

CHAPTER 51



I Saw Satan Fall Like Lightning

Luke 10:17-21

17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

In this record, we are told of the returning disciples Yeshua had sent out to minister truth to the peoples of the surrounding area. The reports of successful delivery and acceptance of the message they took are coming in. The writer tells us about the success of the seventy in terms that are somewhat misunderstood today. The remarks included mention of the joy felt by those who went and shared the truth because “the devils are subject to them.” In the way the writing is given to us, it sounds as if we are hearing about the collective statement of 35 pairs of people calling out at the same time. It appears that the manner of this “rejoicing” is in the fashion of a team cheer, as if they were returning on a bus from a mission trip to Mexico. However, thinking through how this might

have played out there is another and better way to understand it. It would seem to make sense that the returning pairs of disciples brought the report of their activities in much smaller groups and perhaps even as small as each group reporting individually. If the “devils” spoken of here were not literal devils, then what were they? Is it possible the “devils” in this usage of the word are the false beliefs, or errant religious teachers? There has to be an answer that corresponds to the idea of “devils” as is found in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the minds of the people in the Aramaic culture of the period.

The returning disciples rejoiced because the word they were sent to share, was received and that “word” consequently replaced erroneous thinking and heretical doctrine. People were changed by the power of the message the disciples carried. And a change in their thinking took place to bring them into line with truth. *Casting down* simply means remove and *the devil* simply means their false doctrines, ideas and beliefs. “Truth” was “casting down” their “devil.” The devil may well have been any number of things but it certainly was not a cosmic supernatural spirit with powers to inhabit a person like God has. Perhaps the devils were their false doctrine and wrong ideas or perhaps “the devils” were the men who propagated these false doctrines, or perhaps, as George Lamsa suggests, there is yet one more option for what “the devils” were. “The devils” in some cases were the men and women who were insane.

According to Lamsa, the Aramaic culture would have thought an insane person could not be healed from their devil of insanity. Yet at the message of the disciples, these very devils were eradicated from the truly insane persons. Lamsa writes about this situation thus;

“They returned full of joy because of their success. They had demonstrated their power not only by healing the sick but restoring the insane, a type of sickness considered incurable. “Even the devils have been subject to us in your name,” means

the people possessed with insanity were healed and converted through his name.”⁸⁰

No matter whether the devil was one or the other of the preceding possibilities, the situation was cause for rejoicing for the first century community of believers. And the return of the seventy was proof to all that the message coming through Yeshua was not like that of any other spiritual leader. It was a message of power. And the profound and convincing nature of the truth the message contained, actually was powerful enough to alter people's existing belief system. A belief system, for the most part, which contained many diverse devils.

How Can Someone Repent Unless They Know What Sin Is?

The message of repentance from sin was preached by the apostles, the prophets, and likely by these 70 who were sent. The preaching included showing the hearer what the sin to repent of was. The message was simple and to the point, it was the message Jesus preached at the outset of His ministry. “*Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.*” Matthew 4 records the message the Messiah propounded. Those who embraced the message experienced amazing freedom and healing.

When the fruit of the travelling preachers was seen, there was rejoicing. As is the case for any messenger of truth, rejoicing is always the feeling when the message one brings is received and bears fruit. Of course rejoicing would occur at the fantastic outcome of these seventy pioneering disciples witnessing the power of the truth. The proof of the tasting was in the pudding and much pudding was made from people having their “devil”

⁸⁰ See page 333 of *Gospel Light* – George M. Lamsa edited by James Magiera, A.J. Holman Co. 1939 & *The Aramaic Bible Society* 1995

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dealt with by submitting to the true word of the messenger of Yeshua.

As mentioned above, there is another possible explanation for whom or what the “devils” overcome by the disciples are. It is possible they were men and women who opposed the word of the Kingdom. In Luke 10 verse 20 Yeshua mentions the “spirits” that are subject to the disciples. The word for “spirit” can be defined as a *rational soul*, referring to a human person. In the face of legitimate truth, these human opposers, or “spirits,” could not successfully refute the disciples and the disciples rejoiced that those “devils” were subject to them. It was at this that the Messiah admonished His disciples not to rejoice just because men who thought they knew the truth ultimately submitted to the authority of the disciples. Perhaps Yeshua seems to sense that the returning disciple are a little too proud of their accomplishment and are taking some of the credit on personally. After all, the disciples went and shared what they had learned and men changed their minds because of the message. It is the truth that has power to cause devils to fall, not the person.

“Satan fell like lightning” Is Not Literal But Has Aramaic/Hebraic Undertones

When looking at this story in the Gospels, it is important to remember that although the words of the Gospels are preserved in Greek, the writer of the story and the participants of the story, namely Yeshua, were categorically Aramaic in their thinking and understanding of ancient concepts. Hebraic customs, manners, beliefs, and styles of communication were closely related to Aramaic customs, manners, beliefs, and styles of communication. It is through this perspective that Yeshua speaks about seeing Satan fall from heaven. As a Hebrew Messiah He would be in line with the idea that the Greek word *satanas* used here, is equivalent to the Hebrew word *sawtawn* or the Aramaic word *sata*. Thus, He would have connected the term to a concept of Satan being an

adversarial man or the belief system of erroneous doctrine that was adversarial to God.

Yeshua's statement tells the returning seventy that He has knowledge of not only the past but of the future. Saying, "*I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*", was a way of saying He already sees the end of the story when all false doctrines, false beliefs and their purveyors will be made to be nothing. Yeshua understood "Satan" to be the oppositional attitude and rebellious nature that was an adversary to the truth, as coming from human origins. Knowing the end from the beginning puts Messiah in the unique place of "seeing" the past, present, and future. He would have already "seen" the ultimate position of every lofty idea, every false doctrine, and every erroneous belief. That position being equated as "fallen from heaven." Some seem to understand this statement by the Messiah as a statement likened to saying to the returning disciples, "*Don't think you're so hot or that what you have accomplished is such a big deal, I have seen Satan fall from Heaven, now that is a big deal.*" In no way was Yeshua minimizing the accomplishments of the disciples' preaching. He was more likely informing His followers that indeed the word He sends forth will accomplish its intended purpose. All lies and false doctrines will cease and Jesus has seen it coming.

We have already heard Yeshua tell us that evil comes from man's heart. Now in the Messiah's statement, we are hearing Him tell the seventy that He is not surprised. By sending them out as He did, He knew the message they were going to share would bring down not only people's wrong thinking and theology, but it would be irrefutable by those who would wish to stir up contention and maliciously impose conflict and confrontation upon the sent messenger.

Are We Trapped By The Traditional Take On This Story?

So many of us have heard the traditional understanding of this verse as meaning Yeshua was in heaven before the earth was

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created and when “Satan” rebelled and was cast out of Heaven, Yeshua saw him fall. Often, this passage is wrongly connected to Isaiah 14. Isaiah 14 speaks of a Babylonian King falling from power.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! Isaiah 14:12

That passage uses the Latin word Lucifer. And any good commentary will inform you it is not speaking of a cosmic fallen angel. Rather, as the term historically can be proven to mean, it is speaking of the “the morning star” which refers to the planet Venus. At the time Isaiah wrote his prophecy, *The Morning Star*, or *Lucifer*, was an appellation for a pagan king. *For more on this misunderstood passage see Satan Christianity’s Other God-Volume I - Chapter 8; Lucifer’s Fall in Isaiah 14, Explaining the Myth; available at www.imagineenosatan.com.* Regarding the connection of the Messiah’s words here to the passage seen in Isaiah 14, The NKJV Study Bible elucidates this point.

Fallen from heaven is a figure of speech meaning cast down from an exalted political position. Jesus said, “And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades” (Luke 10:15), and apparently with the same meaning, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). The name for Lucifer in Hebrew literally means “Day Star,” or the planet Venus . The poetic language of this verse describes the aspiration of this brightest star to climb to the zenith of the heavens and its extinction before the rising sun. This is an apt summary of the failed goal of the king of Babylon (v.4) who wanted to grasp universal and eternal domination. Tertullian, Milton and others have linked this passage to the career of Satan on the basis of Luke 10:18, but the text does not specifically make this connection.

Some do correctly take the idiom “fall from heaven” as it was taken in the Eastern mind, not as if it is referring to a change in geographical location for “satan.” In other words, some understand correctly it means there was a definitive defeat of “satan.” Although some might incorrectly think a literal cosmic Satan is meant here, they are on the right track in recognizing something is definitively defeated. The idiom; “*fall from heaven*” does intend to mean a “definitive defeat” of some sort. However, the use of the word “*satanas*” by Yeshua is not actually an acknowledgment of the existence of an infernal cosmic archenemy. The word *satanas* is used by Yeshua the same way a first century, Hebrew citizen of an Aramaic culture would have used it. Yeshua was saying the adversarial force that is present in man will certainly undergo a definitive defeat. The adversarial thinking, containing wrong doctrine and erroneous thought, would no longer affect those who were to hear His message of truth via the seventy. That Yeshua “saw” the fall of wrong thinking is little different than what might be said to a young soldier returning from the war after defeating his adversaries in hand to hand combat and dangerous gun battles. Perhaps the young man’s grandfather would say to the victorious soldier, “I saw your enemies falling at your hand Junior.” All that is meant by the grandfatherly expression of confidence in the young man’s abilities, is that the grandfather believed and knew the young man would be successful in his mission. Yeshua confidently knew the disciples would be successful in their mission against false doctrine and heretical teachers. It’s as if to say, “*I knew you guys would be able to take down the enemy, I am not surprised one bit.*”

If by “*satanas*,” the speaker is referencing the removal of the doctrines and beliefs that are opposed to the truth, then it is well put to say *satan fell like lightning from heaven*. This is so because those anti-God teachings and beliefs were truly removed from their position and place of status in the minds and hearts of believers. They were removed because many received the truth

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from the seventy traveling disciples. Removal of such beliefs and ideas is to have them “fall from heaven.”

Yeshua was a profound Rabbi and He spoke very poetically, rabbinically, and aramaically. Therefore, His words would not have been taken to mean a literal Satan when He told the returning seventy that He was very confident the resistance and wrong doctrine to be confronted by the disciples, would “fall from heaven.” This was simply a very strong statement to tell His disciples that what they are called to share with people will have a powerful impact. There was no literal fall of a cosmic entity which appeared to be as lightning.

What Are Serpents And Scorpions?

Yeshua enhanced the imagery in His statement by telling the seventy they would go out and be co-workers in changing people’s lives. No one who opposes them or brings a malicious attack against them because of the message they share will do any harm to them. In our vernacular, a tenacious business person might be known to slay a few dragons, so too the disciples would trample their opposer, the snakes and scorpions.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

The serpent is a bitter human enemy seeking to silence the disciples; the scorpion, is a malicious and crafty man; and the enemy, is one who hates and despises the disciples for the message they bring. Yeshua announced that they would not see their wicked desires for the disciples come to pass. Similar imagery of the seething scorn of human men being associated with scorpions is found in Ezekiel;

Ezekiel 2:6

And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

As for the serpent, we know Yeshua called the Pharisees a brood of vipers and the serpent has always been understood in the ancient East as an idiom representing an evil and wicked man. Yeshua was telling the seventy that they would overcome wicked opposition and expose those who mislead and expose the lies that had been taught. Albert Barnes relates what the serpent and scorpion statement of Yeshua's means:

Luke 10:19 -

To tread on serpents - Preservation from danger. If you tread on a poisonous reptile that would otherwise injure you, I will keep you from danger. If you go among bitter and malignant enemies that would seek your life, I will preserve you. See the notes at Mar 16:18.

Scorpions - The scorpion is an animal with eight feet, eight eyes and a long jointed tail, ending in a pointed weapon or sting. It is found in tropical climates, and seldom exceeds 4 inches in length. Its sting is extremely poisonous, and it is sometimes fatal to life. It is in Scripture the emblem of malicious and crafty men.⁸¹

It appears according to Albert Barnes that the serpents we are talking about are simply enemies of the apostles and the scorpions are malicious men.

Yeshua went on to tell the seventy that nothing by any means would hurt them. Some take this statement today as a promise from the Messiah they would not ever be harmed physically, when ministering in His name. That is an odious heresy, which has been proven time and again, not to be what Yeshua meant. Either Yeshua is lying, or He was specifically talking to the seventy for that time only, or He means something

⁸¹ Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Albert Barnes (1798-1870)

else. Fact is, literal serpents and scorpions have harmed lots of people while ministering. Many of the seventy would have suffered severe persecutions and death at the hands of the metaphorical serpents and scorpions who are men that are enemies and opposed to the disciples' message.

If this statement is a promise for physical protection as some have interpreted it, then the promise cannot be for today, because many who take the “message of the Gospel” to hazardous regions end up dying for their cause or sometimes getting harmed by being beaten or killed. True, some missionaries seem to have a supernatural protection over their physical bodies but Yeshua stated that promise in a very general way and gave no sense of meaning that “some” of you would suffer no harm. Knowing what we know to this point, we are able to conclude Yeshua must have been referring to protection of their message. I believe Yeshua was saying that the seventy would have power over those who intend to contend with their message and over those who would try to refute their message with false doctrine. The false doctrine of the adversarial people would not damage the true message of the seventy and subsequent messengers of truth.

Continuing His exhortation, Yeshua tells the seventy to not be too enamored with the fact that people, called spirits here meaning rational humans, are receiving the message and being changed or that they are able to refute the false teachers and lying prognosticators who teach heresy and desire to harm the messengers. This is mentioned in verse 20; ...rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you. But because all truth is about the message and not the messenger, the disciples are told to remember with joy that it is always about the individual and the blessed reward each of them will have. They will eventually live forever with the Creator.

When looked at in context, there is nothing in the Hebrew Scriptures that reveal any type of a fall of a cosmic being called “Satan.” By Yeshua using the statement, “*I saw satan fall from heaven...*” He was only referring to knowing that the message of truth and hope He imparted to His disciples, would cause the false

doctrine and hard hearted resistance to His truth to suffer a definitive defeat. Satan's fall here is a reference to false teachings and false teachers not standing when truth is brought forward.

As mentioned above, the word Yeshua used for "Satan" here would have been either the Aramaic word for sata or the Hebrew word *sawtawn*. Considering Yeshua spoke Aramaic, we must comprehend that the Aramaic word **sata** means to miss the mark or go astray. Lamsa explains it beautifully in Gospel Light, He says,

*"I saw Satan falling down' means Jesus (Yeshoo) saw light driving out darkness and his truth triumphant over the power of evil."*⁸²

The word **sata** did not represent a proper noun and should never represent the name for a non-existent Satan, rather it was an adjective to describe a consciousness in people. It refers to a person or group who goes aside or turns away, according to the Aramaic understanding. The consciousness was a sin consciousness and was the only thing Yeshua was referring to as suffering a definitive defeat when the truth was preached by the seventy. There never has been an actual fall of a cosmic being, who was once an angel in heaven. However, in the view Jesus had of what the end of error and heresy would be, there was a definitive defeat of the wrong thinking and doctrine people had believed. Coupled with this "fall of sata" we are able to include the definitive end of some who were adversarial to those bringing the message of the Master. The statement was speaking of the present situation and also could refer to the ultimate result of truth being taught. Yeshua was ultimately going to do an end to wickedness. This wickedness was from the heart of man as Messiah taught in Matthew and Mark. Yeshua never once claims evil and wickedness come from a satanic being.

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

⁸² ibid

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Matthew 15:19

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. Mark 7:21-23

In knowing the end of the plan when all men would no longer have a desire to break God's laws and commit sin, Yeshua could say that He had seen "satan" fall from heaven like lighting.

I have one final note to make on this passage. It is concerning the rejoicing over the "devils being subject" to the disciples' message. Lamsa explains the return of the seventy as a case where there was excitement over the unexpected results. These results even included the healing of "insane people".⁸³ I have mentioned this earlier but you may benefit from hearing it again in this context. It was thought that an insane person could not be healed by anyone. The local lunatics were the ones who were left to the destructive aspects of their own mental illness. However, as a result of the authority the seventy taught with, they were seeing these "devils" removed from people. Insane people became sane again. Once the insanity was overcome, there ensued a restoration of normal mental function. The "devil" was simply insanity and this healing of such "devils" was truly a miracle. It was a miracle of such magnitude that jubilation would have been expressed in great quantities by the returning seventy.

Yeshua did not possess the dualistic, two-God belief of the ancient Persians and the Pharisees who came out of the Persian system. He understood the passage in Isaiah 14 that speaks about the day star's fall from heaven the same way every other first century Scripture student understood it. It was about a pagan king who was brought low. The King of Babylon "fell from heaven"

⁸³ Page 333 in *Gospel Light* – George M. Lamsa edited by James Magiera, A.J Holman Co. 1939 & *The Aramaic Bible Society* 1995

because of his lofty ideas and false religion. Jesus did not believe in Satan because He was truly monotheistic in His views knowing that there is only One God.

Any careful and insightful student of the Bible with integrity realizes that we cannot impose a different meaning on a term than what was meant by the original authorial intent. What did the speaker mean when he said those words? That is why Yeshua's statement of seeing Satan falling from heaven must be weighed against the statement found in Isaiah. Moreover, it is certain Isaiah did not intend to refer to a cosmic entity. A cosmic Satan didn't even exist in his mind. I repeat below the statement made in the *New King James Version Study Bible* about this passage in question. The academics who supplied commentary here also understand the lack of truth in claiming Yeshua's statement ought to be understood as referring to a literal cosmic entity that was allegedly cast out of heaven. Don't take my word for it, read the thoughts again of the study Bible commentary I shared above.

Fallen from heaven is a figure of speech meaning cast down from an exalted political position. Jesus said, "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades" (Luke 10:15), and apparently with the same meaning, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). The name for Lucifer in Hebrew literally means "Day Star," or the planet Venus . The poetic language of this verse describes the aspiration of this brightest star to climb to the zenith of the heavens and its extinction before the rising sun. This is an apt summary of the failed goal of the king of Babylon (v.4) who wanted to grasp universal and eternal domination. Tertullian, Milton and others have linked this passage to the career of Satan on the basis of Luke 10:18, but the text does not specifically make this connection.

CHAPTER 52



Do Tests Of Evil Come From God?

Luke 11:2-4

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:9-13

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

In both the above accounts of The Lord's Prayer we are shown clearly the doctrine of where evil and temptation come from. Notice in both Luke and Matthew the Master is teaching us to ask the Father not to lead us into temptation. If Satan is the party who tempts us then should we not ask the Father to keep Satan from leading us into temptation? The request for God not to lead us into temptation is made because Yeshua knows that Yahweh tests His children. A more clear way to say lead us not into temptation is "lead us not into testing." Yeshua knew testing was done in