

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

LESSON 10: SATAN

The Backstory of Satan?

In 2010, I helped with the editing process of a book called *Deconstructing Lucifer* by David Lowe. I had read something online that he had written and contacted him with a question, which led to a fascinating ongoing dialogue. His books are self-published (not peer-reviewed), so this is always something to keep in mind, but sometimes a thinking layperson can make excellent observations, too. (Never forget that!) Throughout my experience with this book, David convinced me that the two primary passages that we use to create a backstory for the devil (Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28) are actually not about him at all. Without a doubt, his name is not “Lucifer.”

The following material is a summary of the arguments that are included in his book about these matters. Some of you will be interested, and others won't care. It is certainly not a central concern for understanding the basic message of the gospel! However, I think it's good to include it here for three reasons. First, you may be curious to know what I'm basing it on when I say I don't really think these passages are about the devil. Second, it's a good exercise for looking carefully at what the text says, and even exploring a few of the important background words. Third, this took a long time to produce and it's still very interesting and it gives you the content of a whole book without having to read the whole book. (Yeah, that last one was probably three separate reasons. I just think some of you will really like this little study. Why leave it out?)

I regularly hear sermons and teaching from people I love and respect who differ from me in their conclusions. Some of them have studied it thoroughly and still conclude that one or both of these passages are about the devil (or some other divine rebel), while most just assume they're about him because that's what they've been taught. This doesn't make me mad. God leads different people at different times in their lives to different areas of study, and nobody can spend in-depth time on everything. I probably wouldn't have cared too much about this if I hadn't helped with David's book and if I weren't trying to give as much accurate information as possible in my class that compares God with his enemies.

So your mission (for those who choose to accept it) is to complete the following guided study, which used to be included in the weekly preparation notes as an optional exercise. There are some questions to answer and blanks to fill in. I used to include some of these details in the lecture, but decided we need to be sure we're highlighting the most important things in class—namely, whether God is responsible for the evil that happens in this world, as well as His possible reasons for allowing the existence of the devil at all.

The Labyrinth to Lucifer

The “Labyrinth to Lucifer” is David Lowe's term for the journey that has led to the name *Lucifer* being commonly used of the devil. Let's follow the trail, and if you get confused by foreign words along the way, be sure to refer to the chart at the end.

The usage of *Lucifer* comes entirely from one verse: **Isaiah 14:12**. Here it is with the Hebrew word in place of where we find *Lucifer* in English:

How art thou fallen from heaven, (heilel), son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! Isaiah 14:12 (KJV)

Look up Isaiah 14:12 on www.biblegateway.com as follows:

- Type the reference in the Search box at the top and click "Search."
- Just below the copyright information, click on "Isaiah 14:12 in all English translations."

You should have a long list of the different ways this verse is translated into English. What are the different words that are used in place of *heilel* in this verse?

Hebrew and Greek

As a background, it's important to understand that most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek. Both are very precise languages which means that we can always learn a lot when we go back to the original language to unpack the potential meanings. (Remember that there are no significant differences of translation or interpretation when it comes to core matters of faith—how to be saved and how to walk in relationship with God.)

In the third century, B.C., the Old Testament began to be translated into Greek, which we know as the Septuagint. The Jewish scholars who translated it used the Greek word *heosphoros* to translate the Hebrew word *heilel*, which expresses their understanding that it had the meaning of a "shining stellar body."

However, this is controversial because *heilel* may or may not come from the root word *halal*, which has two meanings. Let's assume for the moment that it does come from *halal*. The most common meaning is "boast," but the less common meaning is "shining one." It is obvious that the Septuagint translators chose the less common meaning. Write in the two meanings so you can see the difference:

- Look how you have fallen from the sky! _____, son of the dawn!
- Look how you have fallen from the sky, o _____, son of the dawn!

That leaves room for interpretation as it is, but it's further complicated by the fact that *heilel* is found two other times in the Hebrew OT (**Ezekiel 21:12** and **Zechariah 11:2**), and both times it is translated as "howl" and is assumed to come from the root verb *yalal* instead of from *halal*, as the Septuagint translators assumed in **Isaiah 14:12**. Fill in how it would look if "howl" is the correct meaning:

- Look how you have fallen from the sky. _____, son of the dawn!

This translation fits the context perfectly, since the king of Babylon is being rebuked by the Lord for his pride and is falling from his high estate (**Isaiah 14:3-21**).

But because the translators chose to use *heosphoros* (shining one) instead of *ololuzon* (howl), we have to look to see what came of it. Up to this point, do you see this word as a name for the devil? This is the word that eventually became "Lucifer," and that ought to seem strange to you right now.

Heosphoros was used seven times in the Septuagint, with additional uses in the Greek New Testament. The common translation into English is "morning star," and it was always used to indicate the planet Venus. When you look up all seven passages in the Old Testament, it is easy to see that it is talking about Venus which reaches maximum brightness shortly before sunrise and shortly after sunset. You can find plenty of support for that understanding in other Greek writings, as well.

To get to the point where we understand how the name *Lucifer* came to be used in English, we need to talk about a transition step: Latin. The Latin word *lucifer* was commonly used of the planet Venus, which was also known as the morning star, or day star. It is actually two words put together: *lux fero*, or "light/to bear." The Latin Vulgate is a 4th century A.D. translation of both Testaments into Latin, so it came from both Hebrew and Greek. Saint Jerome was the primary translator, and he had the Septuagint on hand to see what those translators had done with the Hebrew over six centuries earlier. The Vulgate uses the word *lucifer* several times because *lucifer* is a common Latin word for Venus. There are three times in the Vulgate Old Testament in which the Latin *lucifer* is specifically used to translate the places where the Septuagint uses *heosphoros*:

- And thy prayer shall be as the morning star, and life shall arise to thee as from the noonday. **Job 11:17** (Brenton's English translation of the Septuagint)
- With thee is dominion in the day of thy power, in the splendours of thy saints: I have begotten thee from the womb before the morning. **Psalms 110:3** (Brenton)
- How has Lucifer, that rose in the morning, fallen from heaven! He that sent orders to all the nations is crushed to the earth. **Isaiah 14:12** (Brenton)

There is a clear inconsistency in the translation here. The Hebrew originally said *heilel* in each case. Then the Greek said *heosphoros*. Then the Latin said *lucifer*. What are the three different words that are used to translate the same thing into English?

There was NO understanding of the word *lucifer* in English at that time, so to use it here in place of Venus or morning star was inappropriate. What if the translator had done the same thing in the following verse from the New Testament, using *lucifer* in place of "morning star?"

Moreover, we possess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing. You do well if you pay attention to this as you would to a light shining in a murky place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19

Peter here is clearly referring to Jesus as the morning star and is comparing him to the planet Venus as it rises in the morning. We can't very well just put the word *lucifer* in there and then claim that it's another name for Jesus! Go ahead and write it in to see how you think it looks:

Moreover, we possess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing. You do well if you pay attention to this as you would to a light shining in a murky place, until the day dawns and _____ rises in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19

Now we're going to see how the Latin word *lucifer* morphed into a new English word.

John Wycliffe handwrote the first middle-English translation in 1395, and he translated from the Latin Vulgate, not the Hebrew and Greek. He chose to transliterate, not translate the Latin *lucifer* (that means you just keep the word as it is instead of trying to find a word in your language that means the same thing), and thus he created an English word, "Lucifer." We don't know why he did this instead of choosing "morning star" or "Venus," but he used it again in **Job 38:32**, so he clearly didn't mean for it to be a proper name for Satan.

Myles Coverdale and John Rogers published the first full translation of the Bible into English in 1535. They used the Latin Vulgate and the German Bible, which was published by Martin Luther. Luther had translated the word in question as *Morgenstern*, which means "morning star," and the German language capitalizes all nouns. Apparently, the Latin word *lucifer* and Luther's capitalization led to the decision to keep the transliteration and capitalize it.

Here is how some other early English translations handled our word:

- The Matthew's Bible, 1537: O Lucifer
- The Great Bible, 1539: O Lucifer
- The Geneva Bible, 1560: O Lucifer (footnote: "morning star")
- Bishop's Bible, 1568: O Lucifer
- Douay/Rheims (Catholic) Bible, 1609: O Lucifer (footnote: "O day star")
- King James Version, 1611: O Lucifer (footnote: "Or, a daystarre")

The footnotes of these translations, as you see them above, provide evidence that the word Lucifer was understood in English at that time to mean the morning star, or Venus.

The Catholic Church, who had previously resisted any translations other than Latin so that the average person couldn't interpret the Bible for themselves, produced the Douay/Rheims translation. They used only the Latin Vulgate as a source, not the original languages. The footnote in the Douay/Rheims was a strong force in perpetuating the "Satan is Lucifer" interpretation. Here is that footnote in its entirety:

"O Lucifer... O day star. All this, according to the letter, is spoken of the king of Babylon. It may also be applied, in a spiritual sense, to Lucifer the prince of devils, who was created a right angel, but fell by pride and rebellion against God."

And this apparently settled the matter and led to the common usage of "Lucifer" as a proper name for the devil.

Early Church Understanding about the Devil's characteristics

Now that we have the word *lucifer* settled, let's see how ideas about the person of Satan have developed.

- Early Jewish teaching was devoid of the idea that Satan was a fallen angel. They focused on his role of "accusing adversary."
- Philo and Josephus were Jewish historians who wrote just prior to and after Christ. Neither one makes mention of Satan as a fallen angel, nor do they connect him to **Isaiah 14:12**.
- Ignatius was the first to connect Jesus' statement in **Luke 10:18** ("I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven") to a being that was once an obedient angel that rebelled. (He lived from 30-107 A.D.)
- Justin Martyr (110-165 AD) was the first to connect **Isaiah 14:12** to Satan falling from heaven.
- Tertullian (145-220 AD) was the first to connect **Ezekiel 28** to Satan.
- Origen (185-254 AD) observed that the following ideas were prevalent in the church at his time, but that they were not firmly supported by Scripture:
 - The devil was once a holy angel of God
 - This holy angel became an apostate
 - He induced other angels to fall away with him
- In spite of that understanding, Origen assigned a proper name to the entity in **Isaiah 14** and declared it to be a reference to the devil. When his work was translated to English, *heosphoros* was translated as *Lucifer*. These early church fathers probably had access to two pseudepigraphal works (*The Life of Adam and Eve* and *Slavonic Enoch*), which are clearly not scriptural, but may have influenced their ideas.
- Jerome translated the Latin Vulgate in the late 4th century A.D., which was the source text for many future translations. In his commentaries, he clearly used the name Lucifer to designate Satan and put forth the idea that **Isaiah 14** was talking about both the king of Babylon and Satan.
- Since the Vulgate became the endorsed translation of the Catholic Church, the story of Lucifer's fall was firmly entrenched as the correct interpretation of **Isaiah 14** and **Ezekiel 28**, which explains why we saw that footnote in the Douay-Rheims. Augustine endorsed this, and to this day it is the dominant interpretation.
- We know from early Protestant translations of the Bible that they were attempting to break free of this interpretation as they came out of the Dark Ages.

Exploration of Key Passages

Satan's commonly accepted "back story" is that he was once a mighty archangel that rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven at some point before the creation of our world.

While we can't be sure this is not at all true (because the Bible is the story of the sons of Adam, not of what happened before that), I'd like to present the case that the Scripture passages that are supposed to prove it actually do no such thing. Let's take a look at them one at a time.

Luke 10:18

Read this verse alone. Now start at 10:17 and read to verse 19.

Jesus made this statement about Satan falling from the sky after the disciples he had sent out returned and reported that they had cast out demons in his name. If this is supposed to be referring to an ancient pre-historical rebellion of Satan, then Jesus is one-upping the disciples' reports to say that he actually saw Satan fall before creation. It's as if he's saying to them, "That's nothing... I actually saw Satan's ancient fall—it was so fast it looked like lightning!"

Is there any other timeframe other than the immediate context of his disciples' recent travels mentioned?

Read David Lowe's analogy from *Deconstructing Lucifer*, p. 75-76:

Imagine that I am the manager of a baseball team, and I am having a conversation with my pitcher who was kicked out of the game for throwing a pitch at the opposing team's star player. In reaction to this, members of the opposing team got up off the bench and started to run on the field to stand up for their team's star, but the coaching staff prevented them from going on the field. After the game, my pitcher commented, "Wow, did you see those players on the bench? I was afraid that they were going to come out and attack me!" In response, I smile and say, "Yeah, and you should have seen that player's father up in the stands. He was so mad at you that he bolted from his seat in the back row of the stands all the way to front row! The usher had to hold him back from getting on the field!" Now, taking this in context, would you be justified in applying my statement to my pitcher to be referring to an incident that happened five years ago instead of the events in the immediate context of the conversation? Of course not! You would understand my explanation of the father running from his seat in the stands toward the field to be applied to that same night, not five years ago. And yet readers of the passage from Luke chapter ten believe they are justified in applying Jesus' reply to the disciples to the ancient past even though the context of the passage was the events that took place during their mission.

The most logical timeframe that coincides with Jesus' statement is the one that matches what is happening. Why did Satan look like lightning streaking through the sky? Could it be because he was angry that *humans* (not just Jesus Himself!) were displaying power over his kingdom? His "falling" reflects that this was the beginning of God's judgment against him. This judgment would be sealed by the cross but not completed in its fullness until Christ's return. Jesus saw the panoramic view of what was happening while the disciples were casting out demons, and so He told them that what had happened was even bigger than their own immediate experience.

Revelation 12:4; 7-9

This is another text that is traditionally used to prove that Satan used to be obedient, but sinned and got kicked out of heaven. Please read it in your Bible now.

While it's quite clear from verse 9 that the dragon is Satan, this chapter is very symbolic (the images John sees represent something else) and it's either about one of three things:

- The time surrounding the birth of Christ, followed by the persecution of the early church
- Something that will happen in the future
- Both of the above

I feel it is an immense stretch of the context to claim that the symbolic element of a dragon sweeping a third of the stars equates to a supposed event that happened eons earlier, when nothing else in the passage gives any indication that it's talking about the ancient past. Because of this one highly symbolic passage, many Bible teachers routinely claim that Satan took a third of the angels with him when he rebelled against God, and these became the demons or fallen angels. There is no support for the idea that angels can become demons or that Satan's spiritual kingdom is one third the size of God's, yet these concepts are often stated as fact.

What there *is* support for is that angels are often represented by stars in prophecy. Because of this, I think it's valid to connect this with something that is happening in the spirit realm.

Isaiah 14:3-22

David Lowe calls this one "the granddaddy of all proof texts" about Lucifer. To start, make some simple observations from your reading of the passage:

- Who will take up this taunt?
- Who is the taunt against?
- What kind of a being are the people staring at in verse 16?
- How do verses 18-21 show that we're not talking about a spiritual entity here?
- Try reading verses 1-4 and then skip the taunt and read 22-23. Is it fairly continuous? (Is it talking about the same subject in the beginning as it is at the end?)

- Can you think of a time that humans desired to become like God? Think about that situation as you read verses 13-14. It sheds some light on what was really being offered to them and why they took the bait.

A quick scan of the passage shows that we have some Israelites (who are now at rest because they've been brought back from their captivity) taunting the king of Babylon because he used to be so high and mighty, but now he has been laid low. Whether or not there is a second spiritual meaning about Satan here, there is no doubt that our primary understanding is to be that the oppressor of all the nations of the earth has been struck down. This is the king of Babylon.

The little interlude in verse 8, in which the trees are speaking, shows us that we're dealing with Hebrew poetry, not literal language.

Sheol is the Hebrew term for death or the grave, where the human dead were understood to gather. Isaiah is creating a poetic picture here in 9-17 in which all the former leaders who have died before the king of Babylon are now waking up to greet him as he arrives.

So our controversial verse 12 clearly lies right in the middle of the taunt by the dead kings of pagan nations. They're laughing because he's dead and worthless now, like them, even though he thought he would become a god.

The trees earlier said that the king was being cut down, and now these dead kings observe that he is being cut down. His pride and arrogance had been so great that he thought he could be equal with God, but now he is brought low. They point out that it's hard to believe that this is the same man who used to be so powerful and tyrannical. He does not even get to stay in the grave where he was put.

Now remember that the idea of Satan being pictured in this passage was only imported after the New Testament was written, and that was probably done because of the phrase "fallen from heaven." We use the English word "heaven" to mean the place where believers go to live with God when we die, but the Hebrew word here is the same as the word for sky¹—which makes perfect sense when we're talking about the comparison to the king as the planet Venus falling from the sky. There is no reason to make this a spiritual understanding of Satan being kicked out of God's realm. Remember, too, that the correct reading may even be, "How you are fallen from the sky! *How!*, son of the Dawn!"

The point is that there is no need to put the devil into this passage, and it doesn't even work because Sheol was created as a holding place for human souls, not for the devil.² He will be destroyed by being cast in the Lake of Fire, which is the place that was prepared for him. His

¹ The Hebrew word for heaven in Isaiah 14:12 is שָׁמַיִם ("shamayim"). Brown-Driver-Briggs has as their first definition, "visible heavens, sky, where stars, etc., are

² Yet thoughtful scholars have pointed out that this could actually tie with the serpent because in ancient writings he is said to be cast down to the underworld. This is Michael Heiser's view, and the conclusion that this is a divine rebel is one of the few areas of disagreement I have with him.

body will never experience the decay of maggots or being cast away from his grave because he does not have a human body. Since the entire passage is a taunt about the king, his rotting body, and the ending of his tyrannical power, it does not make any sense to apply this to the time that Satan supposedly rebelled against God.

Here are David Lowe's 10 summary points about why this passage should not be used to create a doctrine of Satan:

1. The entire passage was to taunt the king of Babylon, a human.
2. The king clearly died a physical death.
3. Sheol, the land of death and the grave, was never described as the abode of Satan.³
4. The former pagan kings declare the king of Babylon had become just like them, which would not happen to Satan as a supernatural being.
5. *Heilel ben-shachar* is properly translated "shining one, son of the dawn," not *Lucifer*.
6. The Hebrew poetic style of writing allows for mere mortals to make claims that they could never actually fulfill.
7. If you're going to claim that Lucifer was the wisest of all angels [as is often somehow deduced from this passage], you can't also claim that he would have such an unwise idea as to aspire to be like God.
8. The Lucifer in the traditional story was already in heaven, so he would not have to declare that he would ascend up to heaven, as the king does in verse 13.⁴
9. The context of the passage perfectly supports the "howl" translation, which would be consistent with other uses in the Old Testament. If this had been used, we would never have our Lucifer.
10. Satan clearly had access to God's throne in Job 1 & 2 and Zechariah 3. How would we find him there if he has already been cast into Sheol?

Before we leave this passage, we should consider what Isaiah was probably trying to convey to the reader, particularly with the "I will" statements that are attributed here to the king of Babylon.

Many ancient pagan nations believed that when one of their kings died, he was exalted to the status of a god and made his appearance every night as one of the stars of the heavens. In Egypt, in particular, they believed that the sky and the dawn's light conceived the Egyptian king. Thus, the reference to "son of the dawn."

Not only did the king of Babylon hope to become a star in the heavens with the other former kings, but he wanted to be equal with the Most High in his postmortal existence since he was in the most powerful position of authority on earth. Isaiah was telling the king of Babylon that his aspiration to achieve godhood in the afterlife was going to be denied. Not only would his dreams of being a god be shattered, even his physical body would be denied a place of honor.

³ Again, I think David Lowe may be simplifying this point too much. Heiser says there IS a connection between Satan's abode and Sheol.

⁴ I actually think this is one of the strongest points.

In contrast, the humble Jesus proved Himself to be superior by his resurrection from the pits of Sheol! Pause to read **Philippians 2:6-9** in light of the pride of the king of Babylon. Then read this summary by David Lowe.

Jesus Christ accepted the fate of mortality by descending from the heavens to the position of humanity, and allowed himself to suffer death. Unlike the king of Babylon, whose eternal fate was entrapment in Sheol without any royal splendor, Jesus Christ conquered Sheol by his resurrection from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God, with the ultimate title of royal splendor—the King of Kings!⁵

Is it by chance that Jesus is called the “morning star” in **2 Peter 1:19**? I think it’s better to leave Him as the only morning star (the One who shines the most brightly) and not confuse the issue by wrongly attributing this title to Satan, too.

In summary, I just don’t see anything in this passage that requires the interpretation that it’s talking about Satan or any other divine rebel. It all fits perfectly to think of it as a taunt against a guy who thought he was going to become a god-star (the greatest god-star, in fact) when he died.

Ezekiel 28:12-16

We have one more key passage to explore that is frequently used in an attempt to recreate Satan’s history. Again, make some simple observations as you read:

- Who is the prophecy directed toward in verses 2-10 (named in verse 2)?
- What is the attitude of his heart, as repeated several times in verses 1-10? What is his desire?
- Who is the prophecy directed toward in verses 12-19? Why does it seem confusing as you read it?

Tertullian reasoned that, even though it says in verse 12 that it’s about the king of Tyre, it goes on to talk about someone who was in the Garden of Eden. Since the king of Tyre

⁵ Lowe, David. *Deconstructing Lucifer: Reexamining the Ancient Origins of the Fallen Angel of Light*. Seismos Publishing, 2011. Page 111.

obviously wasn't there, it must be talking about the only bad guy who was there—the devil. It's actually not bad reasoning, and many of the other church fathers followed along with it until it was adopted as orthodoxy by the Roman Catholic Church.

One way that I've heard this explained is that the king of Tyre was possessed by Satan and so it's appropriate for the language to flow from one to the other. I'm not entirely certain that this isn't true, and based on the description in these verses, this king was nasty. But we need to examine the text, and even its manuscript variations to see if this is the best explanation.

The main source of confusion with this passage is that the subject (the person it's talking about) greatly depends on the translation you use. Here is the English Standard Version for verse 14:

**You were an anointed guardian cherub.
I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. Ezekiel 28:14**

And here's the English translation of the Septuagint:

From the day that thou wast created thou wast with the cherub: I set thee on the holy mount of God; thou wast in the midst of the stones of fire. (Brenton)

What small—yet important—word is present in the Septuagint that is not present in the English Standard Version (and many other English translations)?

In the first one, the prophet is addressing the cherub, but in the second one, he's addressing an unnamed entity that was *with* the cherub.

Now look at verse 16:

ESV: In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Septuagint: Of the abundance of thy merchandise thou hast filled thy storehouses with iniquity, and hast sinned: therefore thou hast been cast down wounded from the mount of God, and the cherub has brought thee out of the midst of the stones of fire. (Brenton)

- What is happening to the cherub according to the ESV?
- What is the cherub doing according to the Septuagint?

The discrepancies between the translations are based partly on the manuscript they're using

and partly on the form of the pronoun “you” or “thou.”⁶ For now, it’s important to point out that the two different ways of translating it result in two different understandings of the subject of the passage. In the end, it’s not the most important case to make because we’re going to see that there is other evidence that the cherub is not the bad guy.

To get the idea of the context, first we find that the two chapters leading up to 28 are a song of lament to the *city* of Tyre. Then chapter 28 begins by focusing on its *prince*. It’s similar to Isaiah 14 in the way it’s taunting the leader. It’s clear that he’s only a man, yet he wants to be a god. God has already specified what he will do to judge the nation in great detail in chapter 26, so here in 28:6-8 He summarizes His previous proclamations.

- What does it say God will do in **Ezekiel 28:6-8**?

God sarcastically asks whether the prince will still be calling himself a god after that.

Then it shifts in verse 11 to the *king* of Tyre. Read 11-19. God points out a couple of positive things about him, then begins to compare him to this unnamed entity in the Garden of Eden. The king has all types of precious stones with which to ornament himself, like this person in the garden did—a picture of royalty.

We see that he walked amidst the “stones of fire” in verse 13. Scholars have all sorts of ideas about what these stones are.

- They could have been brilliant gemstones that sparkled, or actual fiery stones that existed on the mountain of God within the Garden.
- It’s possible the Hebrew word there means some kind of glass.
- It could be a reference to the Urim and Thummim, which would light up for the priests in the Temple to help determine God’s will on a matter.
- Some think it represents the stone tablets on which God wrote the Law, since they believe the Ten Commandments were given before Sinai and that fire represents the holiness of God in general.
- I think the best interpretation is that it represents the sons of God (members of the Divine Council) who were present and visible in Eden because this was the place where heaven and earth came together. This entity that the king of Tyre is being compared to was given the freedom to fellowship with the Council.

Verse 15 gives us the main identifying characteristic for the entity to whom God is comparing the king of Tyre:

“You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.” Ezekiel 28:15

⁶ See Lowe, pages 117-119 for more support about why to use one meaning over another.

This has to be talking about one of five entities that were in the Garden: Adam, Eve, the serpent, God, or the cherubim.

- We can rule out God because He's speaking, and because He didn't sin.
- The two cherubim can be eliminated because they are sinless angelic guardians and they are still doing their job after the humans are cast out of the Garden.
- We can rule out Eve because it's talking about a man.
- So between Adam and the serpent, which one had sin discovered in him in the garden?

The story of Adam's fall is being used as a metaphor. God is saying here that the king of Tyre was so perfect that he's compared to Adam... until he let sin take over. Just like Adam was cast out by the cherubim, so the king is cast away from God's presence because of "the abundance of his trade" and his violence (which is spelled out in the previous two chapters).

Look just three chapters later for a similar metaphor, where Assyria is compared to a tree.

Read **Ezekiel 31**.

Nobody would say that Assyria is really a tree, nor was it a nation at the time of Eden. Trees do not have feelings or descend to Sheol. We understand this to be a metaphor.

If the land of Assyria could be called a tree in the Garden of Eden, which was long before it ever even existed as a nation, couldn't the king of Tyre be likened to a man who was in that Garden? This literary technique was unique to Ezekiel.

Even if we use the understanding of most of our English translations that the entity the King of Tyre is being compared to is the cherub, we still have some trouble when we try to claim that this is about Satan.

- For one thing, what is the form we know Satan took in the Garden of Eden?

Satan was described as an animal in the Garden. A serpent is not like a cherub. A cherub is a special supernatural creature that covers the throne of God, like the two that covered the ark. In **Ezekiel 1:10-12 and 10:14**, we see cherubim described as having four different faces and four wings. This is nothing like a reptile. It is nothing like an archangel, either, which Lucifer is also supposed to be according to tradition. To equate the devil with a rebellious cherub in this passage requires one to change him from a serpent to a cherub, and there is no other place in the Bible that would give any indication that these could be the same thing.

- Who sinned in the Genesis account of the Garden of Eden?

It doesn't matter whether you say it was Adam or Eve or the serpent... it wasn't a cherub or the two cherubim that sinned. They just did their job.

The whole line of thinking that this passage is about Satan leads to some very weird ideas.

- Some take this passage to mean that the ground of Eden was littered with precious gems that the snake crawled among. It's talking about a king who is bedecked in jewels, not a snake crawling around!
- The KJV talks about "tabrets" (or tambourines) and "pipes," which has led to the notion that Satan is covered with musical instruments or was somehow the worship leader in heaven before he fell. This seems ridiculous when you realize that alternate meanings of those words are "sockets for jewelry" and "settings for precious stones." Considering that the context is a list of precious stones, we can be quite confident that we're talking about a king with jewelry on, not an angel with tambourines and wind instruments.
- What kind of commercial trade would a cherub in the Garden of Eden have engaged in? The peddling of gemstones? Or maybe the trading was before Eden. Did he get too wealthy in heaven from his trading activity? Clearly this can't be talking about Satan... it's about the king of Tyre. Frankly, it's difficult to see how this could be applied to Adam, either. I think the best explanation is that, just as Ezekiel slipped into a metaphor in verse 12, he slips back out of it in verse 17 to be talking only about the king of Tyre. Ezekiel does this.

Summary

Let's summarize what we've covered:

- We determined that the name "Lucifer" was improperly assigned to the devil.
- We pointed out that the Luke 10 and Revelation 12 passages that speak about Satan are being taken out of context and assigned to ancient times, when there is no reason for doing so and it is not even logical.
- We showed how Isaiah 14 is clearly about a human king who aspired to be like God, just as his Babylonian religion taught. We are left with little support for the idea that this passage is a description of Satan.
- We showed how the interpretation of Ezekiel 28 hinges on whether it's talking to the cherub or someone who was with the cherub. But even if it were talking about the cherub, it still doesn't make sense to assign this to Satan, for the reasons we mentioned. We also saw that it's rather ridiculous to claim that Satan was a musician, based on an out-of-context reference to flutes and tambourines when it's really talking about settings for gemstones. The whole passage is perfectly explained when compared to Ezekiel's other metaphors. I think the best explanation is that it's about the king of Tyre, who is compared to Adam in the Garden.

Further Investigation/Resources

Lowe, David. *Deconstructing Lucifer*. Wichita: Seismos Publishing, October, 2011.

Bratcher, Dennis. *Lucifer' in Isaiah 14:12-17, Translation and Ideology*. CRI/ Voice Institute, 2013. <http://www.crivoice.org/lucifer.html>

This article summarizes the translation issues with the word "Lucifer," as well as the problems with inserting a doctrine of the devil into this passage. Dr. Bratcher has his PhD from Union Theological Seminary and taught theology at Point Loma Nazarene University.

Tagart, Brian. *Isaiah 14:12 & Revelation 22:16: "Will The Real "Morning Star Please Stand Up..."* The KJV-Only Issue. http://www.kjv-only.com/isa14_12.html

Brian Tagart, of CJF Ministries, has produced this collection of various sources related to the identity of the devil and the name Lucifer.

Johnson, Gaines R. *The Bible, Genesis & Geology: Rightly-Dividing Geology and Genesis*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. <http://www.kjvbible.org/>

I find the evidence for an old earth to be too strong to ignore, yet I do not agree that one must read Genesis 1 symbolically or embrace the Gap Theory to come to this position. All that is necessary is to allow for some time in the universe before Creation Week that God does not tell us about, which people do anyway when they assume that "Lucifer" was a holy angel that rebelled against God in the spirit realm at some time before creation. For evidence supporting an old earth, as well as arguments against a young earth, see this site. My regret is that the author is so strongly "King James Only." I believe the rest of his research is worth examining in spite of this view.

Litke, Th.M., Sid. "Survey of Bible Doctrine: Angels, Satan, Demons." Bible.org, 2004.

<http://bible.org/seriespage/survey-bible-doctrine-angels-satan-demons>

About the doctrine of Satan.

Pink, Arthur W. *The Sovereignty of God*. 1940. Available here via public domain:

https://ia601409.us.archive.org/3/items/TheSovereigntyOfGod_733/preview.pdf

This is a must-read for Christians struggling with the issue of God's sovereignty, including matters related to election. He brings all the relevant Scripture passages into one place and addresses objections as they arise.