

NOTES ON EZEKIEL 28:1-19

* * * PROPHECIES AGAINST SATAN AND THE ANTICHRIST * * *

S.L.H.
Soli Deo Gloria!

"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." **Ezekiel 28:15**

CHAPTER 28

PROPHECY AGAINST THE PRINCE OF TYRE¹ (**ANTICHRIST**)

As it is Satan who is addressed through the personage of the "king of Tyre" in Ezekiel 28:11-19, so it is the Antichrist who is addressed through the personage of the "prince of Tyre" (v2) in Ezekiel 28:1-10. A prince is the son of the king, and in the person of the Antichrist Satan will have a literal son (Cp., Gen3:15) on earth who acts on his behalf during the 7-year Tribulation. The relationship of the Dragon (Satan) who gives power to the beast (Antichrist; Rev13:4), and the false prophet who directs worship toward the beast (Rev13:12), is Satan's attempt to mimic (cf. Isa14:14) the triune Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Typological Note: It is not strange that God should address Satan through the personage of the "king of Tyre", or the Antichrist through the personage of the "prince of Tyre", once it is recognized that Tyre is used as a prophetic type of end times Babylon (i.e., the center of a pagan, world-wide commercial enterprise; Cp., Ezek27:33-36; Rev18:3,11,15,21); thus, the king of Tyre is a type of Satan, and the prince of Tyre is a type of the Antichrist.

- [1] That which follows is "the word of the LORD".
- [2] The "prince of Tyre" is the son of the "king of Tyre" (v12). Since in this context the "king of Tyre" is Satan, the "prince of Tyre" is the son of Satan (Gen3:15), or the future Antichrist. Like Satan, the sin of Antichrist is that his "heart is lifted up" (v17) with a desire to be "God" (Cp., Isa14:12-14). This blasphemous desire will manifest itself at the midpoint of the Tribulation in the "abomination of desolation" (Dan9:27; Matt24:15), at which time the Antichrist will enter the holy of holies of a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem declaring, "I am God" (2Thess2:4), after which he will demand worship from all (Rev13:15). Notwithstanding, the LORD says, "thou art a man, and not God".
- [3] Like his father Satan, the Antichrist will excel in wisdom (v12), being "wiser than Daniel" (a contemporary of Ezekiel's in Babylon, whose wisdom was renowned throughout the kingdom; cf. Dan1:17; 4:9).
- [4] By means of his "wisdom" and "understanding", Antichrist will come to control the commerce/trade of the entire world during the last half

¹ It is important to read the introduction to the PROPHECY AGAINST THE KING OF TYRE (SATAN), which precedes verse 11, first.

of the Tribulation (Rev13:16-17), bringing immense wealth to himself and the "kings" and "merchants of the earth" (Rev18:3; note 1Tim6:10).

- [5] The Antichrist's "wisdom" will be focused on "traffick", which Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines as *trade, commerce, buying and selling* (cf. Rev13:16-17).
- [6] The sin of Antichrist is a lust in his "heart" to be "as ... God" (Cp., Isal4:12-14).
- [7] God's judgment of Antichrist comes in stages. First, "strangers" will smite him with a "sword" and defile his "beauty" and darken his "brightness" (Zech11:17; Cp., Rev13:3,14).
- [8] Antichrist "shall [be brought] down to the pit", as also prophesied for Lucifer/Satan (Isal4:15).
- [9] God's ultimate vindication over Antichrist will be seen in his "death" (Dan11:45; Rev19:20), demonstrating that he is "a man, and not God".
- [10] The "Lord GOD" (i.e., Adonai JEHOVAH) has "spoken it" (thus it is certain), that Antichrist "shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised". To die "deaths" (plural) signifies both a natural death as well as being "cast into the lake of fire", which is the "second death" (Rev20:14). To be characterized as "uncircumcised" indicates one is outside the covenants God has made with Israel (Eph2:11-12).

PROPHECY AGAINST THE KING OF TYRE (SATAN)

This prophecy continues to be the subject of much debate and considerable controversy. On its face the prophecy is directed at the "king of Tyrus" (v12; i.e., Tyre), and many interpreters feel constrained to limit its application to a human, historical king of Tyre. However, at virtually every point such an application is absurd. No human, historical king of Tyre could possibly be characterized as, even in a poetic/hyperbolic sense, an "anointed cherub" (v14) who was present "in Eden, the garden of God" (v13). Clearly, the prophecy has as its subject "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan" (Rev12:9) being addressed through the personage of the "king of Tyre", analogous to the occasion in which the Lord Jesus Himself addressed Satan through the person of the Apostle Peter (Cp., Matt16:23). In the present context, the primary point of connection between the king of Tyre and Satan is commerce. Tyre and its kings were renowned merchants who established and operated a vast commercial enterprise that controlled the ancient Mediterranean world for centuries (Ezek27:33; Cp., Rev18:3); similarly, the world system today is satanically-controlled (cf. Luk4:5-6), and during the second half of the 7-year Tribulation (when this prophesied judgment will be fulfilled) Satan will have instituted a world-wide commercial system, centered in a rebuilt Babylon, by which he will control all buying and selling (cf. Rev13:17; 18:3,11-13).

- [11] That which follows is "the word of the LORD".

- [12] The LORD addresses the prophet Ezekiel as "son of man [Heb., *adam*]" 93 times; outside of the Book of Ezekiel, only the prophet Daniel is similarly addressed (and only on a single occasion; Dan8:7). God's extensive use of the title "son of man" for Ezekiel is likely intended to repeatedly remind the prophet of his lowly estate (i.e., "lower than the angels"; Ps8:5) in light of his many visions of angels, cherubim, and God Himself (Cp., 2Cor12:7).

Through the personage of "the king of Tyre", God addresses Satan (see introduction to this section). God introduces Himself as the "Lord GOD", using both His divine title and personal name (i.e., Adonai JEHOVAH), and He directs Ezekiel to "take up a lamentation"; a "lamentation" is an expression of intense anguish/sorrow, in this context over the sin of the greatest of God's creatures, Satan. God characterizes Satan, presumably in his pre-fallen state, as **perfect** in "wisdom" and "beauty"; even after his fall, Satan excels in these attributes (cf. 2Cor2:11; 2Cor11:14).

- [13] Satan was "in Eden, the garden of God" (Gen2:8) in the form of a serpent (Gen3:1; Cp., Rev12:9; 20:2; "dragon" = "old serpent" = "Devil" = "Satan"). His personal beauty is enhanced by adornment with "every precious stone" and "gold". The 9 "precious stone[s]" listed correspond to the first, second, and fourth rows of stones on the breastplate of Israel's high priest (cf. Exod39:10-13); the third row (jacinth, agate, and amethyst) is absent².

Satan was also equipped with musical instruments, "tabrets" (percussion instruments) and "pipes" (wind instruments), that will also be used later by God's prophets (Cp., 1Sam10:5). Satan was/is a musical savant. While the original purpose of music was for use in praising God (cf. 1Chron15:16), it has been profoundly corrupted by Satan for his evil intents.

Finally, Satan "wast created" by God. Although it has been the primeval lust of Lucifer to be "like the Most High" (Isa14:12-14; 1Tim3:6), he is a creature who cannot rival his Creator in any sense.

- [14] Satan is a "cherub" (Cp., Ezek1:5-11; 10:14-15; Rev4:6-8), apparently the highest rank of creatures in the order of the heavenly host, originally "anointed" (i.e., chosen) to "cover" the very throne room of God (Cp., Isa6:2), reproduced symbolically on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant which furnished the holy of holies in the Tabernacle/Temple (Exod25:20; 1Kgs8:6). Before Satan was "in Eden" (v13), he dwelt in "the holy mountain of God" (Isa14:13). Satan's role as "cover[ing]" the throne room of God was for the purpose of excluding from the presence of God anything that might defile; how ironic that the highest of all God's creatures, who was charged with preventing the presence of God from defilement, was in fact the one who introduced sin into heaven itself.

- [15] It is reiterated that Satan "wast created" (v13), and he was "perfect" in every "way", "till iniquity was found" in him (i.e., he sinned). The sin of Lucifer was a lust to be "like the Most High" (cf. Isa14:12-14; 1Tim3:6) which manifested itself as rebellion against God (Gen3:1-6; Rev12:3-4). The first sin was not that of

² In the Greek text of the LXX, the third row of precious stones were added, presumably in an attempt to "correct" the Hebrew text.

Adam on earth, but Lucifer in heaven. Both heaven and earth have been defiled by sin, which necessitates the destruction of the present "heavens" and "earth" (2Pet3:10,12) and the creation of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev21:1).

- [16] Satan's sins are characterized as "the multitude of thy merchandise"; following his own fall, Satan first enticed one-third of the heavenly host to join him in rebellion against their Creator (Rev12:3-4), then he tempted man to rebel as well (Gen3:1-6). Satan was "cast ... out of the mountain of God" (Ps48:2; Isa14:13) because nothing "profane" is tolerated in the presence of God (Isa59:2; Hab1:13). God says, "I will destroy thee, O covering cherub", which is a certain yet future event.

The Fall of Satan. In this brief passage, Ezekiel views the fall of Satan as a singular event. However, in actuality it occurs as a multi-step process spanning thousands of years. As a result of his primeval sin (Isa14:12-14; 1Tim3:6), Satan was cast from "the mountain of God" (Ezek28:16; Cp., Luk10:18); he was excluded from a permanent presence in God's heavenly throne room (cf. Rev4:1-11), although he continues to have periodic access to God (Cp., Job1:6; 2:1; Zech3:1-2), which is Satan's present status. At the midpoint of the Tribulation, Satan and his angels will be cast from "heaven" to "earth" (Rev12:9). At the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into "the bottomless pit" for a thousand years (Rev20:1-3). Finally, at the end of the millennial kingdom, Satan will be cast into "the lake of fire" for eternity (Rev20:10; Cp., Matt25:41).

- [17] Satan's primeval sin was "pride" (Isa14:12-14; 1Tim3:6), exacerbated by his own "beauty". The creature who was "full of wisdom" (v12) has had his "wisdom ... corrupted"; sin has a profound effect on a creature's ability to think (Rom1:18,21-22). God says He will "cast" Satan to the "ground" (Heb., *eretz*, which depending on context can mean ground, land [of Israel], or earth); this is the future casting of Satan from heaven to earth at the midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev12:9).
- [18] While Satan is guilty of a "multitude" of "iniquities", the one singled out here is "the iniquity of thy traffick". Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines "traffick" as *trade, commerce, buying and selling*. While the world system today is largely satanically-controlled (cf. Luk4:5-6), during the second half of the 7-year Tribulation Satan will have instituted a world-wide commercial system, centered in a rebuilt Babylon, by which he will control all buying and selling (cf. Rev13:17; 18:3,11-13; Cp., 1Tim6:10). This will be the fullness of Satan's "iniquity" which demands judgment.
- [19] At the beginning of the millennial kingdom, Satan will be "bound" for "a thousand years" and "cast" into "the bottomless pit", so that "he should deceive the nations no more" (Rev20:2-3), and at the end of the millennial kingdom he will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ... and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever". Thus, the eternal judgment of Satan is a certain yet future event.

--- S.D.G. ---