**The Roots of Evil**

Ezekiel 28:11-19

I want you to know this, Satan does not appear to be evil nor does he dress up as a demon. But listen to this scripture:

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

THE ROOTS OF EVIL (EZEK 28:11-19)

The biggest winner after the events of September 11 did not show up to claim the prize. Oddly, Christians stop noticing, blaming or challenging him once a war breaks out.

He was not a Taliban official, an Al-Qaeda fighter, or a cave dweller in Afghanistan.

George W. Bush did not want him, dead or alive; America did not offer $25 million cash reward for information leading his location or capture; and America’s Most Wanted did not put his photo on TV.

The biggest winner was undoubtedly the devil, Satan himself. He ducked out of sight and the citizens of the world were left attacking one another and calling one another names.

* To the Arab coalition, America is the Great Satan and Israel is the Lesser,
* To the Americans, Hitler was the embodiment of Satan.
* Reagan called the Soviet Union an “evil empire” at the height of the Cold War in the 80s,
* And the senior Bush demonized Saddam Hussein in the 90s.

Two passages in the Bible point to the devil’s origin, undoing and condemnation. Ezekiel 28 is one of two passages that give us the clearest understanding of the Satan; Isaiah 14 is another.

However, a regular reader of the Ezekiel 28:11-19 does not see the devil. The probable answer may be that the rise and fall of the king of Tyre is emblem of Satan’s downfall and doom and the passage is a restatement and reenactment of the devil’s fate.

Tyre was an eye-catching, a breath-taking and well-watered city by the coast northwest to the land of Israel.

It was a unique city; part of Tyre was on an island a short distance from the shore, and the other on the opposite mainland.

The Bible referred to Tyre as the “strong” or “fortified” city (Josh 19:29). International Standard Bible Encyclopedia records that the city’s borders on the mainland were protected by a 150 feet wall.

Tyre was famous for her fertile land, her busy ports, and her enormous affluence (Ezek 27:3-7).

What was the devil’s original status? Why was he rejected by God? When will God complete His judgment on the devil? Satan was a Captivating but Created Being

Scripture Ezekiel 28-11 The word of the LORD came to me:

12 “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.

14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.

A young woman who had recently undergone somewhat of a religious transformation sought the advice of her pastor on a matter of great urgency.

Previously she had lived her life obsessed with the latest beauty secret, the newest fashion, and the best weight loss program.

The woman said, “Reverend, I need advice to overcome grievous sin.” The minister asked, “What is it, child?” The young woman confessed sheepishly,

“I have committed the sin of vanity. Twice a day I gaze at myself in the mirror and tell myself how amazingly beautiful I am. I can’t help it. It is an ungodly preoccupation.

Now that I have found God, I know that this is not the way to live. Will you please pray for me?”

The preacher turned, took a good look at the girl, and replied, “My dear, I have good news. That isn’t a sin - it’s only a mistake.”

It’s been said, “The devil entangles youth with beauty, the miser with money, the ambitious with power, **the learned with false doctrine.”**

Satan had three fascinations:

1.     Good looks, 2. Bright lights, 3. And fine things.

The devil was infatuated, captivated and obsessed with none other but himself.

He did not need make-up or touch-up, a supporting cast or an adoring public; all he needed was a continuous supply of mirrors. Of course, the devil’s biggest admirer, promoter and believer is himself.

The devil, originally, was the closest thing to a heavenly celebrity. His obsessions were fame and power.

Originally, he was a guardian cherub (Ezek 28 v 14, 16) with outstanding qualities. He was “the model of perfection” (v 12), or in the NASB: ““You had the seal of perfection…” (Ezek 28:12). He was also “full of wisdom,” the kind that not even Solomon or any person on earth could match (1 Ki 4:30, 7:14).

Satan’s wisdom was considered full, not just filled; the two words differed slightly in Hebrew.

Finally, Satan’s beauty was celebrated in words, songs. His beauty was extolled by God in Hebrew as “perfect beauty,” (Eze 27:3),

“Perfected beauty” (Eze 27:4, 11) and “perfect in beauty.”

(Eze 28:12) No individual had that kind of perfect beauty, not even the “lovely to look at” Queen Vashti (Esther 1:11). Precious stones covered this creature.

By the way, the God gave devil the highest compliment among angels. The word anointed (v 14) is an offshoot of the word Messiah (Isa 61:1).

However, twice in this passage, Satan was described as a created being (v 13, 15). Unlike the Creator, Satan did not have a divine nature, was not preexistent and had no power to create out of nothing.

Satan was brought, fashioned and ordered into existence by his Creator. Satan did not speak, will or evolve himself into existence.

Whatever he had was given. The verb “gave” is the word for the translation “ordained” (v 14), “made a spectacle” (v 17) and “reduced you” (v 18).

His role was to be the guardian angel. His place of assignment was God’s holy mountain, where he walked back and forth in the fiery stones.

Though Satan had some powers, he was not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. He was envious of God’s power, knowledge and sovereignty.

**Satan was a Conceited and Cunning Being verse** 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.

16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.

17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. Ezek 28:15-17

A young, gifted, outstanding young preacher was once asked by the renowned nineteenth century Puritan preacher Alexander Whyte to preach in his place at Whyte’s church in Edinburgh.

The young man went up to the pulpit to great expectations from the crowd that had gathered to hear the bright, promising young man.

However, when the invited speaker took his place on the pulpit, his worst nightmare occurred: his mind went blank; he was speechless and couldn’t think of what to say.

It was a disaster, an embarrassment to the church pastor and a shock to the church. A hushed silence fell on the crowd as he came down from the pulpit a broken-hearted man after further attempts to continue yielded the same result.

The dejected young man privately confided with the more experienced pastor, “What went wrong, sir?” Whyte said gently, slowly but truthfully to him,

“Well, laddie, if you have gone up the way you came down; you would have more chance of getting down the way you went up.

Do you know who committed the first sin in the Bible? Adam and Eve were not the ones who committed the first sin in the Bible.

Who committed the first sin in the Bible and the worst sin of all? Satan did and **his sin was pride.**

Adam and Eve’s disobedience was not original with them; it wasn’t their brainchild. His favorite tool is not discouragement, godlessness, or riches.

Satan used his best liked and most powerful and familiar tool to tempt humankind in the garden.

He tempted them with god-likeness before Eve, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil.

(Gen 3:4-5) Pride is the flight of the heart to lofty heights. Instead of planting our feet on the ground, proud people have their head in the clouds, their nose in the air and a chip on their shoulders.

His heart was proud, exalted, raised or lifted up to great heights. The Chinese characterize a proud person as having eyes placed on their heads, instead of their face. Pride is a covert, hidden and underground operation.

How did pride lead to Satan’s downfall and to kings’ destruction (2 Chron 26:16, 2 Chron 32:25)? God created Satan blameless or undefiled, without spot or blemish (v 15), but wickedness was found or appeared or existed in him.

The word wickedness in Ezekiel’s usage, unlike other books of the Bible, usually refers not to the inward state of the heart, but the outward act of sin.

Most translators translate the word wickedness in other passages of Ezekiel as committing sin or doing evil.

Wickedness was found in Satan when he was caught harboring secret ambition in his heart.

The wickedness that was a quiet affair next led to brazen pride and violent rebellion – he actively sinned against God (v 16).

Of all prophets, Ezekiel was the prophet who condemned pride most severely. Tyre alone accounted for three references (Eze 28:2, 5, 17).

1 Timothy 3:6 says conceit or pride is the snare or trap of the devil; it leads to his downfall. Satan, who was perfect in beauty, full of wisdom and dazzling with radiance, became the personification of pride.

Pride in what? Beauty, wisdom, and splendor (Eze 28:17). The devil’s beauty descended to vanity, his wisdom led him to think he was omniscient and his grandeur made him a grandstanding creature.

1 John 3:8 reveals that the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The devil’s violence or cruelty, falsehood and oppression was a climate that was synonymous with Noah’s generation that incurred God’s wrath and doomed for destruction (Gen 6:11-13).

Satan is a Condemned Being, verse 18 Ezekiel By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching.

19 All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more. “Ezek 28:18-19

The widely-respected Gallup organization (gallup.com) conducted a poll in the new millennium to determine people’s belief in God, heaven, angels, hell and the devil. A high 90% of those who responded expressed belief in God. In the same poll, 83% said they believe in heaven and 79% believe in angels.

When it came to the question on hell and the devil, 71% said they believe in a literal hell and 68% said they believe in the existence of the devil.

The belief in hell and the devil is, however, stronger than a poll conducted by Gallup five years ago. People’s belief in God has not changed much, the belief in angels has jumped 7% and the belief in heaven 9%, but 13% more believe in the devil and 15% more in hell--- just as science and technology thrived and religious beliefs and dogmatism suffered.

Satan is God’s unforgivable, impenitent, and overthrown enemy.

1.     Satan was holy, but not sinless; Glorious but proud; awe-inspiring but power-crazy.

2.     Power-corrupting and power-grabbing.

3.     He is an undomesticated beast who cries crocodile tears and is hell-bound with his allies (2 Pet 2:4).

Satan’s horrible end in verse 19 is described by the Hebrew word for terror. Satan, the first terrorist, will experience the last terror on earth (also Ezek 26:21, Ezek 27:36), the same terror that awaits the wicked (Ps 73:19).

Satan was judged for the multitude, the gravity and the design of his sins (v 18). God not only dismissed Satan, but evicted and banished him from his spot; not only pluck, hurl and smash him to the ground, but make an example out of him.

Satan, with all wisdom, however, had no foreknowledge of the future. Not only was he not omniscient, only second-hand information.

The devil and his demons did not know God’s next step nor did they believe in God’s revelation.

Satan’s plan of events, judgment of character and opinion of things were flawed. His greatest joy and ultimate downfall was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 states that the rulers of this age did not understand God’s secret wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

For if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Again, Revelation recorded his Satan’s defeat at the hands of the angel Michael (Rev 12:7).

Satan’s first judgment by a scorching fire that consumed or burnt him and reduced him to ashes recorded in Ezekiel will be replaced by the lake of burning sulfur welcoming him on the last days, found in Revelation 20:10.

Satan’s origin and destiny is synonymous with fire (v 14, 16, 18). He who despised walking among fiery stones (Eze 28:14) will be thrown into a sulfur lake. The truth is that not only Satan was second in command and that, his information was second hand and he had no second chance.

Conclusion: Praise the Lord, God has an intimate relationship with humans that angels do not have. One of the theories for the angels’ rebellion was that they did not have fellowship with God nor the capacity to love God.

They were servants, but never children of God. They were awesome creatures, but not the object of God’s love.

It’s been said, “What causes any battles to be lost is the needless fear of the enemy’s strength.”

The evil one cannot harm us (1 John 5:18). Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Do not let Satan outwit us (2 Cor 2:11) nor give the devil a foothold (Eph 4:27-28). It’s been said, “Avoid evil and the appearance of evil.” His end is sure.

Jesus Christ has appeared to destroy the devil’s work (1 John 3:8). God will soon crush Satan under our feet (Rom 16:20).

Our obligation is to open the eyes of the world and turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness (Acts 26:18).

Evil has its Consequences the last of the wicked will not escape God’s capture and judgment.

Psalms 37:10 says, “A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.” The righteous, those who spurned, resisted and opposed evil, will have the last laugh.

This is the only record of righteous laughter in the Bible. The righteous will laugh in the end because evil has met its match. The tables will turn on evildoers, evil is on its last leg, and the other shoe will soon drop.

The unrepentant will experience a drastic and bitter ending. His greatest enemy is no other than God, who alone has the ability to crush its advance. The reign of evildoers is brunt but it will be brief. They will make a lot of fuss or noise but will fall short of their goals; they will charm some supporters temporarily but will exhaust all goodwill eventually; and they will win some wars but will surely lose the battle.

They will not surrender but they will still succumb to the power of God.