

Is Satan's Name Lucifer?

I doubt anyone will spend eternity with Satan if they make this mistake. However, it is in fact a mistake to believe that Satan's name is Lucifer. Though this has made its way into English literature like Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, it is based on a misinterpretation and not on actual Scripture.

Isaiah 14:12 says, "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!" (KJV).

Interestingly enough, this verse has presented a kind of cycle. During Israel's post-exile period some apparently began using this passage to talk about God's greatest adversary, Satan. Then the story of Satan as an angelic being who because of pride lifted himself up against God and therefore was cast out of heaven became so common, people today can't seem to read anything else in this passage.

However, this passage is not talking about Satan at all. Look back at **Isaiah 14:4** to learn who this passage is about: "You will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon" (ESV). Notice also **Isaiah 14:22**: "'I will rise up against them,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, descendants and posterity,' declares the LORD" (ESV).

The prophecy between these verses in **Isaiah 14** is not talking about Satan. It is not talking about some heavenly war that happened among the angels resulting in Satan/Lucifer being cast down from heaven because of his pride. It is talking about Babylon and her king. Before Babylon had even come to power and conquered Judah, God promised she would herself be conquered. Yes, she may be God's instrument of justice on the idolatrous Judeans, but she would lift herself up and be vanquished because she would not give the glory to God. When we consider the king of Babylon in the context of this prophecy, we remember the story of Nebuchadnezzar in **Daniel 4**. Nebuchadnezzar took the glory himself for what he had accomplished, rather than giving it to God who had allowed him to accomplish it. He went crazy, living as a wild animal until reason came to him and he was willing to glorify God. As far as the nation goes, we know that Medo-Persia humiliated and conquered Babylon while it was under the rule of Belshazzar the night he lifted himself up to use the holy vessels from God's temple for his personal party in **Daniel 5**.

The word translated "Lucifer" in the KJV simply means "day star" or "morning star" or "morning light." It is thought to literally refer to the planet Venus twinkling in the early morning sky. In **Isaiah 14:12**, it is used figuratively to refer to Babylon's king. He had shone bright. God had blessed him, and through that blessing he had done great things. But because of his pride and arrogance he was brought low from his shining position.

This passage is not talking about Satan. It doesn't name Satan. Lucifer is not Satan's name and if we are going to be biblically accurate, we won't use it that way.

--Edwin L. Crozier