

## BIBLICAL ALLUSIONS: THE NEW TESTAMENT

The similarities between Simon and Christ have already been outlined; below are three relevant passages. In the first, Christ goes into the wilderness to fast and is confronted by the devil, who tempts him to abandon his ministry. It corresponds to Simon's confrontation with the Lord of the Flies. In the second, Christ defends himself against the charge that his powers of exorcism come from the devil; the significance of this passage is that the devil in question is named "Beelzebub," literally, the "Lord of the Flies." In the third, Christ drives a horde of demons from a madman into a herd of Gadarene swine, which then commit suicide by plunging into the sea. This passage is interesting because of the link between devils and pigs and, to some extent, because of the role of the sea. To boys stranded on an island, and possessed in a way by devils, the sea might be a similarly ominous presence.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. (Matthew 4:1-11)

### BEELZEBUB

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. (Matthew 12:22-28)

### THE GADARENE SWINE

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said to him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils said besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. (Mark 5:1-13)

## ORIGINAL SIN

One of the early Protestant theorists was John Calvin, a French theologian who was one of the most influential figures of the sixteenth-century Reformation. Based primarily in Geneva, Switzerland, he published his views, founded the University of Geneva, and encouraged the founding of Protestant churches throughout Europe. Informed by "optimism as to God despite pessimism as to man,"<sup>5</sup> Calvinism was expressed most fully in the book *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In it and in his other writings, Calvin argued for the majesty of God, the profound sinfulness of man, the salvation of the elect (certain virtuous souls predestined for paradise), and the need to honor God regardless of one's saved or damned status. An activist, aggressive, austere faith, Calvinism spread to France, the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and New England.

Typical of Calvin's beliefs about human nature is his assertion, reiterated in one way or another throughout the *Institutes*, "that all men are overwhelmed with an inevitable calamity, from which they can never emerge unless they are extricated by the mercy of God."<sup>6</sup> That "inevitable calamity" is the damnation that must result from humanity's abominable inclination to commit acts hateful to God—in other words, from original sin. Of all Calvin's theories, this is the one most relevant to the study of *Lord of the Flies*. Though Calvin was hardly the first to discuss the concept of original sin, which had been a principal tenet of Christianity for centuries, he gave it new emphasis. As a Protestant, he was attempting to distinguish his faith from Catholicism, with its reliance on confession, indulgences, and good works to wash away or mitigate sin. Sects based on Calvinist doctrine often harped even more on this string than Calvin himself, leading to some very severe views of human nature and a permanent association between Calvin and original sin. Calvin's own words on the subject, though not as harsh as those of some of his followers, make it no surprise that Golding is often mistaken for a Calvinist.

FROM JOHN CALVIN, *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*  
(1536)

To remove all uncertainty and misunderstanding on this subject, let us define original sin. It is not my intention to discuss all the definitions given by writers; I shall only produce one, which I think perfectly consistent with the truth. Original sin, therefore, appears to be an hereditary pravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of the soul, rendering us obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls "works of the flesh." And this is indeed what Paul frequently denominates *sin*. The works which proceed thence, such as adulteries, fornications, thefts, hatreds, murders, revelings, he calls in the same manner "fruits of sin;" although they are also called "sins" in many passages of Scripture, and even by himself. These two things therefore should be distinctly observed: first, that our nature being so totally vitiated and depraved, we are, on account of this very corruption, considered as convicted and justly condemned in the sight of God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity. And this liableness to punishment arises not from the delinquency of another; for when it is said that the sin of Adam renders us obnoxious to the Divine judgment, it is not to be understood as if we, though innocent, were undeservedly loaded with the guilt of his sin; but, because we are all subject to a curse, in consequence [*sic*] of his transgression, he is therefore said to have involved us in guilt. Nevertheless we derive from him, not only the punishment, but also the pollution to which the punishment is justly due. . . . And therefore infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by the sinfulness of another. For though they have not yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the seed of it within them: even their whole nature is as it were a seed of sin, and therefore cannot but be odious and abominable to God. . . . The other thing to be remarked is, that this depravity never ceases in us, but is perpetually producing new fruits, those works of the flesh which we have before described, like the emission of flame and sparks from a heated furnace, or like the streams of water from a never failing spring. Wherefore those who have defined original sin as a privation of the original righteousness, which we ought to possess, though they comprise the whole of the subject, yet have not used language sufficiently expressive of its operation and influence. For our nature is not only destitute of all good, but is so fertile in all evils that it cannot remain inactive. Those who have called it *concupiscence* have used an expression not improper, if it were only added, which is far from

being conceded by most persons, that every thing in man, the understanding and will, the soul and body, is polluted and engrossed by this concupiscence; or, to express it more briefly, that man is of himself nothing else but concupiscence. (229-30)

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