

The Origin of Satan

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A. Ezekiel 28

1. Single Address

The interpretation of Ezekiel 28 is an important element for a proper understanding of Satan. Many have argued that Satan is not addressed at all in this passage, but it is directed to the king of Tyre only. The primary evidence used to support this position is the phrase “Yet you are a man and not God,” which God speaks of the “leader of Tyre” in verse 2. The argument is that this is a man who is being addressed here and therefore in the entire chapter.

A secondary argument has to do with the belief that prophecy is for revealing things future, not things past. In this case, if the passage were to speak of Satan’s fall then it would be speaking of the past.

2. Double Address

The view that two persons are being addressed is supported by noting that the “leader of Tyre” (v. 2) is not the same person as the “king of Tyre” (v. 11). The human king of Tyre is addressed in verses 2-10, and the spiritual “king of Tyre” is addressed in verses 11-19. So the passage is both, historically conditioned and prophetic at the same time.

In verse 2 the “leader of Tyre” is called a man, but in verse 14 the “king of Tyre” of verse 12 is called “the anointed cherub who covers.” The “king of Tyre” is said to have been at the Garden of Eden (v. 13) and the mountain of God (v. 14), both of which would have been impossible for a human.

To argue that prophecy is limited to revelation that is future in nature is not a strong argument. Isaiah 14 and Revelation 12 are prophetic passages that talk about the past. What prophetic writing requires is truth of what is being revealed.

B. Satan in His Original State

1. He was perfect

Satan had outward and inward perfection (Ezekiel 28:12). He was the most beautiful of the angels God created. According to Paul “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). If angels were to appear to us today, we would be wise to recognize this fact. Since no more revelation is needed during the church age God does not need to send His angels to us with messages. Any such apparitions must therefore be assumed as demonic.

Satan was not just perfect in his appearance but also in his knowledge. Though he was full of wisdom he still rebelled. Satan was created holy, he was blameless (v. 15) until unrighteousness was found in him (v. 16).

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2. His privileges

In Ezekiel 28 we see a number of privileges granted to Satan. He was allowed in Eden, the garden of God (v. 13). Satan “had the seal of perfection” (v. 12), a seal indicates ownership, in a similar way in which we receive a seal from the Holy Spirit when we become His (2 Timothy 2:19), that’s how perfect Satan was.

Satan was an “anointed cherub” (v. 14). No other angel or cherub is given such a rank or title. He was a “cherub who covers” (v. 14), or a “covering cherub” (v. 16), that is, one who guards or is a guardian. So Satan was not only a member of the highest order of angels, the cherubim, he was likely anointed by God to be their highest ranking member, and perhaps the leader of all the angels.

We are told that Satan had access to “the mountain of God” (vv. 14, 16), which is not a reference to a physical mountain, like Mount Sinai, but a figurative reference to God’s abode. In other words, Satan was granted the privilege to be in God’s presence, which is where cherubim are.

The obscure phrase, “You walked in the midst of the stones of fire” (v. 14), probably has to do with Satan having ready and immediate access to God.