



## Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity (Cornell Paperbacks)

*By Jeffrey Burton Russell*



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This lively and learned book traces the history of the concept of evil from its beginnings in ancient times to the period of the New Testament. A remarkable work of synthesis, it draws upon a vast number of sources in addressing a major historical and philosophical problem over a broad span of time and in a number of diverse cultures, East and West. Jeffrey Burton Russell probes the roots of the idea of evil, treats the development of the idea in the Ancient Near East, and then examines the concept of the Devil as it was formed in late Judaism and early Christianity. Generously illustrated with fifty black-and-white photographs, this book will appeal to a wide range of readers, from specialists in religion, theology, sociology, history, psychology, anthropology, and philosophy to anyone with an interest in the demonic, the supernatural, and the question of good and evil.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Russell is not only a conscientious historian, anxious to examine in texts, myths, legends, art and literature the persistence and transformation of a particular idea. He is also an introspective essayist who acknowledges his own continuing struggle to understand the nature and source of evil."?Robert Coles, *New York Times Book Review*

"This is a serious work by a first-rate medievalist who has turned his eyes to antiquity in order to elucidate the sources of man's experience of the evil one. The result is scholarly, readable, and comprehensive. . . . Russell's notations are copious and impressive, attesting to the vast amount of research that has gone into this study. The text is richly illustrated with some fifty well-chosen plates. . . . An exceptionally lucid study and a major contribution to the field."?Review of Books and Religion

"All readers . . . will be enriched and stimulated by this honestly presented biography of the Evil One. The Devil, in religious myth, personal vision, and mystical reality, offers invaluable material for reflection and meditation."?Studia Mystica

"This fascinating story of 'the Devil' explores the concept and personification of evil (defined as 'the infliction of pain on sentient beings') from its ancient beginnings into New Testament times."?Seventeenth Century News

#### About the Author

Jeffrey Burton Russell is Professor of History Emeritus at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

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