

1. Satan in Hebrew, and 2. Tannin preceded with the Shin character

The Hebrew spellings for both words, featuring the letter **Shin (ש)**, are detailed below.

1. Satan (שָׂטָן)

The Hebrew word for **Satan** (meaning "adversary", "accuser", or "opponent") is spelled with three letters:

- ש (Shin/Sin)
- ט (Tet)
- ן (Nun - final form)

Note on pronunciation: In the word *Satan*, the dot sits on the upper-left side of the first character (ש), technically making it a **Sin** character, which carries an "S" sound rather than a "Sh" sound.

2. Tannin preceded by Shin (שְׁתַּנִּין)

The biblical Hebrew word **Tannin** (meaning "sea monster", "serpent", or "dragon") is originally spelled תַּנִּין (Tav-Nun-Yod-Nun).

When you precede the word Tannin with the letter **Shin (ש)**, it acts as a prefix (called *Shin-Daled* or *She-*) meaning "that", "which", or "who". Spelled together from right to left, it forms:

- שְׁתַּנִּין (Transliterated: *She-tannin*)
- **Meaning:** "That [which is a] sea monster" or "Who [is a] dragon."

Here, the dot sits on the upper-right side of the letter (ש), keeping its classic "Sh" sound.

John's use of Satan in book of Revelation, aware of Hebrew, but writing in Greek

John of Patmos composed the book of Revelation in Greek, but his linguistic, theological, and conceptual framework was deeply rooted in the **Hebrew Bible** and Hebrew vocabulary. When John introduces the figure of ultimate evil, he intentionally merges his Hebrew background with his Greek-speaking audience's language to create an undeniable, comprehensive portrait of the enemy.

John's deliberate linguistic strategy comes alive in his treatment of Satan, particularly in **Revelation 12:9** and **Revelation 20:2**:

text

"And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world..."

1. The Linguistic Equation: *Diabolos* vs *Satanas*

John uses a classic literary device of dual naming to bridge the Greek and Hebrew worlds. He uses two distinct terms:

- **The Greek Translation:** He writes *ho diabolos* (ὁ διάβολος), which means "the slanderer" or "the false accuser".
- **The Hebrew Transliteration:** Right next to it, he drops a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word *Satan* (שָׂטָן), writing it out phonetically in Greek as *ho satanas* (ὁ σατανᾶς).

By pairing them, John signals to his readers that the "Slanderer" (*diabolos*) of Greek culture is the exact same legal "Adversary/Accuser" (*satan*) from the Hebrew scriptures. He reinforces this legal aspect in the very next verse (**Rev 12:10**), calling him "*the accuser of our brothers... who accuses them day and night.*"

2. The *Tannin* (Dragon) connection

John's Hebrew mindset is clearest when he calls Satan "**the great dragon**" (*ho drakon megas*).

While the Greek word *drakon* meant a large serpent, John is structurally evoking the Hebrew concept of the **Tannin** (תַּנִּינִי) or **Leviathan**. In the Hebrew Bible (specifically [Isaiah 27:1](#)), God vows to punish "*Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent*" and slay "*the dragon [tannin] that is in the sea.*"

When writing in Greek, John takes these separate threads from Hebrew tradition—the cosmic sea monster (*tannin*), the original deceiver (*nachash* / serpent), and the divine prosecutor (*satan*)—and binds them tightly into a single entity.

3. "Thinking in Hebrew, writing in Greek"

Scholars frequently point out that Revelation contains "Semiticisms"—phrases where the grammar is technically Greek, but the underlying sentence structure and idioms match Hebrew. John chooses to preserve the Hebrew flavour of *Satan* rather than exclusively translating it because, by the first century, *Satan* had evolved from a simple noun meaning "opponent" into a weighty, specific proper name for the ultimate cosmic adversary.

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