



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 22, 2016

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The Devil Entered American Homes Last Month

If late radio legend Paul Harvey were around to update his famous commentary “If I were the Devil,” he might include on his demonic to-do list, “portray Satan as a nice fellow.” Because this is precisely what Fox network is doing in its new series *Lucifer*, which premiered January 25.

Characterized by one reviewer as “redemption for the Devil,” the show casts Satan (Tom Ellis) as the main character, “Lucifer Morningstar,” who has become bored being king of the netherworld and decides to retire to Los Angeles. As owner of upscale nightclub “Lux,” he’s enjoying a libertine lifestyle when, one evening, a beautiful pop star of whom he is fond is murdered outside Lux. Inspired, Lucifer ends up allying himself with comely Detective Chloe Dancer (Lauren German) and using his supernatural powers to help authorities fight crime.



Billed by Fox as “Hot as Hell,” the Brit-accented Morningstar certainly reflects the biblical description of Lucifer, “perfect in beauty.” He’s also likable, charming, witty, and fun-loving as he lives his life of wealth and indulgence. And Lucifer is a champion of both today’s popular (i.e., loose) sexual mores and our new faux morality: political correctness. He emphasizes that while he hates hip-hop, he’s not racist and loves the black music genre the blues; makes a statement against domestic abuse; and terrifies a school bully, telling her there’s a special place in Hell for her kind.

But if the threat of damnation in Hades is supposed to be scary, *Lucifer’s* implicit portrayal of Heaven is no more appealing. In an entry on the D.C. Comics character Lucifer (on which the show is based), Wikipedia states, “The violent, aggressive, totalitarian, vengeful, and dictatorial aspects of Heaven’s rule are represented mostly by the Archangel Amenadiel, who has a particular hatred of Lucifer and leads attacks of various kinds against him.” Ah, the poor Devil only wants to be left alone, but the Lord will give him no peace! (Message: Christianity is all wrong about that Prince of Peace stuff.)

One should wonder what hope this presentation gives for the afterlife. Hell is so unattractive that even the Devil has emigrated, and Heaven is supposed to be some kind of eternal North Korea. If only we could all be immortal in the flesh and forever young like Lucifer and spend eternity indulging wine, women, and song at Lux — and help solve crimes so we don’t feel like complete wastrels. Of course, there’s only “pleasure in sin for a season” and even the most devoted hedonist would eventually descend into melancholia and meaninglessness, even if it takes 10,000 years. And suicide won’t be a way out (you’re immortal, remember?).



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But *Lucifer* isn't aiming to propound sound theology or philosophy; a boob-tube demagoguery inculcating erotic attachment to vice is its stock-in-trade. It signals this in its opening scene. After being stopped for speeding, Lucifer makes clear that the policeman's actions couldn't possibly be driven by duty but only a desire to exercise power and punish, and then supernaturally seduces him into taking a bribe, saying, "It feels good to get away with something, doesn't it?"

Yet most telling is the interaction between Lucifer and Amenadiel (D.B. Woodside), who, sporting dark wings and a dour demeanor, is portrayed as more devilish than the Devil himself. In their second meeting, after Amenadiel complains that Lucifer is "showing restraint, mercy," the latter responds, "You scared I'm turning my back on the dark side, bro?" Amenadiel then emphasizes that because "balance" must be maintained, Lucifer should go back to Hell — and that he'd "love a war" and has hatred for "Luci" that "grows stronger with every visit."

And that's Fox's topsy-turvy theology: The Devil wants to cease doing evil; God insists he resume. The Devil is happy to live in peace; God's emissary wants war. The Devil is willing to live and let live; the Lord's angel is consumed by hatred.

Then there's the first meeting between the two, in which Lucifer says, "Remind Dad that I quit Hell because I was sick and tired of playing a part in his play." Amenadiel then proceeds to tell Morningstar that he's "a mockery of everything divine," at which point Lucifer thanks him and asks rhetorically, "Do you think I'm the Devil because I'm inherently evil, just because dear old Dad decided I was?" Ah, it's all arbitrary. Why, God could be the Devil! Don't you see?

Thus, *Lucifer* doesn't entertain Dostoevsky's idea that if "God does not exist, everything is permitted," or French poet Charles Baudelaire's warning, "The devil's finest trick is to persuade you that he does not exist." Rather, *Lucifer* peddles Lucifer's purest line, that satanic message of the world's first rebellion: God exists. Even the Devil exists. But what does it matter? God is just a hypocritical killjoy with arbitrary rules, exercising power and handing down punishment just 'cause He can. And if Lucifer can ignore the restrictions placed on him and leave Hell, leaving church, doctrine, and morality ought to be nothing at all.



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