

Lucifer/Satan/the Devil

Written by K B Napier

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There is no need to extend this brief article, for the subject matter is easy to explain. Though we apply the word 'lucifer' to Satan, the word itself is not a true proper noun, though it is a masculine noun. 'Lucifer', *hey/el*, is used only once as a name, in Isaiah

14:12. (Of interest: in Arabic this becomes *ha'la*). Thus, it becomes a personal noun.

This text tells us that the one here named 'Lucifer', fell from Heaven/was cast out by God and made it his business to "weaken the nations". Lucifer, to us, is Satan, once chief of all angels. In this verse, the name 'Lucifer' was given to describe not his character but his role, as a 'light bearer'. That is, a false bearer of light, because he is the epitome of sin, who wishes to present himself to gullible sinners as bearing the light of God.

Hence, Satan is also called 'the destroyer' e.g. 'one who ruins'. It is based especially on the image of a venomous snake (which takes us back to the Garden of Eden, when Satan appeared to man as a serpent). This name is another instance of an ordinary noun being used as a proper noun... Satan, then, has many names derived from his actions and aims.

The name 'Satan' first appears in 1 Chronicles 21:1, where we find this ousted archangel at the top of the 'league', as a tempter of whole nations:

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."

Once again, this is not a proper noun (a name) but a name that describes what Satan does. Here, it means an adversary who stands boldly against God. Though a masculine noun it is used ordinarily as a proper noun (a person's name).

So, we have Lucifer and Satan; who is also known as 'the Devil', *diabolos*. This makes him a slanderer, a false accuser, one who opposes God. We can see, then, that the Devil has several names, each describing an aspect of his wickedness. A different name is given to demons subservient to Satan –

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daimonion

, which can mean a god (false) or a devil, a neuter noun based on

daim

ōn/daemon

(an evil spirit). To pagan Greeks this name referred to an inferior deity, which is appropriate, because a demon is inferior to his master, Satan, who was the most powerful archangel in Heaven. In the Greek mind such an inferior being could be either good or bad. But, a demon is always bad in the New Testament, without exception.

You will find this latter name used for demons, the lower-class evil spirits headed by Satan. The name *diabolos* is used of Satan himself, who has yet another name: “the tempter” (e.g. Matthew 4:3), *peirazō*. He is, then, someone who tries to dissuade another, to cause them to be under a trial, to test someone maliciously to leave one’s faith or godly intent. In other words, he tries to lead someone into sin. This is just as wicked as when Satan openly faced God as a challenger.

In Genesis 3:1, we find Satan appearing as a serpent, *nachash*, an image often used for Satan as a subtle deceiver. In the New Testament the Jews referred to the devil as ‘Beelzebub/Beelzeboul’ (‘lord of the house’, or, more accurately, ‘lord of filth/dung’. The idea that it relates to the Philistine ‘lord of the flies’ is not fully proved). He is also known as The Accuser (of believers) (Revelation 12:10), the ‘ruler of this world’, the ‘god of this age’ (2 Corinthians 4:4), the ‘prince of the power of the air’ (Ephesians 2:2), and an ‘angel of light’ (2 Corinthians 11:14) – appearing to be good but actually bad, deceiving people into believing in him. There are other descriptions for this ultra-wicked archangel of evil.

Of interest is that ‘lucifer’ is also used in science to describe something that brings light. For example, there is a pigment (luciferin) that helps marine animals to emit light, thus enabling bioluminescence (a chemical reaction turns energy into light, by use of an enzyme, called a luciferase. Remarkably, this process results in very little heat). This shows that ‘lucifer’ is indeed more of a description of Satan’s activities, rather than a proper name, even though it is used as such.

In the New Testament the name ‘Satan’/*Satanās* (Chaldean) is more descriptive: He is an adversary of God and prince of evil spirits, leading men into apostasy (which we see in abundance today) and sin, stopping men from their holy duties and aims, actually controlling the minds and hearts of idolaters (hence the great evils coming from Islam, Hinduism, psychopaths, etc), bringing disease upon men through his demons, plus oppression and possession. The term can also be applied to any man who displays satanic characteristics and personality.

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There is much we could discuss, but the above is sufficient. It is enough to know that Satan was the most powerful and most beautiful archangel in Heaven until he sinned (why and how he sinned is outside the scope of discussion, because we find no answer in scripture). For His treasonous desire to be greater than God, he was cast out of Heaven to the earth and its environs, along with an innumerable following of other lower angels, who then became known as demons.

Satan knows his final hour of rule over Earth is fast coming, so his entire efforts are now found in leading men astray and, where possible, into unbounded violence and evil (hence Islamic terrorism, etc.). The majority of people are thus led by Satan and so they will never see Heaven. At this time Satan is free to do whatever he wishes, but the era will be very short, and God will totally crush him before he is sent to hell forever, along with all who reject the Gospel and God, including atheists and false religionists (of all and any type). Jesus Himself warned that if we fear anything, it should be Satan, because he can rob people of spiritual life.

Also read A-385, 'Ezekiel 28:11-19'

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