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A Prophecy Against the King of Tyre
Ezeki'el 28: 1-19

A prophecy against the king of Tyre DIG: Did the king really think he was wiser than Dani'el, or was this Ezeki'el mocking the claim of the ruler? Do you think other countries admired the king's great skill in trading? Did such skill help or hurt him? In what exaggerated terms does Ezeki'el describe the king's character, adornment, location and role (Ezeki'el 28:13-15)? Who does the king remind you of? How does the lament describe his sin? Do you think the king mattered to ADONAI?

REFLECT: Why do you think YHVH hates pride so much? Why is he so zealous of His role as the only God in the universe? Do you ever "play god" in your words, actions or attitudes? Who in your life would be the ones to know? Have you asked them about your "pride status?" Who sits on the throne of your heart? Has the issue been decided or is there sometimes a struggle for power? Are there some areas in which your surrender is less than complete?

The prophecy was given in 585 BC during the exile in Babylon

This is the conclusion of the three chapters directed against Tyre. Here the guilt and punishment of Tyre are laid at the door of the king of Tyre who is regarded as the embodiment of the people. The root cause of Tyre's collapse was her pride and reliance on her abundant wealth. Her vast wealth, which she attributed exclusively to her own genius, was her only purpose in life. God had no place in their lives; self-glorification and self-sufficiency reigned supreme. Such arrogance always leads to destruction. In a striking prophecy, Ezeki'el describes the fall of the king of Tyre and his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, repeating his message that the multitude of his sins would eventually consume him.

Up to this point **Ezeki'el** has dealt with **Tyre** as a unit, as a city that became extremely wealthy and powerful because of its economic control of the sea-lane

traffic. But now, in **verses 1-10, the prophet** now focuses **his** attention upon that one individual in **Tyre** that was largely responsible for making **Tyre** that great **city** that it was. That was the human ruler of **Tyre** that **Ezeki'el** addresses as **the prince of Tyre**.



The judgment of the prince of Tyre: The word of ADONAI came to Ezeki'el, saying: **Son of man, tell the prince of Tyre.** Now although the rest of the world considered this **man the king of Tyre**, yet **Ezeki'el** is inspired by **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** to give this **man** a lesser title: not that of **king**, but that of **prince** (Hebrew: *nagid*). This human **prince, Ithoba'al II**, is to be distinguished from the real **king of Tyre** that **Ezeki'el** will be dealing with in **verses 11-19**. Because, as we shall see, the real power behind that throne does not really lie in the visible person sitting on that throne, but to an invisible being that is *the true power behind the throne*. Therefore, the discussion of **the prince of Tyre** in **verses 1-10** is merely a prelude to the discussion of **the** real **king of Tyre** in **verses 11-19**. So for now we need to remember this one main point: from a human perspective, **Ithoba'al II** is referred to as **the king of Tyre**; but in reality, **he** is no **king**, only a **prince (Ezeki'el 28:1-2a)**.

Tell the prince of Tyre that Adonai ELOHIM says: **Because you are so proud.** Riches and power so fed **his pride** that **he** claimed to be **God,** which was **his** greatest sin. This is a very important point as to why **the prince of Tyre** is a prelude to **the king of Tyre,** because the problem of **the prince of Tyre** is exactly the same as that of **the king of Tyre.** And what did this **pride** lead to? **Ithoba'al** made a claim about **himself**, saying: **I am a god**. **He** claimed to be deity and have divine authority: **I sit on the throne of God, in the midst of the sea. The**

throne of God referred to was coastal **Tyre** itself, which **he** considered to be a divine **throne**, and the control of the sea-lane traffic of the Mediterranean. **Yet,** the truth is just the opposite. **ADONAI** said: **You are just a man, not God, even though you think you are wise as a god (Ezeki'el 28:2b).** And **his** humanity will be proven by the ensuing verses.

The rabbis teach that this king was Hiram, the same Hiram that was a friend of King David. The same Hiram who sold the cedars of Lebanon to Solomon, so Solomon could build the Temple. According to rabbinical legend, Hiram lived for centuries and was still living after the fall of Isra'el in the days of Jeremiah, Ezeki'el and Dani'el. And where he was righteous in the days of David and Solomon, because he lived for so long he thought he was immortal. Hence, his claims of deity brought about his death. Consequently, **in Jewish legend he was Hiram**, but in actual history **he** was **Ithoba'al II**.

Then **Ezeki'el** describes **the wisdom of the prince**. First, **the prophet** compared **the prince of Tyre** with **Dani'el**. **You are indeed wiser than Dani'el.** At the time **Ezeki'el** was writing this passage **Dani'el** was living. **Ezeki'el** lived outside the city of **Babylon** and **Dani'el** lived inside the city of **Babylon**, and it was clear that **Daniel's wisdom** had become well known at that time **(Dani'el 1:19-20, 2:48, 5:11** and **14)**. Yet, in spite of **Dani'el's** tremendous **wisdom**, **the** great **wisdom** that had become renowned throughout the ancient world, **the wisdom of the prince of Tyre** was superior. **No secret is hidden from you (Ezeki'el 28:3 ESV).** This refers to the ability to reveal secrets and solve mysteries. We know **Daniel** had that ability **(Dani'el 2:47, 4:9, 5:12** and **16)**, but **the prince of Tyre's** ability to reveal secrets and solve mysteries was even greater than **Dani'el's**.

By your wisdom and discernment you have acquired wealth, you have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries. By your great skill in trafficking back and forth with your merchant fleet, **you have increased your wealth.** The Hebrew word used here for **wealth**, can also mean **power**, and of course **power** usually comes with **wealth**. But whereas **Dani'el** used **his wisdom** to glorify **YHVH**, **the prince of Tyre** used **his wisdom** to glorify **himself**. **And it is because of your wealth that you have become so proud (Ezeki'el 28:4-5 CJB)**, which led **him** to believe in **his** own deity and full divine authority.

Therefore, because of your self-deification, **Adonai ELOHIM** says: **Because you**

think that you are a god, I will bring foreigners against you, the most barbarous of the nations (Ezeki'el 30:11, 31:12, 32:12; Habakkuk 1:6-8), or **Babylon, to draw their swords against your fine wisdom and defile your splendor (Ezeki'el 28:6-7 CJB). His wisdom** did serve **him** for a while. It did help **him** to withstand a thirteen-year siege by king Nebuchadnezzar, yet eventually **his** wisdom failed **him. The Babylonians would come and destroy the material wealth that he worshiped, and had acquired by his wisdom. The prince of Tyre's wisdom** was also used to beautify coastal **Tyre**. But when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed coastal **Tyre**, its **splendor** would end and so would its **prince**.

God is eternal, but the king of Tyre would meet a violent death. They will lower you into Sh'ol to die a violent death surrounded by the sea (Ezeki'el 28:8 CJB). In the Hebrew text, the word **death** here is in the intensive plural, signifying **a** very **violent death (Isaiah 53:9; Jeremiah 16:4)**, possibly a lengthy period of torture. **He** will **die** in the place of **his** supposed power, where **he** proclaimed **himself** to be **a god, surrounded by the sea**. **Though his kingdom had a very strong maritime presence, and was in a very strong strategical position, it would be no protection for him. His** humanity will be clearly seen. **Will you still say, "I am a god," to them who are about to kill you? You are a man, not a god, in the hands of those who defile you (Ezeki'el 28:9 CJB).** In **his** pride and **his** power, **he** declared **himself** to be **a god** because there was no one to challenge him. But now as **the Babylonians** had broken through the walls of coastal **Tyre**, would **he** continue to say **he** is **a god**? No! **His** own **death** would **defile his** own supposed deity. **You will die the deaths of the uncircumcised Babylonians, at the hands of foreigners. Ha'Shem** guaranteed it. **For I have spoken,** says **Adonai ELOHIM (Ezeki'el 28:9-10 CJB).**[380]



A lamentation for the king of Tyre: The word of ADONAI came to me saying: **Son of man, sing this funeral song for the king of Tyre, and tell him that**

Adonai ELOHIM says **(Ezeki'el 28:11-12a NLT)**. So **the** *real* **king of Tyre** was not the visible **Ithoba'al II** sitting on **the throne**, but the invisible **being** that once fell for the same reason, a **pride** that led to a self-declaration of deity (see the commentary on **Isaiah, to see link click Dp – How You Have Fallen From Heaven, O Morning Star**). This invisible **being** is the one we now call **Beelzebub, the great dragon, the enemy of souls** or **Satan.** T**he tempter,** who controlled **the prince of Tyre**, was **the** *real* **king of Tyre**. Even though **Lucifer** had fallen, **the LORD** took no joy in it; hence, **He** called for **a lamentation**. So the following verses are the words of **the dirge**.

Before **your** fall from heaven, **you had the seal of perfection. YHVH** did not create **Satan** as some prime minister of evil. As with all **God's** creation, **Lucifer** was a **perfectly** created being – one of the crowning achievements in **the LORD's** angelic realm. **You were full of wisdom and perfect in beauty**, in fact, the **wisest** and most **beautiful** creature of all created beings **(Ezeki'el 28:12b-13)**.[381]

Arnold Fruchtenbaum describes **the six abodes of Satan** in his classic book *The Footsteps of the Messiah.* The first two abodes are in the historical past, the third abode is Satan's present state and the last three abodes are in the future.

The first abode, the throne of God. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. In the celestial sphere, there are three orders or ranks of beings. The lowest in rank is the angels, over whom is Michael the Archangel. Above the angels are the seraphim, noted for having six wings **(Isaiah 6** and **Revelation 4)**. The highest rank of created beings are **the cherubim** (see **Er – Ezeki'el's First Vision**), and at some point in eternity past **God** made **Lucifer** the **Arch-Cherub** and evaluated **him** over the other **cherubs**. At that point, **Lucifer** was the highest of all created beings, not only in **wisdom** and **beauty**, but also in power and authority. **You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. You were on the holy mount of God** (**the holy** throne **of God**)**; you walked among the fiery stones (Ezeki'el 28:14-15).** When **YHVH** created **Lucifer**, **he** was **perfect in all his ways**, meaning **his** actions were as **perfect** as **his** being. So **Satan's** fall cannot be blamed on **God**.

The second abode, the garden of God: Satan was given an exalted place: **You were in Eden, the garden of God. Eden** was the epitome of **God's** beautiful Creation on earth. **Lucifer's** beauty matched **Eden**. **Every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper,**

lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl, your pendants and jewels were made of gold, prepared the day you were created (Ezeki'el 28:13).

The problem of **the prince of Tyre** centuries later was the same problem of **the king of Tyre** centuries earlier. Looking at **his wisdom, beauty**, power and authority, and meditating on these things, ultimately, while **Satan** was in **his** second abode that **wickedness found him,** one day, there it was, and **his** fall took place. **Through your many sins and widespread trafficking, you were filled with violence.** The word **trafficking** is the same word used of the human **prince of Tyre** in **28:5**. For **the prince of Tyre** it meant going from port to port gathering wealth. But for **the king of Tyre**, **Satan**, it meant going from angel to angel slandering **YHVH** in order to win their allegiance. Eventually, **the devil** convinced one-third of all the angles that **God** was wrong **(Revelation 12:4)**. In that way **the deceiver** became **the father of lies (John 8:44)**. **So I drove you in disgrace from the** throne **of God. He** lost the high position of **his** first abode, and **the perfect cherub** then became **the disgraced cherub**. **He** was no longer the guardian of **God's** Throne. **And I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones, the** mineral **garden.** This refers to the loss of **his** position in the second abode. **Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor (Ezeki'el 28:16-17a).**

You have desecrated your sanctuaries. The word for **sanctuary** means *holy place*. **Your sanctuaries** were the holy places of heaven and refer to corruption in heaven. The fact that it says **your sanctuaries** means *Satan's sanctuaries*, and shows that **Lucifer** did have a priestly function in heaven. As the high priest, **he** led the worship in heaven in the heavenly **sanctuaries** before **his** fall. So when **he sinned he desecrated the sanctuaries** in heaven. This is the reason **Hebrews 9:23-26** states that the heavens themselves needed cleansing by the blood of the Messiah. **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.** At one time, this fire was a mark of **Satan's** glory. But the **fire** that once glorified **Lucifer** will now be used to punish **him.** At one time the **fiery stones** beautified **him**, but now **fire** will be used to punish **him**. The principle is that sin always carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction, and it will destroy the one performing this sin unless there is repentance and confession. **All who know you among the nations will be horrified. You are an object of terror, and you will cease to exist** as the destroyer of souls on earth **(Ezeki'el 28:18-19).**

The third abode, the heavenly realms: Today, **Satan** is dwelling in **his** third

abode, **the heavenly realms. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:1-2 and Ephesians 6:12).**

The fourth abode, the earth: So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings (Ezeki'el 28:17b). In the middle of the Great Tribulation, **Satan** will be cast out of **his** third abode into **his** fourth abode (see the commentary on **Revelation Di – There Was War in Heaven, and Satan Was Hurled Down to the Earth**), and so will be confined to the earth for the remainder of **the Seventieth Week of Dani'el (Dani'el 9:27)**. **He** will remain in **his** fourth abode for a total of three-and-a-half-years. **His** program during that time will be an attempt to destroy the Jews once and for all **(Rev 6, 13-17)**. **The deceiver** will attempt to do this by means of the antichrist and the false prophet **(Rev 13)**.

The fifth abode, the abyss: Satan will be confined to **the abyss** during the thousand years of the Messianic Kingdom (see the commentary on **Revelation Fb – He Seized the Dragon, or Satan, and Bound Him for a Thousand Years**). As a result of this confinement, sin and death in the Kingdom will be greatly reduced, but not eliminated. **Satan's** imprisonment and the reign of **Messiah** will fulfill **Jesus'** calling to exercise authority over the earth **(Hebrews 2:5-9).**

The sixth abode, the lake of fire: Suffice it to say that **the lake of fire** will serve as **Satan's** sixth and final abode, where **he** will remain for all eternity along with the other fallen angels and unredeemed humanity (see the commentary on **Revelation Fm – Satan Will Be Released from His Prison and Will Go Out to Deceive the Nations**). As a result of **Satan's** being thrown into the sixth abode, two major effects of **Satan's** fall will be removed: **death (First Corinthians 15:24-26)** and **the seas (Revelation 21:1)**.[382]

Pride is seen here as the destroying sin. It was devastating to the glories given to **Satan** when he was yet **the anointed cherub**. Is there not a warning here for us also? There must be a recognition that all privilege and opportunity carry with them great obligation. **For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that He might have mercy on them all (Romans 11:32).** If you have received that mercy, then **ADONAI** expects that through the mercy shown to you, the Gospel

may be carried in love and gratitude to the lost.[383]