

# The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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## Who is Lucifer?

by Jefferson David Tant

It is popular in many denominational circles to identify Satan with the name Lucifer, and reference is made to Rev. 12:7ff, where Satan is cast down to the earth after he and his angels were defeated in their effort to overthrow the throne of God.

“Lucifer” is the name given to a being in Isaiah 14:12. *“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!”* (King James Version). Before identifying this being, notice that in other translations, the term Lucifer is not used. *“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn...”* (New American Standard Version).

In the NASV, “Lucifer” is rendered as “star of the morning.” This is from the Hebrew word *halel* – to shine. Thus a literal translation of the Hebrew into English might read, “How you have fallen from heaven, O shining one...”

Now, just who is this Lucifer, this morning star or shining one? As we go back into the context of Isaiah, we note the beginning of this particular passage in 13:1 and the prophecies about Babylon, the world power at that time: *“The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.”* The prophet then goes on to detail the sins of this haughty nation. Note an outline of chapters 13 and 14.

- 13:1-5 – The doom of Babylon predicted
- 13:6-16 – The judgment “day of the Lord” is coming against Babylon
- 13:17-22 – Babylon will fall to the Medes
- 14:1-2 – Israel to be preserved
- 14:3-23 – The proverb against the king of Babylon (note v. 4)
- 14:24-28 – Judgment against Assyria
- 14:29-32 – Judgment against Philistia (Palestina)

In reading the context before and after 14:12, we see God’s condemnation of both the kingdom of Babylon and its king. It is clear that God is angered at the fact that both Babylon and its king exalted themselves to the heavens. In v. 11, God says *“your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol.”* “Pomp” is a word meaning

“stately display; splendor; magnificence.” “Sheol” is a reference to the grave. Thus the splendor and magnificence of the king is going to be brought low.

And who is the king? He is not named in the text in Isaiah, but there is a strong case to be made that this king is Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. This king had oppressed God’s people, which is referred to in 14:2, 4. When we turn to the prophet Daniel, we see Nebuchadnezzar named and his reign described. The king had a vision in chapter four which Daniel interpreted for him, telling him that it was a warning against the king that he was going to be cut down and brought low. In 4:30 we see his haughty spirit: *“Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?”* Then look what happened in v. 31: *“While the word was in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you.”* The record then goes on to describe what happened to the king. He became insane, and lived in the fields and ate grass like cattle. Thus the one who thought he was so high and mighty was humbled and brought low until he recognized that Jehovah God is the only one who is on high (Daniel 4:34ff).

But then it was not long before the kingdom itself was brought down. The story of its defeat is told in Daniel 5, and in v. 30 we see that Belshazzar the king (Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson) was killed, and the Babylonians fell into the hands of the Medes, *“so Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two”* (v. 31). This was a fulfillment of the prophecy that had been made in Isaiah 13, where the Medes were mentioned by name in v. 17. This prophecy was made in about 734 B.C. and was fulfilled in about 539 B.C., nearly 200 years later.

Notice the listing in THE NEW SMITH’S BIBLE DICTIONARY: **Lucifer** (lu-ci-fer) [light-bearer] likely the planet Venus, as the morning star, which appears as a morning or an evening star, according as it is west or east of the sun, returning to the same position about every eighteen months. It may thus be a harbinger of daylight. To it, the splendor of the Babylonian king is likened (Isa. 14:12, its only occurrence in Scripture). The Lord calls himself the “bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16; cf. II Pet. 1:19). Since Jerome’s day, it has been poetically applied to Satan, rebel hurled from heaven, on the erroneous supposition that Luke 10:18 explains Isa. 14:12.”

We see that the whole context in Isaiah 14 is talking about Babylon and its king, and there is no mention made of Satan anywhere. But because of a similar statement in Luke and Revelation, some have jumped to the erroneous conclusion that Satan is the one talked about in Isaiah. This is another example of people who do not handle the Scriptures carefully, but who look here and there to find some particular point, and then take a verse out of context to make it fit some idea they have. Peter says that there *“are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”* (II Peter 3:16).

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## **News and Notes:**

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

*“...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”* James 5:16