

Is Lucifer A Scriptural Name for Satan?

Many have held the view that Lucifer mentioned in Isaiah 14 is a Biblical name for Satan. Under "Bible Facts" on a certain website it says, "Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer are the three angels mentioned by name in the Bible." In John Milton's *Paradise Lost* Satan is also called Lucifer. As he is in Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*. In *The Satanic Bible* of 1969, Lucifer is acknowledged as "Bringer of Light, the Morning Star, Intellectualism, Enlightenment." Even in Islamic writings Satan or iblis is referred to as Lucifer (Qur'an 17:61; 2:34; 17:62; 63-64; 7:11,12; 20-22). Is Lucifer a synonym for "Satan" in the Bible? Why do so many people believe that Lucifer is Satan?

Perhaps the belief stems in part from the fact that the name "Lucifer" is found in Bible prophecy (Is. 14:12-22). Some translations use this name (KJV, NKJV). The King James reads: "*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*" This popular translation borrowed the name from Jerome's translation of the Bible (A.D. 383-405) known as the Latin Vulgate. Keep in mind that the original Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew. By the time Jesus came to earth the Scriptures had been translated into Greek (this translation was known as the Septuagint). If we are to understand the origin of the term "Lucifer" as it is found in some English translations we will have to look at the Latin. The name does not come from the Hebrew or even from the Greek translation (Septuagint), but from the fourth century AD Latin translation of this verse: *quomodo cecidisti de caelo lucifer qui mane oriebaris corruisti in terram qui vulnerabas gentes*.

The term *Lucifer* in the fourth century Latin language was a name for Venus, known as the morning star. The Latin word for Lucifer comes from the words *lucem ferre*. First, *lux* means "light" and *ferre* means "to bear" or "to bring." Thus, it literally means "bearer of light." In fact, the Latin Vulgate uses the term in Job 11:17; 2 Peter 1:19; and in Job 38:32 where it occurs in the plural (*luciferum*) in reference to an astral constellation. The translator's of the Latin Vulgate may have never had in mind a name for Satan in any of these passages.

Another reason some think Lucifer is the same as Satan is the similarities Isaiah 14 has with other passages. For example,

Ezekiel 28:11-19 regarding the "*king of Tyre*" has also been applied to the Devil due to phrases which have been associated with Satan in the New Testament. Others have been convinced that the word "*sheol*" which is sometimes translated "hell" in verse fifteen represents further proof that Satan in being discussed in Isaiah 14. According to Jesus, hell is a place which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). In Revelation 12:9-12 Satan is cast out of heaven because of pride. In Luke 10:18-19, at the return of the Seventy, as they comment on their success, Jesus says: "*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*" In 2 Corinthians 11:14 Paul wrote, "*And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.*" At first glance a casual reading of these passages could cause some to conclude that the Devil/Satan is somehow associated with light and the sky. Therefore, all these verses must be talking about Satan. Verse twelve of Isaiah fourteen says, "*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!*" The context does show this "*Lucifer*" to be someone with a great ego. "By adding these three passages together without regard to context, a jigsaw picture of a long ago historical event described in great detail [as been developed]...we have to put the pieces together from various bits scattered through literature written 800 years apart!" (Dennis Bratcher, "*Lucifer*" in *Isaiah 14:12-17: Translation and Ideology*).

Another reason so many have come to believe that Lucifer is the same as Satan is the abundance of traditions dating all the way back to the second century. An early Christian writer by the name of Origen (185-254 A.D.) first made this new connection between Satan and Lucifer. He argued that Lucifer, the Prince of Tyre, and the Leviathan of Job, were all identical with the Devil. He wrote, "Lucifer, star of the morning, fell from heaven to be warred against and destroyed by Jesus" (Origen c. 228 9:304). Later Tertullian (155-After 220 A.D.) taught that before Satan's fall he was not only an angel but the foremost angel. He believed that the Devil was jealous of humans. Augustine believed that the Devil's envy arose from pride. In the Catholic Encyclopedia it states, "(Hebrew *helel*; Septuagint *heosphoros*, Vulgate *lucifer*): The name Lucifer originally denotes the planet Venus, emphasizing its brilliance. The Vulgate employs the word also for 'the light of the morning' (Job 11:17), 'the signs of the zodiac' (Job 38:32), and 'the aurora' (Psalm 109:3). Metaphorically, the word is applied to the King of Babylon (Isaiah 14:12) as preeminent among the

princes of his time; to the high priest Simon, son of Onias (Ecclesiasticus 50:6), for his surpassing virtue."

The meaning of any term must be determined by its usage in context. In this case "Lucifer" mentioned in Isaiah 14:12 must be interpreted in relationship to the paragraphs associated with it. Isaiah begins this chapter with the promise of Israel's return from Babylonian exile. God will "*give them rest from their sorrows and hard bondage*" (v.3). Verse four makes it very clear as to whom this prophecy concerns: "*you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon*" (Isa 14:4,NIV). This monarch lived in and abided over a "*golden city*" (vs. 4). In contrast to this, Satan is the monarch of a kingdom of spiritual darkness (cf. Ephesians 6:12). The golden city ceased! Babylon was called the "*golden city*", and is referred to as the "*glory of the kingdoms*" (Isaiah 13:19), "*lady of the kingdoms*" (Isaiah 47:5), the "*praise of the whole earth*" (Jeremiah 51:41). In 14:5-7 God's people are celebrating the fall of Babylon, not the fall of Satan. Concerning the king's body, it will be eaten by worms (14:11). This is what happens when the flesh is placed into the grave. Isaiah makes reference to the pride of the Babylonian kings in 14:13,14. Nebuchadnezzar was a very proud king whom God punished until he learned to humble himself before God (Dan. 4:28-32). Daniel was called upon by the proud king Belshazzar to interpret the hand writing on the wall (Dan. 5:22-23a). The interpretation by Daniel was against this proud king. While Lucifer was alive he made the earth tremble with his power and military might (14:16) by overthrowing cities and refusing to release his captives (14:17). He was not to be buried like others kings but only find dishonor in death (14:18). This passage may be making reference to the demise of the last king of Babylon. Lucifer is "*thrust through with a sword*" and is cast out of his grave and into the pits reserved for the downtrodden masses (14:19-20). He is a man. Isaiah calls him the father of descendants who will be slain for his iniquities (14:21). Isaiah is most certainly describing Babylon and her evil kings (14:22). Nowhere within the context of Isaiah 14, however, is Satan depicted as Lucifer.

Isaiah chapter fourteen is found within a section of the book where God explains how He punishes all nations for their sin. Isaiah 13 begins a long section of the book known as "Oracles Against Foreign Nations" beginning with the destruction of Babylon in chapters thirteen and fourteen. "*The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw*" (Isaiah 13:1).The

judgement or “day of the Lord” is coming against Babylon (13:6-16) and it will fall to the Medes (13:17-22). The prophecies of destruction for many nations are covered in this section: Assyria (14:24-28); Philistia (14:29-32); Moab (15); Damascus (17); and Egypt (19).

When considering the broader context of the book of Isaiah the prophet spends the first chapters denouncing the sins of Israel and its failure to be God’s people. But he does not make a direct mention of Satan in the entire book. Furthermore, no where does the Bible support the belief that Lucifer is Satan.

Within the context of the paragraph, section, book of Isaiah and the whole Bible there is no evidence for Lucifer being Satan. However there does seem to be plenty of archeological evidence for the term “lucifier” to be a metaphor for the king of Babylon. An old Canaanite story says that the Morning Star made a move to become dominant in the sky but was cast down into the underworld. Isaiah even used two names of Babylonian astral deities within the context: Helel meaning morning star, and Shahar meaning dawn. Often ancient kings were deified as gods. The Babylonians worshiped the celestial bodies in their astral religion. The effects of God’s punishment upon Babylon is described as a failure of the heavenly bodies to give light. *“And He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations; Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil”* (Isaiah 13:9-11). The habit of the kings of the east to be considered incarnations of the gods the people worshiped is being turned against them in this prophecy.

The actual meaning of the term “Lucifer” as the “morning star” is supported by the context and the archeological evidence. Many translations, such as the ASV, NIV, NRSV, NASB, NJB and ESV, use "day star", "morning star" or something similar, and never use the word "Lucifer". For example, *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn!”* (Isaiah 14:12, NRSV). The planet Venus’ orbit lies within the orbit of the Earth around the Sun. So just before dawn Venus (the morning star) can be seen in the eastern sky for an hour before the rising of the sun. Lucifer is the name for the dawn appearance of the planet Venus, heralding daylight. It is not another name for Satan.

Neither the Jews or the early Christians of the New Testament ever referred to Satan as Lucifer. The Universal Jewish

Encyclopedia defines Lucifer: “the rendering of the Vulgate for the Hebrew phrase helal (‘day-star’) in Isa. 14:12; the verse is rendered in the Authorized Version as: ‘How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!’ The passage in question is a song of derision over the downfall of a Babylonian king; the figure used may trace back to a Hebrew or Babylonian astral myth like the Greek story of Phaethon, in which the day-star is cast out of heaven because of presumption. The term Lucifer is never used in Jewish legend” (229). In the New Testament the Adversary has many names, but "Lucifer" is not among them. It was not until the time of Origen do we find Lucifer being used to refer to Satan.

Although there is no reference to Lucifer in the New Testament, it does mention the morning star. It is Christ, the Son of God, who is the morning star in the New Testament - not Satan or even the king of Babylon. In the book of Revelation Jesus calls Himself *“the Bright and Morning Star”* (Rev. 22:16). Peter makes reference to the morning star rising in the hearts of Christians. *“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts”* (2 Peter 1:19). Surely Peter was not a making reference to Satan.

<p>Forum Terrace Church of Christ 2446 Arkansas Lane Grand Prairie, Texas 75052 Phone: 972.641.4351 Internet: www.fourmterrace.com</p> <p>Service Times</p> <p>Sunday Bible Study.....9:30 am Worship Service.....10:30 am Worship Service.....5:00 pm</p> <p>Wednesday Bible Study.....7:30 pm</p>

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