

Ezekiel 28:1-18 ADAM AS ANOINTED CHERUB

This study was taken from my larger study regarding the Cherubim and Seraphim, which is in the process of being published into a book. The following excerpt is taken from my working manuscript for this book.

The following section is addressing the Cherubim found in the book of Ezekiel and in particular the cherub that was cast out of the Holy Mountain of God, associated with the King of Tyre, as that has traditionally been associated with Satan falling from heaven.

The study below points out, with a proper exegesis of Ezekiel 28:14, that the one who was cast out of the Holy Mountain of God was not Satan, but Adam.

Adam was created in the image of God to reflect His glory and minister before God in His sanctuary in that Garden Paradise. He was commissioned by the Lord to advance this Kingdom in righteousness, to be fruitful and multiply and have dominion over all the earth. But he chose a different god with a different agenda that resulted in death.

ADAM AS ANOINTED CHERUB

Adam fell from a very high position and Ezekiel describes his position before God.

Ezekiel 28:12-19 ¹² "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. 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. ¹⁴ "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. ¹⁵ "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you. ¹⁶ "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. ¹⁷ "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. ¹⁸ "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. ¹⁹ "All who know you among the peoples Are appalled at you; You have become terrified And you will cease to be forever." (emphasis added)

It is often viewed that Ezekiel is describing the fall of Satan as he utilizes the King of Tyre to depict this powerful and privileged being as a cherub that fell from heaven, the holy mountain of God. But a closer examination shows that this is actually a picture of a human being clothed in royal priestly garments before the throne of God. G.K. Beale points this out in his book, "A New Testament Biblical Theology", (pg. 618).

"Some identify this figure as Satan, but that this figure is Adam is pointed to by the description in Ezek.28:13. The jewels that are said to be his covering in Ezek.28:13 are uniquely listed in Exod.28:17-21, which describes the jewels on the ephod of Israel's high priest, who is a human and not an angel.... Therefore Adam was to be the first priest to serve in and guard God's temple."

Exodus 28 reveals a parallel of the jewels of the priest's ephod in Ezekiel's figure, except that in the Ezekiel figure only 9 stones are mentioned.

Exodus 28:15-22 ¹⁵ "You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, the work of a skillful workman; like the work of **the ephod you shall make it: of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen you shall make it.** ¹⁶ "It shall be square and folded double, a span in length and a span in width. ¹⁷ "**You shall mount on it four rows of stones; the first row shall be a row of ruby, topaz and emerald;** ¹⁸ **and the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and a diamond;** ¹⁹ **and the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst;** ²⁰ **and the fourth row a beryl and an onyx and a jasper; they shall be set in gold filigree.** ²¹ "The stones shall be according to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, according to their names; they shall be like the engravings of a seal, each according to his name for the twelve tribes. ²² "You shall make on the breastpiece chains of twisted cordage work in pure gold. (emphasis added)

The three stones not mentioned in Ezekiel that are recorded in Exodus are the jacinth, an agate and an amethyst. I suppose there could be some aspect of a numerological explanation that might be brought to bear. For example, the number 9, which is used 49 times in Scripture, symbolizes divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality. Keep in mind that when Adam was given his commission by God there were no twelve tribes in existence.

Therefore, the number nine would be sufficient to portray the perfect priest in the perfect garden.

All of the stones in Ezekiel are described as "stones of fire" or "fiery stones." This would indicate an authority and glory that derives from God the Creator and shared with both the king of Tyre and Adam in the context of Ezekiel 28. Suffice it to say, for this application, the nine stones of fire in Ezekiel are still fully representative for the priests' bejeweled clothing to make the point that the cherub in question represents a man rather than an angel.

SATAN IS AN ANGEL NOT A CHERUB

But Ezekiel 28 does describe this one in Eden, in the garden of God, as a cherub. Does this mean that Adam was a cherub? Or for those who believe that this figure is Satan, that he is actually a cherub, as some would identify a cherub as a rank of angel?

The answer is no to both. Satan is an angel, not a cherub which Scripture establishes as a heavenly animal. As such, animals, even heavenly animals, are not charged with sin. Judgement on sin is limited to only angels and people.

1 John 3:8 ⁸ *the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning.* The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. (emphasis added)

Romans 3:21-23 ²¹ But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³ for ***all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*** (emphasis added)

Even though animals don't practice sin, an angel, veiled through a serpent, acted worse than an animal in the garden as he essentially murdered those made in the image of God.

John 8:44 ⁴⁴ *"You are of your father the devil,* and you want to do the desires of your father. ***He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.*** (emphasis added)

Genesis 3:14-15 ¹⁴ *The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;* ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (emphasis added)

Satan, as a serpent or dragon, is characterized as base as an earthly animal, not an angelic being who should be following and serving the one true God. The other thing to consider is that Satan is described as **ruler** of the demons, which would necessarily make him a rebellious angel, not a heavenly animal.

Matthew 25:41 ⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the ***eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;*** (emphasis added)

Matthew 12:24 ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, "This man casts out demons only by ***Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.***" (emphasis added)

Revelation 12:9 ⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and ***Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.***
(emphasis added)

This following verse seems to imply that Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. This would make him, by default, of the order of angels. Only an angel, albeit a rebel angel, can appear as an angel of light who is associated with other demons.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 ¹⁴ No wonder, ***for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*** ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if ***his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness,*** whose end will be according to their deeds. (emphasis added)

By the way, a better reference than Ezekiel's, relating to Satan's rebellion and fall from grace, could be seen in Isaiah's account of God's judgment on the King of Babylon. This king may more closely represent the one who is "ruler" of this world, or as Paul describes him, "the god of this world." (2Corinthians 4:4)

Isaiah 14:12-15 ¹² "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! ¹³ "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. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' ¹⁵ "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.

So, in summary, for those who believe that angels and cherubs are of the same type of being, it would make sense to equate the cherub of Ezekiel 28 as an angel and not a human being. From this perspective one could conclude that the cherub in question, who was thrown from the "holy mountain of God," is none other than Satan.

But as has been demonstrated, the Scriptures are clear. *Chayyah* and *zoon*, as they describe both seraphim and cherubim in Hebrew and Greek respectively, are heavenly animals, not angels.

Adam, however, was a man who is equated with the king of Tyre, whose heart [was] lifted up and said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods in the heart of the seas'; (**Ezekiel 28:2**)

ADAM AS A GOD?

How is it possible that Adam's heart could even entertain such a notion? Let me remind you of the promise the serpent, Satan, made to Eve, and by extension to Adam in the garden, the holy mountain of God's earthly sanctuary.

Genesis 3:5 ⁵ "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and ***you will be like God, knowing good and evil.***" (emphasis added)

There is no question that Adam understood the implication of this promise as it was expressed in the actions of Eve and then embraced by Adam in the very next verse.

Genesis 3:6 ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was ***desirable to make one wise [ie., to be like God], she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*** (emphasis added)

To presumptuously think you could *be like God* may have been ill-advised, but Adam didn't appear to blink. And God would remind both the King of Tyre, and by extension backwards to Adam, what they really are.

Ezekiel 28:2 Yet you are a man and not God, Although you make your heart like the heart of God—
In the vision that God shows Ezekiel he further describes this scene in Eden and the consequences of Adam's sin.

Ezekiel 28:13-16 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.*** ¹⁴ "***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. ¹⁵ "***You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you.*** ¹⁶ "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.*** (emphasis added)

So, the figure in Ezekiel 28, described as a cherub, is not Satan, but Adam. Of course, this begs the question. How can Adam be regarded a cherub in the context? In the same way that Judas could be described as a devil.

John 6:70-71 ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet ***one of you is a devil?***" ⁷¹ Now ***He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot,*** for he, one of the twelve, ***was going to betray Him.*** (emphasis added)

Jesus did not mean that Judas was in fact a devil in the sense that he was a rebel angel who fights against God and His kingdom. Rather our Lord employs a metaphor equating the actions and desires of Judas on a par with Satan to the degree that he is an accuser of the One who is righteous.

Judas ultimately betrayed the Lord, as he delivered Jesus over to the authorities to be slain at the cross. It is this same Judas of whom we are told that his dark

heart was influenced and subsequently possessed by Satan to pursue that which would lead to the arrest of Jesus.

John 13:2 ² During supper, *the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him*, (emphasis added)

John 13:26-27 ²⁶ Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, *the son of Simon Iscariot*. ²⁷ *After the morsel, Satan then entered into him*. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." (emphasis added)

And so, in John 6:70-71 Judas is a devil through his actions as he is associated with "the" devil, Satan. In the same way, Adam is described as a cherub, not in the sense that he is literally a heavenly animal, but to the extent that he shared the same role of the cherubim, that of guardian of the domain he initially was given charge. In that sense he can be equated to a cherub.

Remember the role of the cherubim. They stand as guardians around the throne of God, even as they were given the role to stand as guardians at the entrance to the earthly tabernacle of God; that sanctuary contained in the Garden of Eden, to which Adam was charged to cultivate and protect. In fact, the very words used in Ezekiel 28:14 demonstrates this role.

^{NAU} **Ezekiel 28:14** "*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. (emphasis added)

The word "covers" in the Hebrew essentially means to overshadow or cover in the sense of guarding that which it overshadows. In fact, this is how other translations treat this verse.

^{NIV} **Ezekiel 28:14** 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. (emphasis added)

^{ESV} **Ezekiel 28:14** You were an anointed *guardian cherub*. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. (emphasis added)

^{NET} **Ezekiel 28:14** I placed you there with an anointed *guardian cherub*; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked about amidst fiery stones. (emphasis added)

Again, the immediate context in Ezekiel is of this cherub residing in Eden as a priest who was to guard the garden.

Ezekiel 28:13 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. (emphasis added)

And so, to call Adam a cherub is designating him a priest in the sanctuary of Eden as one responsible to guard the way to the presence of God. He was to advance God's gift of a kingdom given to him and his family, and in the process to magnify the name of Jehovah who created him perfect and beautiful.

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

THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED

On the day that unrighteousness was found in Adam was the day he died. And how is that depicted here in Ezekiel? By comparing him to an ungodly ruler of Tyre who elevated himself to a position through treachery.

Ezekiel 28:18 ¹⁸ "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.*** (emphasis added)

The sanctuaries that Adam profaned are reflected in a perfect Eden where he, along with his wife, would have communed with their God and creator. But that sanctuary was meant to be extended to the whole earth as a kingdom filled with Adam's offspring who carried the name of God in righteousness. Instead, God turned him to ashes, according to Ezek.28:18, just as He promised in the day that he rebelled in the beginning of Genesis.

Genesis 3:19 ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; ***For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.***" (emphasis added)

The Hebrew word for dust in Genesis 3:19 is *aphar*, and it essentially addresses that part of the earth that we would call dirt or dust. There are other passages that use this same word in a context that necessitates the need for fire to consume something so as to turn it to ashes or dust. This would parallel the image of Adam eschatologically being turned to ashes by God in His fiery wrath in Ezekiel 28:18. Moses uses this same word when addressing the ceremonial purification of an unclean person.

^{NAU} **Numbers 19:17** 'Then for the unclean *person* they shall take some of the ***ashes (aphar, dust) of the burnt purification from sin*** and flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel. (emphasis added)

Another reference where *aphar* is used is found in 2Kings as it related to vessels used to worship false gods that are to be burned outside of Jerusalem as they in turn become ashes.

^{NAU} **2 Kings 23:4** Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second order and the doorkeepers, to ***bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes (aphar, dust) to Bethel.*** (emphasis added)

Notice the reference to the priests who were also doorkeepers, and by implication, guards to the entrance into the temple of the Lord. In this case the idols made for Baal and Asherah, (ostensibly representing the serpent making its way into the Garden sanctuary) have already entered into the holy place. But God commands the high priest, along with the ***priests of the second order and the doorkeepers***, to take the tainted vessels and burn them to dust as they carry them to Bethel, which means house of God.

The abominable serpent desolated the holy temple of the Lord and precipitated the death of Adam, as Adam rebelled against his Creator and God, who is now identified with the serpent. As a result, the Lord would fulfill the promise of death that is now seen in the vessels of wrath as He ceremonially turned them to ashes, subsequently burning them outside of the holy place, never to return.

And now the cherubim would protect the integrity of the sanctuary by making sure the idolatrous vessels (now reflected in rebellious Adam and his wife) and their ashes, would remain outside the holy sanctuary. Of course, this comes with a merciful caveat where God promises to one day restore them as He carried their ashes to Bethel; that future house of God foreshadowing a new paradise.

Genesis 3:24 ²⁴ So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

Ezekiel 28:18 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. (emphasis added)

The Hebrew word for ashes here in Ezekiel, *epher*, is similar to the word for dust found in Genesis 3:19. The fire of God's wrath that turns man to dust is the very fire that is associated with the sacrificial offering of a blameless substitute that God freely and graciously offered to Adam and his family. It would be this sacrifice, seen in Abel's offering, that would appease God's wrath and restore men of faith to a right relationship with God that would lead back to Paradise through that offering of faith.

Genesis 4:4 ^{NAU 4} Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering...

Hebrews 11:4 ⁴ ***By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain***, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, ***and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*** (emphasis added)

And to what does Abel still speak?

Hebrews 12:22-24 ²² *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,* and to myriads of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, **and to God,** the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect, ²⁴ **and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.** (emphasis added)

Ezekiel, in chapter 28, is describing a man who had it all, who was given unfettered access to the living God in a Kingdom that God prepared for him to share in. And yet in his heart he desired to be like God, knowing good and evil. For that he was cast off the holy Mountain of Eden only to return to the dust of the earth.

But as the grace of God was extended to Adam, he found a righteousness in the promise of the seed of the woman through whom he would be reconciled back to his Creator. It is the seed of the woman, the Messiah, the mediator of a new covenant, whose sprinkled blood on his behalf was foreshadowed every time he and his family came before God, in faith, with their acceptable sacrifice.

He was designated a cherub, a protector and guardian of this Kingdom, and he gave it all up for a lie from the father of lies. The cherubim described in the book of Ezekiel are a reminder of the role they play in the kingdom of God as we will see when we revisit this book in greater detail. But first, let's move through some of the other places that address the cherubim.