

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

VOLUME 2

FEBRUARY 5, 2017

ISSUE 32



## IS LUCIFER THE DEVIL?

*By Andrew Dow*

Although not directly stated, the evidence of Scripture leads us to conclude that Satan is some kind of disobedient angelic being. Since God created all things “**visible and invisible**” (Col. 1:16, NASB), Satan must have been created by God. Since it would be against God’s nature to create something evil (cf. James 1:17), Satan must have been created good initially. Since angelic beings have the choice to serve or defy God (cf. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6), we conclude that this must have been the course that Satan followed.

In trying to prove this point, many people point Isaiah 14:12—“**How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!**” (NKJV). They see in this a vivid description of Satan falling from God’s presence to seduce humanity away from their creator. So pervasive is this interpretation that the name “Lucifer” has become synonymous with Satan and the Devil. Was Isaiah describing the fall of Satan? Is Lucifer the Devil?

To properly identify “Lucifer,” we first need to understand the context and overall meaning of Isaiah 14. The opening words of the book explain that Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of “**Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah**” (Isa. 1:1, NASB). This places Isaiah’s prophetic work prior to and during the Assyrian

captivity. In the first twelve chapters of his book Isaiah addresses **“Judah and Jerusalem”** (1:1), but in chapter 13 we see a shift in focus: **“The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw”** (13:1). What follows is the description of God’s judgment against the Babylonians.

Bear in mind that Assyria was the world power at the time Isaiah foretold these things. Babylon was not in power and their successors, the Medes, certainly were not either. Yet Isaiah very specifically explains that **“Babylon, the beauty of the kingdoms... will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah”** (13:19). He even points out that God would **“stir up the Medes against them”** (13:17).

Isaiah informed Israel, **“It will be in the day when the Lord gives you rest from your pain and turmoil and harsh service in which you have been enslaved that you will take up this taunt against the King of Babylon”** (14:3-4). The bulk of Isaiah 14 contains this taunt that the post-exilic Jews would speak against the once great King of Babylon. This is the context in which we find the description of Lucifer falling from heaven.

Let me pose a question at this point: how would describing Satan’s fall serve as a taunt against the King of Babylon? It would not! Isaiah 14:4-21 isn’t about Satan, it is a taunt against the King of Babylon who was defeated by God. **“The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked,”** Isaiah writes, **“the whole earth... break[s] forth into shouts of joy”** (14:4-7). He continues, **“Your pomp and the music of your harp have been brought down to Sheol; maggots are spread out as your bed”** (14:11). All of this is designed to mock the King who enslaved God’s people!

Let's read Isaiah 14:12 with this background in mind: **“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning (Lucifer, NKJV), son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!”** This taunt against the Babylonian king would have reminded him of his once lofty position. He had power over all the nations and was as prominent as the sun! Despite a period of world dominance God still held ultimate authority, even over this mighty king. He, the king of Babylon, was forcibly removed from the lofty position he had claimed for himself (cf. 14:13).

While we admit that Satan must have been a created being who grew defiant toward God, we should not feel compelled to take passages out of context to prove that point. To be clear: Lucifer is NOT a name for Satan. It is a description of the king of Babylon who was overthrown by God. Pointing to Isaiah 14:12 as a description of Satan's fall from heaven is a misuse of God's Word.

### **AN ANECDOTE FROM “RACCOON” JOHN SMITH**

*By Louis Cochran*

In passing a Methodist camp meeting one day in September he stopped to watch a young Methodist preacher baptize a howling, rebellious infant by sprinkling water on the squirming body. When the service was concluded, he stepped to the front of the crowd and, identifying himself, took the preacher firmly by the arm and attempted to lead him toward the creek a few yards away.

“What are you trying to do, Brother Smith?” the young preacher protested. “Are you out of your mind?”

“What am I trying to do?” John affected deep surprise. “Why, sir, I am going to baptize you by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his commandment.”

“But I have no desire for such baptism. I know of you; you are called ‘The Dipper.’ But you are not going to dip me. I’m a Methodist; let me go!”

John tightened his hold on the man’s arm while the crowd watched, some in apprehension, others in amusement. “That is a scoffer’s blasphemy of a holy ordinance,” John said sternly. “Are you a believer?”

“Of course I’m a believer,” the preacher said indignantly. “But I’m not willing to be immersed. It would do no good for you to baptize me against my will. It would be wrong!”

“I don’t understand,” John said. “Only a few minutes ago you baptized a helpless baby against its will, although it screamed and kicked. Did you get its consent first? Come along, sir, we will have no more of this foolishness.”

The crowd broke into open laughter, and John gave the young preacher a quick pull toward the creek, and then as suddenly released him. *[Raccoon John Smith: A Novel, 324-5]*

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”  
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**