text is informal and readable. Almond has made theology and demonology approachable and his account rips along. This is an entertaining and informative read." Marion Gibson, University of Exeter "Philip C. Almond's new book spans the whole range of time, amounting to two and a half millennia, in which Satan has been a figure in the Western imagination. It is lucid, explaining often quite complex theology in a manner that can be understood by, and makes the material genuinely interesting and exciting to, any readers. This is probably the best scholarly book on the subject currently available to a general audience." Ronald Hutton, University of Bristol "This fascinating and tragic account of his influence through history will be a real eye-opener to anyone who supposes that the inconvenience of his not existing would limit the damage the Devil could do. Fundamentally, the Devil owes his powers to the problem of reconciling God's goodness with God's omnipotence. Following with deep learning a trail of confusion, dogmatism, and persecution, Philip C. Almond in his vivid biography convincingly demonstrates that the Devil was, and is, a very bad idea." Jill Paton Walsh, author of Knowledge of Angels About the Author Philip C. Almond is Associate Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences (Research) and Professorial Research Fellow at the Centre for the History of European Discourses at The University of Queensland. He is the author of many books, including *The Devil: A New Biography* and *Afterlife: A History of Life after Death*, both from Cornell; *The Lancashire Witches: A Chronicle of Sorcery and Death on Pendle Hill*; *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century*

Thought; and Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England.