

# The King of Tyre and Satan, The Power Behind The Throne

In our study we are going to learn some amazing truths that are revealed in the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel. But our study is primarily from Ezekiel 28:1-19. It is about judgment upon the prince of Tyre and the power behind his throne. The passage is divided into two sections. Verses 1-10 is the “Destruction of the Prince of Tyre.” Then verses 11-17 is “A Lamentation Over the King of Tyre.”

Before we read the first verse of Ezekiel 28, we need to remember that God had prophesied in Ezekiel 26 that He would destroy Tyre. The prophecy had two parts. First, it predicted that the Babylonian army would defeat the portion of the city of Tyre that was on land. This occurred about 585 B.C. The second part of the prophecy stated that the army of Alexander the Great would scrape the land portion of Tyre bare, like a rock, and destroy the island portion of the city of Tyre. That occurred in 332 B.C.

In Ezekiel 27, the prophet Ezekiel sang Yahweh’s lamentation about the destruction of Tyre. The lamentation symbolically described Tyre as a ship on the sea. God was going to sink it. The lamentation also emphasized the great impact that Tyre’s destruction would have on her trading partners around the Mediterranean

Sea. We discovered that Yahweh planned to destroy Tyre

because the nation was very proud. Because of their pride, they laughed when Israel was attacked by the Babylonian army. So, that is the context of our study.

**DESTRUCTION OF THE PRINCE OF TYRE.** Now we are ready for verses 1-2 of Ezekiel 28. They say,

The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,

“Son of man, say to the leader of Tyre, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,

Because your heart is lifted up

And you have said, ‘I am a god,

I sit in the seat of gods

In the heart of the seas’;

Yet you are a man and not God,

Although you make your heart like the heart of God —”

Ezekiel 28:1-2 (NASB)

The New American Standard Bible (NASB) says that

Yahweh told the prophet Ezekiel to speak to the leader of Tyre. The Hebrew word that is translated as “leader” is *nagid*. It can be translated as leader, ruler, or prince. Since this prophecy is directed to the top man of Tyre, a better translation of *nagid* would be

“prince” or “king.” It will become clear in verses 12-17 why the



Adam, Eve, and Satan In the Garden

king is called “leader” or prince and not king. So, the prophet is speaking to the prince. History tells us that his name was Ethbaal III (591–573 BC).

Then Yahweh said in verse 2 that the prince’s heart was lifted up. That is, he was a very proud man. He was so proud that he thought he was a god. He thought, “I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods in the heart of the seas.” In the ancient Near East, the people believed the king of a nation was a god. We know that some of the Roman emperors thought they were gods and had temples of worship built for their people to use to worship them. So, the prince thought he was a god. Apparently, he thought he was a sea god for he said, “I sit in the seat of gods in the heart of the seas.”

Yahweh replied, “Yet you are a man and not god.” You are just a man “although you make your heart like the heart of God.” Since the word heart was a common term for mind, the prince thought he had the intellect of a god. He thought it was his intellect that made him and his nation wealthy. This is obvious in the next three verses,

**Behold, you are wiser than Daniel;  
There is no secret that is a match for you.  
By your wisdom and understanding  
You have acquired riches for yourself  
And have acquired gold and silver for your treasuries.  
By your great wisdom, by your trade  
You have increased your riches  
And your heart is lifted up because of your riches —”  
Ezekiel 28:3-5 (NASB)**

Verse 3 sounds like God is admitting that Ethbaal was wiser than Daniel, and knew everything, every secret. But both statements imply a negative response. They are sarcastic statements. The message is that Ethbaal thought that he was wiser than Daniel and knew everything, but he was wrong. Dr. J. Vernon McGee makes the comment that he believes the “wise men in that day would make the so-called intellectual crowd [today] look like beginners in kindergarten.”<sup>1</sup>

Verses 4-5 say he made himself so extremely wealthy that he

became proud. I am sorry to say that is true for many unbelievers and even some believers. When God blesses us with wealth and a great reputation, many become proud. We forget 1 Samuel 2:7 which says,

**The LORD makes poor and rich;  
He brings low, He also exalts.  
1 Samuel 2:7 (NASB)**

We fail to recognize that the wealth we have was given to us by God. We fail to recognize that we are not owners of our wealth. God gives us wealth to be used for His glory. That includes meeting our daily needs, sharing with those in need, and advancing the gospel. There are too many warnings in Scripture against us just using wealth to live a life of careless ease (Ezekiel 16:49). This give us our first principle. To avoid pride, remember that your wealth is a gift from God. Wealth should be a tool to be used for His glory—to meet our needs and to advance His kingdom (Luke 16:8).

In verses 6-8, Yahweh said,

**“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,  
‘Because you have made your heart  
Like the heart of God,  
Therefore, behold, I will bring strangers upon you,  
The most ruthless of the nations.  
And they will draw their swords  
Against the beauty of your wisdom  
And defile your splendor.  
They will bring you down to the pit,  
And you will die the death of those who are slain  
In the heart of the seas.  
Ezekiel 28:6-8 (NASB)**

The strangers that Yahweh refers to in verse 7 are the Babylonian army. The army would destroy everything that Ethbaal’s wisdom had created. The pit in verse 8 refers to the grave. That is, he would die like those who die in the sea. That is, the god of the seas would die in the sea over which he thought was a god.

Then Yahweh announced the prince was not a god. He was

<sup>1</sup> J. Vernon McGee. Book of Ezekiel. Thru the Bible. Thomas Nelson Publishers. 1982. p. 491.

only a man.

“Will you still say, “I am a god,”  
In the presence of your slayer,  
Though you are a man and not God,  
In the hands of those who wound you?  
You will die the death of the uncircumcised  
By the hand of strangers,  
For I have spoken!’ declares the Lord GOD!”  
Ezekiel 28:9 (NASB)

Since the Phoenicians practiced circumcision, to be uncircumcised meant the individual was a barbarian. So, Yahweh announced that he would die like a barbarian.

Therefore, the message of verses 2-10 is that because the prince was so very proud, he believed he was a god, As a result, he would die a horrible, humiliating death.

**A LAMENTATION OVER THE KING OF TYRE.** Then verses 11-19 are about a lamentation over the king of Tyre. Verses 11-12 say,

“Again the word of the LORD came to me saying,  
“Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,  
“You had the seal of perfection,  
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.”  
Ezekiel 28:11-12 (NASB)

Here we discover in verse 12 that Yahweh begins a lamentation over the king of Tyre. This is not the prince of Tyre because the Hebrew text says “king.” So, this is a different person. The person in view is not Ethbaal.

Who is the person? We are going to discover the answer in the next five verses. We will be given twelve characteristics about this individual. Here is verse 13,

“You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
Every precious stone was your covering:  
The ruby, the topaz and the diamond;  
The beryl, the onyx and the jasper;  
The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald;

And the gold, the workmanship of your settings  
and sockets,  
Was in you.  
On the day that you were created  
They were prepared.”  
Ezekiel 28:13 (NASB)

Following the statement of the king’s perfection, the first clue about the identity of this individual is that he was in the garden of Eden. Now we know from Genesis 3 that the only individuals in the Garden of Eden were Adam, Eve, and Satan, who was disguised as a serpent. Since Adam and Eve were mortal and had died long before this lamentation, this individual must be Satan. The first clue was that he was in the garden of Eden.

The second clue about this individual’s identity is that he was beautiful. He was covered with precious gems. We do not know if the gems were real or symbolic. If they were real, this cannot describe a human. The third clue about his identity is that the Hebrew word translated as “created” is *bara*. The word refers to an activity that only God can perform. So, he was not born. He was not human. He was created by God.

Verse 14 gives us more clues about this individual.

You were the anointed cherub who covers,  
And I placed you there.  
You were on the holy mountain of God;  
You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.  
Ezekiel 28:14 (NASB)

This verse is extremely important in identifying the individual. It gives us two clues. The fourth clue is that he was the anointed or guardian cherub. He was and is a cherubim who used to cover Yahweh. That is, his wings covered Yahweh just as the two cherubim of the ark of the covenant spread their wings to cover God. The fifth clue is that this cherub was on the holy mountain of God. That is, he was in the presence of God in heaven. Six, we are told the cherub walked in the “midst of the stones of fire.” The identity of the stones of fire are not explained in Scripture. But, if we combine all the information from verses 12-14 together, it becomes clear the indi-

vidual is Satan.

Verse 15 adds some bad news about Satan. We are told,

You were blameless in your ways  
From the day you were created  
Until unrighteousness was found in you.  
Ezekiel 28:15 (NASB)

The seventh and eighth characteristics about Satan are given now. He was blameless when he was created until he sinned. The word blameless is translated from a Hebrew word that literally means completeness. He did not have any defect. It does not mean he was holy. It means he was without defect. But eventually he chose to be unrighteous. He sinned. That agrees with the next verse.

Verse 16 gives us more bad news about this individual,

“By the abundance of your trade  
You were internally filled with violence,  
And you sinned;  
Therefore I have cast you as profane  
From the mountain of God.  
And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub,  
From the midst of the stones of fire.”  
Ezekiel 28:16 (NASB)

The meaning of the two statements “By the abundance of your trade” and “You were internally filled with violence” are not clear. But it appears from the Hebrew that it refers to a digression that describes what Satan had accomplished through the prince, King Ethbaal. It appears to reveal that Satan



was continuing to be unrighteous. That is, Satan had sinned in the process of making King Ethbaal wealthy. His behavior demonstrated that he was in fact evil. This is the ninth fact about Satan. The tenth fact about Satan, is that Yahweh cast him out of heaven. He deserved it. Jesus said that He watched Satan being cast down in Luke 10:18,

And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” Luke 10:18 (NASB)

Isaiah 14:12-15 also describes this as follows,

“How you have fallen from heaven,  
O star of the morning, son of the dawn!  
You have been cut down to the earth,  
You who have weakened the nations!  
But you said in your heart,  
‘I will ascend to heaven;  
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,  
And I will sit on the mount of assembly  
In the recesses of the north.  
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High.’  
Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,  
To the recesses of the pit.  
Isaiah 14:12-15 (NASB)

This passage echoes the same facts given to us in Ezekiel 28:12-17. But Isaiah 14:14 reveals some new information when it says that Satan wanted to be like God. That is the eleventh fact about Satan. Ezekiel 28:17 gives us the inward motivation

for his desire, which is the twelfth fact about Satan.

**“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;  
You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.  
I cast you to the ground;  
I put you before kings,  
That they may see you.”  
Ezekiel 28:17 (NASB)**

He thought he was beautiful. Did he think he was better than God? We do not know. But we do know that God cast him down out of heaven. 1 Peter 5:8 says that today the devil “prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” He is dangerous.

He has been making nations wealthy and gaining power over the people of the world through them. Daniel 10:10-20 reveals he and his demons seek to control the nations of the world. So King Ethbaal was a puppet king. Satan was the real power or king on the throne. The same is often true today. There are demonic forces that seek to control the nations of the world. They are manipulating national leaders to accomplish their goal of total world domination. Eventually, they will succeed through the antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:4-12).

So, Satan controlled the nation of Tyre. When Tyre rejoiced that Jerusalem was being destroyed, the city revealed its pride, which revealed the pride of King Ethbaal, which reflected the pride of Satan, the power behind his throne. Satan’s work was going to be destroyed by the Babylonian kingdom.

Verses 18-19 are the final verses in this section,

**“By the multitude of your iniquities,  
In the unrighteousness of your trade  
You profaned your sanctuaries.  
Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you;  
It has consumed you,  
And I have turned you to ashes on the earth  
In the eyes of all who see you.  
All who know you among the peoples  
Are appalled at you;  
You have become terrified  
And you will cease to be forever.”**

**Ezekiel 28:18-19 (NASB)**

These verses focus on King Ethbaal. He had built magnificent temples and buildings in the city of Tyre according to the ancient historians. The magnificent temples would have featured the worship of so-called gods or demons. Again, this revealed Satan working through the puppet king. The description applies to both the puppet and the real power behind the throne.

This gives us the second principle. Satan is the real power behind the puppet leaders of the nations of the world. The only exception would be Christian leaders. Satan wants to be like God and to have total control of the world.

But believers can rejoice! When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He defeated sin, death, and Satan. Because Jesus sacrificed Himself for us, we are no longer slaves to sin because we believe in Jesus. Since the Holy Spirit dwells within every Christian, Satan cannot enter us or possess us as he did with Judas, because the Holy Spirit lives within us (1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 John 4:4). Because we believe in Christ, we have escaped the second death, the lake of fire. Romans 16:20 says,

**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.  
Romans 16:20 (NASB)**

Praise the Lord.