

“Lucifer” or “Day Star” in Isaiah 14:12?

By Kane Dane

Satan has an earthly throne

Isaiah 14:4-12 says:

“...take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, ...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! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” (Isaiah 14:4-14)

The Bible is clear that Satan assumes an earthly throne at one location at a time. This is because Satan is not omnipresent like God; Satan can only be in one place at a time. In the time of Apostle John, Satan dwelt in Pergamos, a city given to cultic emperor worship and idolatry:

“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.” (Revelation 2:13)

Many commentators suppose that “Satan’s seat” is figurative. However, since the Bible treats Satan as a very real person who was actually present with our Lord in the physical realm of the wilderness, there is no reason to suppose that the reference to “Satan’s seat” in the physical city of Pergamos is figurative. Satan most likely strategically chose Pergamos as his headquarter in the late first century because of its close proximity to the earliest growing Christian churches. Satan undoubtedly tried to thwart the work of the Holy Spirit in the early churches.

Babylon, however, has been and will be Satan’s main headquarter. It is at Babel (Babylon) that the first post-flood rebellion against God occurred (Genesis 11:1-9). In the future, the Antichrist will be associated with “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:5). The statement that Babylon is “the mother” of abominations indicates that Babylon has been the source of earth’s abominations, which leads to the conclusion that Babylon has always been Satan’s city. Satan’s future demise will begin with the fall of Babylon: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils” (Revelation 18:2). The Bible

cannot be any clearer that Babylon is Satan's city. How reasonable it is then to conclude that Satan is the king of Babylon.

It is not as popular today, however, to associate the figure in Isaiah 14:12 with Satan. Nowhere in the text of Isaiah does it say that this figure is Satan. However, nowhere in Genesis does it say that the Serpent is Satan. Yet, Christians agree that the Serpent is Satan, based on Revelation 12:9, 20:12. The Serpent is revealed in Genesis, the first book, and his true identity is speculated but unconfirmed by explicit scripture until Revelation, the last book. If we could make the Serpent/Satan connection based on other passages of scripture besides Genesis, it is certainly biblical to make the Lucifer/Satan connection based on other passages of scripture besides Isaiah. First, the fact that Babylon is Satan's city is undeniable. Second, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18). Third, the name "Lucifer," which means "Lightbearer," is consistent with Paul's description of Satan as an angel who can appear to be bright: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). When we connect the dots the picture becomes clear:

Satan is King of Babylon + Satan fell from heaven + Angel of light = Lucifer in Isaiah 14:2

Fall of Lucifer by Gustave Doré

The following rebuttals are provided to refute criticisms concerning the translation of "הִילֵל (Heylel)" as "Lucifer", as it appears so in the Vulgate, KJV, and the NKJV:

Critics: "Lucifer" is the invention of Latin church fathers:

Critics allege that "Lucifer" is a name for Satan that Latin Christians invented. This is not wholly true. Although "Lucifer" is Latin, it is the Latin equivalent of the Greek name. The Septuagint translates "Heylel" as "ἑωσφόρος (Eosphorus)," which means "Dawn(light)-bearer." "Lucifer," from the Latin, "lucis" and "ferre," means "Lightbearer." Thus "Lucifer" is the Latin equivalent of the ancient Septuagint translation of "Heylel" as "ἑωσφόρος." If you accept the mainstream view of a Jewish-made Septuagint, then you must accept that Jews translated "Heylel" as "ἑωσφόρος," which means the same thing as "Lucifer."

Critics: The Jews did not think that Heylel was Satan:

A critic¹ writes: "Is it possible that Isaiah and Ezekiel wrote passages about Satan but did not let anyone else in the Jewish religion know that they were referring to

Satan... leaving them misunderstood until Origen and Tertullian discovered the hidden truth?"

This critic does not understand Jewish demonology. The Talmud and Midrash do not equate Heylél with Satan, but the early Talmud and Midrash do not even refer to Satan as a devil. The doctrine that Satan is a fallen angel developed in Judaism around the time of the Palestinian Talmud (completed around 400 AD). This is around the same time that Tertullian and Jerome identified Heylél as Lucifer, the descriptive name for Satan's former identity. Besides, Christians must interpret the Old Testament in accordance with other Christians who believe the New Testament, not with Jews.

Critics: Heylél is just a king of Babylon:

Some critics say, "Heylél is not Satan because the context of Isaiah 14:12 identifies Heylél as the king of Babylon." Such a statement is illogical. It is as illogical as the parallel statement that "Jehovah is not God because the Bible identifies Jehovah as the king of Israel." Spiritual beings can be kings too. Satan is called "the *prince* of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). The Bible describes demonic "princes" who preside over physical regions (e.g. the prince of Persia (Daniel 10:13), the prince of Grecia (Daniel 10:20)). The locusts in Revelation 9 have a demonic "king" over them, named Abaddon or Apollyon (Revelation 9:11). Whereas lesser demons preside over other kingdoms, Satan is the king of Babylon. From Genesis to Revelation, we read that Babylon is Satan's city. Babel was the place of the first post-flood rebellion (Genesis 11) and Babylon will be Satan's city in the future (Revelation 17:5). Peter may have referred to Rome as Babylon because of the same satanic character of both cities (1 Peter 5:13). It is certainly biblical to believe that Babylon is Satan's city. Then it would follow that Satan is the king of Babylon.

Critics: "Heylél" just means "day star":

Isaiah 14:12 uses celestial imagery to illustrate the fall of Heylél. In this picture, Heylél is compared to the planet Venus which appears early in the morning. Thus "Day Star" is the symbolic referent in Isaiah 14:12 and the KJV margin indicates this. That being said, Heylél is much more than just the planet Venus. Planet Venus is an inanimate object but Isaiah 14:12-14 clearly describes a morally evil being with anti-God ambitions. Although planet Venus the "Day Star" is intended in the symbolism, the word "Heylél" itself does not consist of the Hebrew words for "day" and "star." Thus "Day Star" is not the most accurate translation. Furthermore, unnecessarily having "day star" in Isaiah 14:12 can cause confusion because there is another different "day star" in 2 Peter 1:19. The "day star" in

Isaiah 14:12 is not the “day star” in 2 Peter 1:19. The “day star” in 2 Peter 1:19 is the “Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2), who is Jesus Christ (“Phosphoros” translated “day star” literally means “light bringer”, not Venus despite the common association in pagan Greek mythology). The “day star” in Isaiah 14:12 is Venus, which represents Satan. The Sun represents Jesus Christ (the king of Israel) whereas Venus represents Satan (the king of Babylon). Having “Lucifer (Venus)” instead of “daystar” in Isaiah 14:12 distinguishes the celestial body in Isaiah 14:12 from that in 2 Peter 1:19.