

The King of Tyre

(23) Ezekiel 28:1–26

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Besides Judah, Israel and Babylon, God has had more to say about Tyre than any of the other nations around Israel. Why do you think that is?

- As we discussed last time, Tyre was an economic powerhouse in the world at that time. While Babylon had military prowess, Tyre had economic clout.
- Also as we discussed last time, there is a connection between Tyre and Mystery Babylon which also will be an economic powerhouse.
- Thus, Tyre foreshadows the global economic wherewithal of the future economy of the Antichrist.
- So, it should not be surprising that the spirit behind Tyre is Satan as we will discover in today's passage.

Ezekiel 28:1-10 – Against the King of Tyre

Summary: God describes what He has against the prince of Tyre... his pride. His economic power had gone to his head making him think of himself as a god. With his great wealth, he is able to do anything his heart desires. He has no thought for the Creator-God who is raising up the Babylonian army to humble him. And the prince of Tyre will die the death of the uncircumcised which probably referred to a Gentile unbeliever who had no regard for God's Law, or more significantly God Himself, the Lawgiver. Thus, he would be going to torments awaiting the Great White Throne Judgment where all would end up in the lake of fire.

Do you think God condemned the prince of Tyre for being wealthy?

No, it was his inordinate pride that provoked God's ire. God did not condemn the prince of Tyre for the possession of riches, but for how those riches corrupted him.

What is the problem with being wealthy?

Matthew 19:23-24 – *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

It is all too easy for rich people to convince themselves that they don't need a personal relationship with the Savior... they can rationalize that the Savior must be pleased with them because they are wealthy (prosperity gospel). And they can also rationalize that their wealth can be their savior.

So, how can a wealthy person be saved?

Matthew 19:25-26 – *When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

It is God who does the saving and He will save whoever He will, even wealthy people.

The following passage is important because it gives insight into the origin of Satan. Another important passage on the origin of Satan is in Isaiah 14 where Satan is referred to as Lucifer which means "light bearer, luminous, or star of the morning."

What does the name Lucifer reveal about his creation?

This name reflects how Lucifer was created; his other names are more descriptive of him after his fall. Satan is more of a title of his role and means "adversary." The term Devil is from the Greek word diabolos and means "accuser, slanderer, or one who maligns."

Ezekiel 28:11-19 – Lamentation for the King of Tyre

¹¹ *Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying,* ¹² *"Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God:*

'You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

¹³ *You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering:*

The sardius, topaz, and diamond,

Beryl, onyx, and jasper,

Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.

The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes

Was prepared for you on the day you were created.

¹⁴ "You were the anointed cherub who covers;
I established you;
You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

¹⁵ You were perfect in your ways from the day you were
created,
Till iniquity was found in you.

¹⁶ "By the abundance of your trading
You became filled with violence within,
And you sinned;
Therefore I cast you as a profane thing
Out of the mountain of God;
And I destroyed you, O covering cherub,
From the midst of the fiery stones.

¹⁷ "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor;
I cast you to the ground,
I laid you before kings,
That they might gaze at you.

¹⁸ "You defiled your sanctuaries
By the multitude of your iniquities,
By the iniquity of your trading;
Therefore I brought fire from your midst;
It devoured you,
And I turned you to ashes upon the earth
In the sight of all who saw you.

¹⁹ All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at
you;
You have become a horror,
And shall be no more forever. " ' ' "

Did you identify some reasons this passage can only be referring to Lucifer?

Lucifer was created perfect, he was referred to as the anointed cherub and given great authority serving in the presence of God. He was also in the garden of Eden. The Bible only tells us about one angel in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. And Satan was already in his fallen state when he tempted Eve to disobey God. Notice that Satan was created perfect in wisdom, beauty and his ways to serve in the presence of God on the mountain of God.

Why did God start referring to the king of Tyre here in this passage whereas He was speaking of the prince of Tyre previously?

The one controlling the prince was the king... there spiritual power behind the human prince was a spiritual being, Satan, a fallen angel.

What might be the significance of the 9 precious stones that adorned Lucifer?

- This is reminiscent of the 12 precious stones that adorned the high priest who presided over the priests who served in the Tabernacle and Temple.
- It is interesting to note that the number 9 is often associated with the judgment of God in Scripture.
- The words translated timbrels and pipes probably refer to the sockets and settings for the precious stones... or some say musical instruments (some preachers like equating worship leaders with Satan).

What do we know about the cherubim?

The cherubim are a special class of high-ranking angel that had four faces, wings and served in the presence of God. Most angels are not described as having wings as popular culture depicts them, but the cherubim certainly did.

- Andy Woods pointed out that angels in the spiritual realm were generally described as cherubim where as angels on earth were generally seen as men. He said it could well be that all angels were cherubim with the ones around God's throne having privileged duty.

Verse 14 says this particular cherub was anointed by God to "cover." What might that mean?

It brings to mind the cherubim depicted on the Ark of the Covenant with wings covering the lid. The lid of the Ark is called the mercy seat and it represents the throne of God in heaven. The point is that Lucifer was given a position of great power represented by him being close to God.

Verse 14 says Lucifer "walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones." What does this bring to mind?

God gave Moses a vision of Himself which included this in Exodus 24:10, "there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity." The fiery stones were probably the sapphire stone pavement near God's throne in heaven that reflected God's glory.

Verse 15 – What important doctrinal truth is revealed here about Lucifer?

That he was a created being; so hardly on par with the Creator-God as some try to make him.

When was Lucifer created?

Job 38:4, 7 – *"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? ...when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"*

The term *"sons of God"* refers to angels because they were all created directly by God. So this verse says that the angels were all created prior to the creation of the earth.

This means we know that both the earth and the angels were created prior to the six days of creation.

- A careful reading of Genesis 1 indicates that the earth was actually created prior to the six days of creation. The first thing God created on the first day of creation was light per Genesis 1:3. The previous verse, Genesis 1:2 says the earth was already in existence prior to the day light was created. Granted, the earth was formless and void but it had to have been created sometime prior to the six days of creation.

What might it mean that Lucifer was perfect in his ways?

Lucifer was certainly a formidable creature with perfect beauty and wisdom. And he was also perfect in his ways. The only indication of what this could be referring to is the function of the office God ordained him to and the "trading" he conducted. Verse 16 says that Lucifer engaged in an abundance of trading.

Why might the fact that the angels engaged in trading shed light on why Lucifer was referred to the King of Tyre?

The city of Tyre was an ancient Phoenician nation-state in what is now known as Lebanon. The Phoenicians were known for becoming wealthy from trade. And their end would be the dust bin of history after multiple nations conquered them multiple times.

Why don't we normally think of angels engaged in trade?

The idea of commerce is generally considered such a worldly activity. The stock market before electronic trading comes to mind where buyers and sellers gathered together yelling bids and counter-bids at each other. Angelic trading was surely much more civilized.

How might the angels have been engaged in trade?

In the Age before Adam, God may have given the angels a mission to accomplish and Lucifer would have had a significant role in administering that mission. We don't know what that mission was but can surmise that its purpose was to determine which angels would remain in their created condition loyal to God and which ones would rebel against him. Just as this Age is determines which

humans would embrace the provision God made for our salvation and who will reject it.

What biblical support is there for the idea that the angels were given a mission by God prior to the Age of mankind?

God is the *same yesterday, today, and forever* so He works in patterns...

- Genesis 1:28 describes the mission God gave mankind before our original sin saying, *"fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*
- As God commissioned mankind to be stewards of the earth, it is possible that God likewise made the angels stewards of the earth before us. The trading that the angels engaged in was probably related to their stewardship of the pre-Adamic earth.

What do we know about the division between the holy and the fallen angels?

Lucifer was the highest ranking of the angels who rebelled against God. Per Revelation 12:4, a third of the angels joined Satan in rebellion against their Creator.

Verse 16 – What was the consequence for Lucifer's rebellion?

Lucifer lost his position serving close to God when iniquity was found in him being cast out of the mountain of God per Ezekiel 28:16.

- But Satan continued to have access to God in heaven as we see in Job.
- And even today Satan gets to have an audience with God in his role as the accuser of the brethren per Revelation 12:10.
- But the day will come when Satan and his fallen angel followers will be cast out of the spiritual realm and on to the earth (Revelation 12:8-9).

Did the abundance of Satan's trading occur before or after he sinned?

- Probably both... it sure looks like his abundance of trading came before he became violent and sinned. As Satan engaged in an abundance of trading, he learned he could win more worldly advantage if he cheated.
- Certainly, the abundance of his trading could have continued after he became corrupted and was an influence on the prince of Tyre... The dishonest business practices of the leaders of Tyre were a reflection of the dishonest, deceptive dealings of the spiritual power behind them.

Why should we expect Satan to inspire cheating in commercial enterprises?

John 8:44 – *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*

Satan is the father of lies and comes only to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

What kind of violence do you think Satan might have engaged in which caused him to sin?

You became filled with violence: Satan's desire to exalt himself above his associates (Isaiah 14:13-14) led to some kind of violence. This has first reference to some kind of battle in heaven (as in Revelation 12:7), but also violence against the humanity made in the image of God.

- Satan was the leader of the demonic locusts released from the Abyss during the Tribulation at the Fifth Trumpet Judgment...
Revelation 9:11 – *they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon [both names mean Destroyer]*

Why do you think Satan hates humans so much?

His **violence** against humanity is perhaps explained by the idea that Satan rejected God's plan to create an order of beings made in His image (Genesis 1:26), who would be beneath the angels in dignity (also 2 Pet 2:11):

Hebrews 2:6-7 – *What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him?*

You have made him a little lower than the angels

Yet God used angels to serve humans in the present...

Hebrews 1:14 – *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

And one day humans would be lifted in honor and status above the angels...

1 Corinthians 6:3 – *Do you not know that we shall judge angels?*

Satan wanted to be the highest among all creatures, equal to God in glory and honor, and the plan to create man would eventually put men above angels.

Who joined Satan in his schemes to thwart the will and plan of God?

Satan was apparently able to persuade one-third of the angelic beings to join him in his rebellion...

Revelation 12:3-4, 9 – *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. ...So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who*

deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

How does Satan's hatred for people in the image of God explain what he is doing today?

- He as the ruler of this world (John 12:31) is inspiring the human ruling elite to subjugate humanity and enslave us while he can.
- He would also conjure up schemes to destroy as many humans as God will let him through wars, famine, and pestilence.
- It is interesting to note that historically way more people die from abuse by their government than from war... see the Wikipedia article on Democide

When was Satan cast as a profane thing out of the mountain of God?

God fired Satan from his role as a covering cherub probably some time before he tempted Eve in the garden... he had already committed himself to sin and opposing God before he recruited Eve.

- This is what Jesus spoke of in Luke 10:18 when He says He saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

This is the only fall of Satan that has already happened... what other falls will Satan have?

There are three more falls of Satan, all yet future...

- Satan will fall from having access to heaven (Job 1:12, 1 Kings 22:21, Zechariah 3:1) to restriction on the earth (Revelation 12:9).
- Satan will fall from his place on the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3).
- Finally, Satan will fall from the bottomless pit to the lake of fire, which we commonly know as *hell* (Revelation 20:10).

v17 – Why did Satan become a fallen angel?

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty: Satan's sin was prompted by **pride**. With a swelled heart, drunk on his own sense of **beauty** and **splendor**, he made himself an opponent of God, because *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5).

When will Satan be cast to the ground, and laid before kings?

When Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation. Satan's fall would be public and dramatic. As all the world would note Tyre's fall, so all the world would note the fall of the king of Tyre, Satan himself.

What were the sanctuaries Satan defiled?

You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading:

This might be a reference to the responsibilities Satan had when he engaged in his abundant trading that led to his violence and sin.

- Also, “Tyre boasted numerous sanctuaries, and the temples of Tyre were the reason it was called the Holy Island by the ancients.

v19 – How is it Satan will become a horror?

Isaiah 14:16-17 – *Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities*

Much like the reaction of the nations described here, Ezekiel records that the nations will be horrified at the judgment that will come upon Satan. They will be horrified because it will mean to them that they also will be judged, and they will be horrified considering how greatly Satan had deceived them, leading to their own damnation.

Ezekiel 28:20-24 – Proclamation Against Sidon

Summary: The city of **Sidon** was another Phoenician harbor city near Tyre. And God would judge them along with Tyre using pestilence and violence in her streets via the sword, a clear reference to Babylon which is what happened.

Ezekiel 28:25-26 – Israel’s Future Blessing

²⁵ *‘Thus says the Lord God: “When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob. ²⁶ And they will dwell safely there, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them. Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God.” ’ ’ ’*

When will God gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered?

It has already begun in the 20th Century... Ezekiel looked forward to an aspect of the new covenant, one feature of which is the gathering of Israel once again as a people and into the land (Deuteronomy 30:3; Jeremiah 23:3, 32:37; Ezekiel 11:17, 36:24).

- In God’s design the Babylonian exile would not last forever. After 70 years of forced captivity, the Jewish people were allowed to go back to the promised land.

But only about 50,000 of them did in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and when they did they did not return to a safe and secure land. This means that the promises of gathering back to the land were only partially fulfilled in the return from Babylonian exile. As part of the new covenant promises, there was a greater and perfect fulfillment to come, which can rightly be said to have a significant milestone in 1948.

What does this tell us about God’s plan for Israel?

God is not done with Israel... J Vernon McGee said: “One reason that so many theologians are believed when they say that God is through with the nation Israel is because God’s people are not acquainted with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the minor prophets. The theme song of these prophets is that God is *not* through with Israel as a nation.”

When will Israel dwell securely in the land God gave them?

After God *executes judgments on all those around them who despise them*: During the Millennial Kingdom. Prior to that time, such security will only partially be fulfilled.

What applications do you see from what we discussed in this passage?

- It is hard for a wealthy person to be saved because it is all too easy for them to rationalize that they don’t need God... but all things are possible with God.
- Pride was behind the fall of Satan and it also keeps people from knowing the Lord.
- Satan tempts people to sin as part of his strategy to thwart God’s plan... be aware of his schemes and don’t fall prey to them.
- God is not done with Israel and He has already begun setting the stage for when He will use them again!
- Satan is actively tempting our government authorities to enslave us and even to destroy us.
- Our hope is in Jesus... He will deliver us from the worst the evil of men and demons can do to us.