

The Guardian Cherub of Eden

And the Primordial Story of Satan

- | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|
| 1 ^{27:1} The word of the Lord came to me: ² “Now you, son of man, raise a lamentation over Tyre, | 28 The word of the LORD came to me: ² “ Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord GOD: | ¹¹ Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me: ¹² “Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: |
| 2 ³ and say to Tyre, who dwells at the entrances to the sea, merchant of the peoples to many coastlands, thus says the Lord GOD:
“O Tyre, you have said,
‘I am perfect in beauty. ’
⁴ Your borders are in the heart of the seas;
your builders made perfect your beauty. | “Because your heart is proud,
and you have said, ‘I am a god,
I sit in the seat of the gods,
in the heart of the seas,’
yet you are but a man,
and no god,
though you make your heart like the heart of a god— | “You were the signet of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. |
| 3 ⁵ They made all your planks of fir trees from Senir;
they took a cedar from Lebanon to make a mast for you.
⁶ Of oaks of Bashan they made your oars;
they made your deck of pines from the coasts of Cyprus, | ³ you are indeed wiser than Daniel;
no secret is hidden from you;
⁴ by your wisdom and your understanding | ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; |
| 4 inlaid with ivory.
⁷ Of fine embroidered linen from Egypt was your sail,
serving as your banner;
blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah was your awning.
⁸ The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were your rowers;
your skilled men, O Tyre, were in you;
they were your pilots.
⁹ The elders of Gebal and her skilled men were in you,
caulking your seams;
all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in you | you have made wealth for yourself,
and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries;
⁵ by your great wisdom in your trade
you have increased your wealth, | every precious stone was your covering,
sardius, topaz, and diamond,
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle;
and crafted in gold were your settings
and your engravings.
On the day that you were created |

to barter for your wares.

they were prepared.

5 ¹⁰“Persia and Lud and Put were in your army as your men of war. They hung the shield and helmet in you; they gave you splendor. ¹¹ Men of Arvad and Helech were on your walls all around, and men of Gamad were in your towers. They hung their shields on your walls all around; they made perfect your beauty.

and your heart has become proud in your wealth—

⁶therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because you make your heart like the heart of a god,

(CENTRAL SQUARE)

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.

6 ¹²“Tarshish did business with you because of your great wealth of every kind; silver, iron, tin, and lead they exchanged for your wares. ¹³ Javan, Tubal, and Meshech traded with you; they exchanged human beings and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. ¹⁴From Beth-togarmah they exchanged horses, war horses, and mules for your wares. ¹⁵The men of Dedan traded with you. Many coastlands were your own special markets; they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony. ¹⁶ Syria did business with you because of your abundant goods; they exchanged for your wares emeralds, purple, embroidered work, fine linen, coral, and ruby. ¹⁷ Judah and the land of Israel traded with you; they exchanged for your merchandise wheat of Minnith, meal, honey, oil, and balm. ¹⁸ Damascus did business with you for your abundant goods, because of your great wealth of every kind; wine of Helbon and wool of Sahar ¹⁹and casks of wine from Uzal they exchanged for your wares; wrought iron, cassia, and calamus were bartered for your merchandise. ²⁰ Dedan traded with you in saddlecloths for riding. ²¹ Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your favored dealers in lambs, rams, and goats; in these they did business with you. ²²The traders of Sheba and Raamah traded with you; they exchanged for your wares the best of all kinds of spices and all precious stones and gold. ²³ Haran,

⁷therefore, behold, I will bring foreigners upon you,

¹⁶In the abundance of your trade

Canneh, Eden, traders of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad traded with you. ²⁴In your market these traded with you in choice garments, in clothes of blue and embroidered work, and in carpets of colored material, bound with cords and made secure. ²⁵The ships of Tarshish traveled for you with your merchandise. So you were filled and heavily laden in the heart of the seas.

- 7 ²⁶“Your rowers have brought you out into the high seas. The east wind has wrecked you in the heart of the seas.
- ²⁷ Your riches, your wares, your merchandise, your mariners and your pilots, your caulkers, your dealers in merchandise, and all your men of war who are in you, with all your crew that is in your midst,
- 8 sink into the heart of the seas on the day of your fall.
- ²⁸At the sound of the cry of your pilots the countryside shakes,
- ²⁹ and down from their ships come all who handle the oar. The mariners and all the pilots of the sea stand on the land
- ³⁰ and shout aloud over you and cry out bitterly. They cast dust on their heads and wallow in ashes;
- ³¹ they make themselves bald for you and put sackcloth on their waist, and they weep over you in bitterness of soul, with bitter mourning.
- 9 ³²In their wailing they raise a lamentation for you

the most ruthless of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor.

- ⁸ They shall thrust you down into the pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas.
- ⁹ Will you still say, ‘I am a god,’ in the presence of those who kill you, though you are but a man, and no god, in the hands of those who slay you?

¹⁰You shall die the death of the uncircumcised

you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned;

- so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.
- ¹⁷ Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.
- ¹⁸By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries;
- so I brought fire out from your midst;

and lament over you:
 'Who is like Tyre,
 like one **destroyed in the midst of
 the sea?**

³³ When your wares came from the seas,
 you satisfied many peoples;
 with your abundant wealth and mer-
 chandise
 you enriched the kings of the earth.

³⁴ Now you are wrecked by the seas,
 in the depths of the waters;
 your merchandise and all your crew in
 your midst
 have sunk with you.

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the coastlands
are appalled at you,
 and the hair of their kings bristles with
 horror;
 their faces are convulsed.

³⁶ The merchants among the peoples
 hiss at you;
 you have come to a dreadful end
 and shall be no more forever.' ”

by the hand of for-
 eigners;
 for I have spoken, de-
 clares the Lord
 GOD.

it consumed you,
 and I turned you to
 ashes on the
 earth
 in the sight of all who saw
 you.
¹⁹ All who know you among
 the peoples
 are **appalled at you;**
 you have come to a dread-
 ful end
 and shall be no
 more forever.”

Ezekiel 27:1:28:19

Helicopter Exegesis?

When I was in seminary, we had a class on the Old Testament. One day, we came to **Ezekiel 28:12** and its “**king of Tyre.**” I can still see the professor asking us who we thought this was. Almost everyone in the class said **it must be Satan.**

Seemed pretty natural, after all, it talks about Eden, the garden, cherubs, being created perfect, and the like. But then the Bible closed and the professor looked up at us to teach us all a lesson.

“*That*,” the professor began, “is what we call *helicopter exegesis*.”

“*What’s that?*” someone asked, knowing the answer was already coming.

“*Helicopter exegesis is where we fly all around the Bible, wherever we feel like and then swoop down like a helicopter on whatever passage we feel like, attach it to chains coming from the chopper, and the fly away with the text, making it say whatever we want it to say.*” “*The Church Fathers loved doing this,*” I think he likely added. And then he began to chide us all that there is *no possible way in the world that this refers to Satan.* “*Look,*” he said, “*the oracle is very clearly against ‘the king of Tyre,’*” as he pointed to *Ezek 28:12.* “*We have no business interpreting the Eden and cherub language as anything other than metaphor.*” And with that, class was dismissed.

From what I’ve seen, it seems that my Evangelical professor’s view was *the dominant one*, at least during the 20th century in conservative Protestant circles. Henry Ellison,

for example, said, “Those who implicitly hold this view have generally little idea of how unknown it is in wider Christian circles, or of how little basis there is for it in fact ... any such interpretation detaches vv. 11–19 from their setting ... Here we are asked to believe that **without giving any warning** Ezekiel’s gaze wanders first back to a period before man.”¹ Iain Duguid says in his commentary, “This passage has suffered from **imaginative exegesis** at the hands of the early church fathers, whose ideas have been given renewed currency in some contemporary expositions. These writers interpreted the depiction of Ezekiel 28, along with a similar passage addressed to the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14, as describing literally a heavenly conflict between God and the forces of evil. This conflict resulted in the fall of ‘Lucifer’ and his followers from a primary place in the heavenly realms to the earth. Such an interpretation **ignores the metaphorical context** of both passages, however.”²

Sometimes we are given principles of interpretation in the context of Ezekiel 28. One writer says,

¹ **H. L. Ellison**, *Ezekiel: The Man and His Message* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 1008-09.

² **Iain M. Duguid**, *Ezekiel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 348.

[The Bible student] is not at liberty to extract, from his own imagination, an “interpretation” that is wholly alien to the historical text or that stands in contradiction to information found elsewhere in the scriptures ... when the context specifically identifies the thrust of the symbolism, the issue is settled. And it is nothing short of exegetical criminality to substitute one’s personal “expository agenda” for that which the inspired author has stated explicitly.³

I actually basically *agree* with this statement. But then he goes on to say this, “Verses 12-19 [of Ezekiel 28] constitute a “funeral lament” over the fallen “king of Tyre” (vs. 12). It is paramount that the Bible student keep in view this point. This discussion is not regarding Satan. Rather, it is about a human king over a material city. To ignore this fact is to be guilty of the coarsest form of textual manipulation.” Is he right?

Before answering that question, which is what we will do in this sermon, I want to discuss that passage mentioned by Duguid a moment ago. This is **Isaiah 14**, especially **vv. 12-17**—because it is so similar to Ezekiel 28:11-19. It says,

³ Wayne Jackson, “A Study of the King of Tyre Prophecy in Ezekiel 28,” *Christian Courier* (n.d.).

12 How you are fallen *from heaven*,
O Day Star, son of Dawn!
How you are cut *down to the ground*,
you who laid the nations low!
13 You said in your heart,
'I will *ascend to heaven*;
above the stars of God
I will set my throne on high;
I will sit on *the mount of assembly*
in the far reaches of the north;
14 I will ascend above *the heights of the clouds*;
I will make myself like the Most High.'
15 But you are brought *down to Sheol*,
to the far reaches of the pit.
16 Those who see you will stare at you
and ponder over you:
'Is this the man [*ish*] who made the earth tremble,
who shook kingdoms,
17 who made the world like a desert
and overthrew its cities,
who did not let his prisoners go home?'

The oracle actually begins back in 14:4 as a “**taunt against the king [*melek*] of Babylon.**” As such, it has a lot of overlapping ideas, movement, and themes to Ezekiel 28’s

two laments against the “[prince \[*nagid*\] of Tyre](#)” ([Ezek 28:2](#)) and/or “[king \[*melek*\] of Tyre](#)” ([12](#)). When we put the three together and compare them, we discover that all three share most of the same themes, save for the cosmic language of Eden, etc. which is not found in the Prince of Tyre lament, but is in the other two:⁴

Beat / Theme	Ezekiel 28:1-10 (Prince of Tyre)	Ezekiel 28:11-19 (King of Tyre / Cherub)	Isaiah 14:4-23 (King of Babylon)
Opening Verse	“The word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre...’” (1-2)	“Moreover the word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre...’” (11-12)	“You will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon...” (4)
Pride / self-exaltation	“Your heart is proud” (2)	“Your heart was proud because of your beauty” (17)	“You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend...’” (13)
Claim to be God / divine status	“I am a god... I sit in the seat of the gods” (2)	“You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (12)	“I will make myself like the Most High” (14)
Claim to sit on God’s throne	“I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas” (2)	“You were on the holy mountain of God” (14)	“I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far reaches of the north” (13)
Claimed divine wisdom / beauty	“You are indeed wiser than Danel; no secret is hidden from you” (3)	“Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (12); “you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor” (17)	“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds” (14)
Wealth / power / trade as source of pride	“By your great wisdom in your trade you increased your wealth” (4-5)	“By the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence” (v. 16); “in the unrighteousness of your trade” (18)	“You made the earth tremble... shook kingdoms... made the world like a wilderness” (16-17)
Violent / oppressive rule	“The most ruthless of the nations... draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom” (7)	“You were filled with violence in your midst” (16)	“Struck the peoples in fury... subdued the nations in anger” (6)

⁴ Cooper, reading both Ezekiel laments are referring to the same person, sees “[twenty elements associated with the king of Tyre in Ezek 28:11-19](#),” but then gives a chart that goes from 28:1-19 as he compares Ezekiel to Isaiah. Cooper does see Satan behind the human kings in both passages. I’ve given a three column table rather than his two column table and I think it reveals much more than his as we will see. See [Lamar Eugene Cooper](#), *Ezekiel*, vol. 17, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 268–270.

Beat / Theme	Ezekiel 28:1-10 (Prince of Tyre)	Ezekiel 28:11-19 (King of Tyre / Cherub)	Isaiah 14:4-23 (King of Babylon)
Mount of God / assembly	(Implied in “seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas”)	“On the holy mountain of God” (14)	“I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far reaches of the north” (13)
Eden / garden connection		“You were in Eden, the garden of God” (13)	(Implied in cosmic mountain + heavenly ascent language)
Cherub / anointed guardian status		“You were the anointed guardian cherub who covers” (14)	“Morning star” who ascends to the divine assembly parallels exalted heavenly being)
Created blameless / perfection		“Blameless in your ways from the day you were created” (v. 15); “signet of perfection” (12)	(Implied in exalted heavenly status before fall)
Fall from heaven / cosmic descent	“They will thrust you down into the pit” (8)	“I cast you to the ground” (17); “I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God” (16)	“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of dawn!” (12)
Thrust down to pit / Sheol / earth	“Thrust you down into the pit... die the death of the slain” (8)	“I turned you to ashes on the earth” (18)	“You will be brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit” (15)
Public shame / appalled onlookers	“Will you still say, ‘I am a god,’ in the presence of those who kill you?” (9)	“All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you” (19); “exposed you before kings” (17)	“All the kings of the nations... they will all respond and say to you...” (9-10)
Fiery judgment / destruction		“I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you” (18)	(Implied in total downfall and “broom of destruction” in 23)
Final end / “no more forever”	“You shall die the death of the uncircumcised” (10)	“You have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever” (19)	“May the offspring of evildoers not be mentioned forever” (20)

I bring up this parallel because I preached through Isaiah over twenty years ago now. When I did, I took the same view as Calvin who said,

The exposition of this passage, which some have given, as if it referred to Satan, has arisen from ignorance; for the context plainly shows that these statements must be understood in reference to the king of the Babylonians. But when passages of Scripture are taken up at random, and no attention

is paid to the context, we need not wonder that mistakes of this kind frequently arise. Yet it was an instance of very gross ignorance, to imagine that *Lucifer* was the king of devils, and that the Prophet gave him this name. But as these inventions have no probability whatever, let us pass by them as useless fables.”⁵

Sproul, commenting on Calvin said, “Though Calvin’s words might seem a bit harsh, they teach us a good lesson. It is too easy to read things into the text of Scripture that are not there. We must, therefore, remain true to context, and in this case the context is the king of Babylon.”⁶

I no longer hold this view. I’ve changed my mind. And I’ll tell you why that matters at the end today. But first, I want us to go through Ezekiel 28’s *two* laments and look carefully *at the context* to see if this really is just inventions with no probability whatever, imaginations of our minds taken up at random, gross ignorance, useless fables, exegetical criminality, the coarsest form of textual manipulation.

⁵ John Calvin and William Pringle, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 442. Block comments, “Had he got this far in his commentary on Ezekiel, John Calvin’s response to the diabolical interpretation would probably have sounded like his comments on Isa. 14.” I tend to agree. See Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997–), 119 n. 139.

⁶ *Tabletalk Magazine*, March 1999: *The Blind Leading the Blind* (Lake Mary, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 1999), 26.

Two Laments: Not the Same Person

I want to start off our actual study of the passage with one more quote. This one from Daniel Block in his commentary. He says,

Ezekiel's prophecy is **thought** to recount the circumstances of the original fall of **Satan**, who had previously been one of the cherubim attending the throne of God. But those **who interpret the oracle historically** reject this approach. Ezekiel's prophecy is indeed couched in extravagant terms, but the primary referent within the context is clearly the human king of Tyre. In any case, for this prophet and his professional colleagues, as well as for the Hebrew historiographic narrators, human rebellion is problem enough. A detailed treatment of the origin of the demonic is not to be expected from the OT.⁷

Block's comment **restates a couple of important things** we've said up to this point. **First**, he says that those who take the "Satan" view are not interpreting the oracle *historically*. The meaning of this is tied directly to the **second** thing which is that the context is, supposedly, "**very clearly**" the

⁷ Block, 118-19.

human king of Tyre. Thus, the history is tied to the *human* king and none other. These two thoughts now allow us to begin looking at the actual text.

We will start in this third lament which takes place in **Ezek 28:11-19**. It says, “Moreover, the Word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, raise a lamentation over the *king* of Tyre...’” (11-12). The key word here is *melek*, which means “king.” We will come back to this word, but for now, it is enough to state the obviously, of course this word *can* mean a **human** king. **But does it *always*?** Stay tuned.

Now, as I said earlier, nearly all commentators see the second lament which takes place in **Ezek 28:1-10** as referring to *the same individual*. Listen to how it begins. “The Word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, say to the *prince* of Tyre...’” (1-2). The key word here is *nagid*, which means “prince.” Obviously, this is a different Hebrew word, and I would argue it does in fact only ever refer to human princes or rulers.⁸ In fact, based on what we will see later, I wouldn’t

⁸ None of its 43 occurrences refers, except perhaps here, to a heavenly being. Curiously, it is not a different word in the LXX, which translates both with *archōn*. This is a word used for both human princes (**Ex 2:14** LXX) and heavenly princes (**Dan 10:13, 20; 12:1** LXX; **John 12:31**; etc.). In fact, in the ESV, “prince” (*archōn*) only refers to heavenly beings (**Matt 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15; Eph 2:2**). Nevertheless, the majority of the time, the ESV renders it as a “ruler,” not “prince,” and most of these occurrences are human, not angelic.

translate it as “prince” here, but rather as something like a “**leader**” (NAS) or “**ruler**” (NIV), because in some places there are in fact *heavenly* “princes” (see note above), which could lead to confusion, since that cannot be what is in mind here as we will see.

Let’s stop for a moment and consider something about the context, since context is in fact king. What **no one that I’ve come across notices** when exegeting Ezekiel 28’s two laments is that these are the second and third of *three laments* against Tyre. The first takes up the entirety of Ch. 27. But listen to how it begins. “**The Word of the LORD came to me: ‘Now you, son of man, raise a lamentation over Tyre...’**” (27:1-2). This is **exactly the same introduction formula** in all three laments, not just the last two. The only difference is that “Tyre” here is not addressed to a specific ruler or king, but to **the entire city**. It is corporate, not individual. Nevertheless, it’s the same formula.

Not only this, but almost no one has noticed that Ch. 27 unfolds as a series of **nine steps** that exactly mirror the unfolding—also in **nine steps**—of the second and third laments. These steps are exactly the same across the three laments. They are as follows:

1. Prophetic command to lament
2. Prideful boast
3. Cosmic splendor
4. Glorious adornment
5. Exalted strength
6. Corrupting trade
7. Violent downfall
8. Cast to the depths
9. Ashes and lament

In fact, in many of these nine, we even have identical phrases and words, and in all of them we have the very same concepts: “**raise a lamentation**” or “**perfect in beauty,**” or wealth or “**trade**” or foreigners or violence or “**down**” or “**appalled at you,**” and so on. In other words, *the context*, which supposedly those who take the satanic interpretation are totally avoiding actually *demand*s that *the three laments be read together* and inform one another. Not just two. All three.

This is part of the beauty of learning to understand that many ancient texts are **woven together**. It is the Scripture’s own inherent literary structure, not one imposed from the outside by us. It is objective, demonstrable, contextual, and in this case helpful and perhaps even necessary for precise interpretation.

Here's an example of how this can be **valuable**. **No one would say** that the *city-ship* of Tyre is identical to the *prince* of Tyre. **No one would say** that the *king of Tyre* is identical to the *city-ship* of Tyre. Yet, people say that the *prince of Tyre* is the same as the *king of Tyre*. Same person. Why? While two laments might lead to that view, three can't. The first is aimed at **a city**, a **corporate** people, a collective. It is quite **earthly** in nature, and in fact sinks into the heart of the seas in its demise. The second, based I believe rightly on all of the language of its lament, including the word *nagid*, is aimed at a **human individual** ruler. Yes, he *claims* to be divine, but *he's still mortal* and in fact *is killed* by foreigners as he dies the death of the uncircumcised. No supernatural being could say that. Thus far, then, I agree with those who believe that the prince of Tyre is a human.

The Prince/Ruler of Tyre

But **we have three laments, not two**. The first isn't the second isn't the third. None are the same. So what are we to make of this "**king of Tyre?**" Who is he? Let's briefly go through **vv. 2-10** regarding the "prince/ruler" lament and

see how it is in fact about a human before we answer this question.

It begins with him having a “proud” heart which says, “I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas” (Ezek 28:1). His pride parallels the cities boast, “I am perfect in beauty” (27:3) and, as we will also see, it parallels the declaration of the Sovereign LORD about the king (in that verse is it not his own boast, but the declaration of God), “You were the signet of perfect, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (28:2). See how they are all saying the same thing?

But this prince or ruler or Tyre *says* that he is a god who sits in the seat of the gods in *the heart of the seas*. On one level, this refers back to the city itself, which was the great island of commerce in the ancient world, thus in the heart of the seas and kings of the seas. But it also is going to refer forward, again as we will see, to the third lament in this way. Heiser says,

Both phrases, “seat of the gods” and “heart of the seas,” point to the place of divine authority, the throne room of the divine council. Ugaritic yields a close parallel to *moshab elohim*

(Ugar. *m[t̄]b il*, “seat of El”; *KTU* 1.4.i.13).⁹ ... The residence of El (*m̄tb il*) is referred to in [Ugarit] *KTU* 1.3 iv:48; v:39; 1.4 i:12; iv:52. El’s mythic dwelling is situated at *mbk nhrm / apq thmtm*, ‘the fountainhead of the two rivers / bedding of the two floods’ (e.g. *KTU* 1.2 iii:4; 1.6 i:33–34).¹⁰

But though *he says he is a god, the LORD says, “Yet you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god” (28:2)*. The word for “man” here is not ‘*ish*’ but ‘*adam*’ (curiously, the word used for “man” in *Isa 12:16* is ‘*ish*’, not ‘*adam*’). *He is a human being*. To use the words of Wayne Jackson who completely chastises those who take the view I will talk about later, yet agree with him here, “**Could a text be clearer?**”

This is confirmed in what comes next. He claims to be *wiser than either Daniel or Danel (3-4)*. I believe it is more likely Danel, but for this point it doesn’t matter. Because

⁹ Here, he helpfully cites two works for further consultation. **Richard J. Clifford**, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 4; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972; reprinted by Wipf and Stock, 2010; but page numbers refer to the original edition, not the reprint by Wipf and Stock), 170; **E. Theodore Mullen Jr.**, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 24; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), 150–55.

¹⁰ This is a quote from **W. Hermann**. “El,” *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2nd edition, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 278. The whole quote in Heiser is **Michael S. Heiser**, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, First Edition (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 76 n. 4.

both of them are perfectly *human* beings. The boast isn't that he has wisdom *like the gods* (something you might find in Gen 3), but that he has wisdom *like the greatest human sage*. But unlike Danel or Daniel—using his wisdom, he has *become rich* (5)! And this is why he became proud and thought himself a veritable god (6). As for the rest of this lament and the identification of his prince/ruler as a human, the last key is that God will bring foreigners against him who will draw their swords, destroy his splendor (7), and thrust him down to the pit where he will “*die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas*” (8), thus coming to the same end as the city. God then taunts, *will you still call yourself a god in the presence of those who kill you* (9), as you *die the death of the uncircumcised* (10)? Everything about this lament screams that the prince/ruler of Tyre is a mortal human leader of the city of Tyre. I not only have no qualms with that; I think it is demanded by the context.

The King of Tyre

Before going formally into *the king*, I want you to remember that in the total chiasmic structure of Ezekiel, the or-

acle and the only text of Ezekiel that is the place many scholars see as the very central focus of Ezekiel's book is **vv. 11-19**. Not 1-19, but 11-19.¹¹ They are distinct, and that's meaningful! Everything before it moves toward that moment. Everything after it flows out from it. Why? Because **the real disaster** behind Tyre's shipwreck, behind the human ruler's arrogance, behind every nation's rebellion, is the fall of *a heavenly power* who once walked in Eden among the stones of fire. This was a shipwreck on the heavenly divine council. Many have problems with this view. So let's address it by looking at the story.

Who is this king of Tyre? The first thing to do is return again to the word "king." While it is certainly true that kings (*melek*) are *often* human, this is most certainly not always the case. **First up** is **Milcom** "**the abomination of the Ammonites**" (**1Kg 11:5, 33**). Milcom literally means "**their king**" (from *melek* + 3rd person plural suffix). Milcom was the chief god of Ammon, an abomination, not just an idol. He has ties to Nergal, the god of the underworld,¹² and this in turn is eerily similar to the god Hades, the brother of Zeus.

¹¹ Jiří Moskala, "[Notes on the Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel](#)," *Andrews University* (2016): 102-110.

¹² E. Puech, "Milcom," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 575-576.

But we'll see later something else about him, because he is really pretty important in Tyre itself. A second one is **Molech**, to whom the Israelites repeatedly offered their children as human sacrifices to (**Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; 2Kg 23:10**). His name is also a deliberate vocalization of *melek*. It also means "king." Molech is literally "King."

Furthermore, in **Psalm 95:2**, "The LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods." Yahweh himself is called the supreme King! Same goes for **Ps 47:7**, "For God is the King of all the earth." When Yahweh tells Samuel that they have rejected him as King (**1Sam 8:7**), he is stating that he was the king over Israel. This is a divine council concept and ties directly to **Deut 32:8-9**, where sons of God are placed over the nations, while Yahweh inherits Israel and becomes their king. It is into this that you can think of Jesus' title "King of kings" (**Rev 17:14**) doing much work! For he is God of us, God of Israel, God of the nations, God of gods! Perhaps most directly, Yahweh is called the "King of Israel" (cf. **Isa 44:6**), an exact conceptual match to the "king of Tyre" language, but it refers to God not a man.

Now, the fact that *melek* can mean a supernatural entity is vital, but it certainly **doesn't prove anything**. So we have to go through the passage. The first thing God says to this

king of Tyre is that he was the “**signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.**” We’ve seen how this “perfection” parallels both the city and the prince. But here, the word “**signet**” (*chwtm*) is used. There is a beautiful play on words going on. Signets are rings used by kings. However, this word, which is actually addressed as a “you” implies a sealer, not a ring *per se*. As a person, it is important to know that this word can also be translated as *a serpent*!¹³ That’s interesting, especially in light of what comes next.

“**You were in Eden, the garden of God**” (13a). Curiously, this parallels both the **wisdom** of the prince of Tyre (28:3-4) and the **trees** that make up the ship of Tyre (27:5-6). Garden, wisdom, and trees are parallel in the nine-part movement. What do we find in Eden? Lots and lots of *trees*. This is a fact that Ezekiel himself knows very well, and will later use to even talk about the “**trees of Eden**” (31:9), a fascinating and parallel story to this one. Importantly, what do we find the narrator telling us the woman was thinking in response to the *serpent* in *Eden* as regards the forbidden *tree*? It was “**desired to make one wise...**” (Gen 3:6). In fact, in **Proverbs 3:18**, “**She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her.**” Is this a coincidence? I think not.

¹³ Heiser has a long discussion of this. See *Unseen Realm*, 79-82.

Next it says, “Every precious stone was your covering” and then it lists nine stones: sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle. These are then crafted together in gold settings. What’s going on here? Somehow, the king of Tyre is covered in these nine glimmering, shining gems. Now, the translators of the LXX realized what a close parallel this felt to the priestly breastplate which he put on as a covering. The problem is, there are *twelve* gems there. So, the translators decided to harmonize Exodus 28:17-21 here and they added three stones making twelve.¹⁴

Nine is a fascinating number. Bullinger only links one number to the occult in his *Number in Scripture* book: Nine. It is related to judgment, is the number of nations in the giant wars of Gen 14, is a factor of 666 (9x74), is related to the Sodom story, the sieges of Jerusalem, the abyss, the ungodly, lasciviousness, lightning, and so on.¹⁵ In our story, it is fascinating that all three laments have nine distinct yet parallel movements or rows. It’s almost as if the weave is embodying

¹⁴ I noted this last week and gave the following article: Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé; Jacobus A. Naudé, “Textual Interrelationships Involving the Septuagint Translations of the Precious Stones in the Breastpiece of the High Priest,” *HTS* 76.4 (HTS Theological Studies, 2020). See the Appendix at the end for a table comparing them.

¹⁵ E. W. Bullinger, *Number in Scripture* fourth ed. Revised (London: Eyre & Spottiswodde, 1921): #9. The only positive associated with nine in his book is the fruit of the Spirit. All the rest is negative.

these stones, clothing, as it were, the final king of Tyre in nine rows of judgment! The nine stones that once adored him in glory have been replaced, row by row, with the record of his pride, corruption, violence, fall, and doom. In other words, the form of the text itself is doing what the content describes: the one who was covered in glory is now covered in the testimony of his own rebellion. The structure embodies the judgment. Structure is theology!¹⁶

But what kind of glory? *Heavenly glory*. We learn more. “On the day that you were created they were prepared” (Ezek 28:13b). “They” refers to the nine precious stones, plus the gold settings that formed the king’s covering or adornment. They were not added later, but were ready and assigned to him the moment he came into existence. Kings receive coronation when they ascend to the throne. Not this king. His very identity and status was tied to the stones from the instant of his creation. This means that his original purpose was to guard, to shine, to reflect divine splendor. It was built into him at the moment God made him. He was not promoted or decorated later; his glory was intrinsic and immediate and directly tied to these stones.

¹⁶ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3A, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 1322.

So what is [the meaning of these stones](#)? In ANE and biblical and Jewish cosmology, precious stones, especially in groups of seven or nine, often represented members of [the divine council](#) or heavenly beings themselves. We see this in [1 Enoch 18:6-9](#):

I passed by and I saw a place *burning* night and day, where there were *seven mountains of expensive stones*, three toward the east and three laying toward the south. And, indeed, those toward the east were from a stone of color, but one was from a stone of pearl, the other a stone of healing; but the one to the south was from a fiery red stone; And the one in their midst was into heaven, as the throne of God was made from the stone of alabaster, and the top of the throne was made from the stone of sapphire; And I saw a consuming fire and things within these mountains.

Enoch's stone thrones likewise has a parallel in a Babylonian text, the very place Ezekiel is at, where the *Amesha Spentas* ("[Immortal Holy Ones](#)") are seated near the throne of Ahura Mazda where they serve him as ministering angels.¹⁷ Three of this divine council sit to the right of Mazda,

¹⁷ [Bundahishn 2.4](#). The thrones are specifically referenced in [Venidad 19.32](#).

three sit to the left.¹⁸ Back in Enoch, six archangels are referred to (Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Sariel, and Gabriel; **1 En 20:1-7**) as a parallel idea. Thus, scholars conclude that the six mountains of Enoch “represent the thrones of the chiefs of God’s heavenly entourage.”¹⁹ So writes one, “In the case of the ‘stones of fire’ in whose midst he dwells, the reference is to his fellow inhabitants—who are thus thought of as creatures of light [i.e. angels].”²⁰ This is in line with **Psalm 104:4**, “He makes his angels flaming fire.” Would it surprise you then to learn that **the Church Fathers** often saw these precious stones as angels? For example, Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) wrote, “He gave the names of nine stones, since there are nine ranks of angels. The first angel was adorned and covered with these nine since when

¹⁸ **A. V. Williams Jackson** (*A Brief Note on the Amshaspands* [Freiburg: Mohr, 1898], 364) reproduces the arrangement with Mazda at the head and other archangels to his left and right:

Ahura Mazda

Vohu Manah (“Good Purpose”) Spenta Armaiti (“Holy Devotion”)

Asha Vahishta (“Best Truth/Righteousness”) Haurvatat (“Holiness”)

Khshathra Vairya (“Desirable Dominion”) Ameretat (“Immortality”)

¹⁹ **George W. E. Nickelsburg** and **Klaus Baltzer**, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 286. Others who take this view include, **Richard Clifford**, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 173; **Kelley Coblenz Bautch**, *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17-19* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 114-20; **Millard C. Lind**, *Ezekiel*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996), 237; Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 79-80; **Walther Zimmerli**, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 93. Zimmerli notes other non-English speaking commentators who view them as angels or stars.

²⁰ Zimmerli, 93.

it was set ahead of the whole multitude of angels, it was more illustrious in comparison with them.”²¹

There really are good reasons, not just “fanciful imaginations,” why the Fathers said things like, “Satan is interpreted ‘the adversary.’ This is not my teaching but that of the inspired prophet Ezekiel [citing our passage]” (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 2.4) or “If you turn to the prophecy of Ezekiel, you will at once perceive that this angel was both by creation good and by choice corrupt. For he speaks of the devil there in the person of the prince of Tyre” (Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 2.10).²² They aren’t just making it up.

But let’s continue, because what follows will very much help us understand this angelic talk and the real identity of this king. “You were an anointed guardian cherub” (14a). In my Q&A Companion to *The Unseen Realm* that Dr. Heiser edited for me, I ask, “Question 29. What are cherubim?” A:

²¹ Gregory the Great, “Forty Gospel Homilies 34,” cited in Kenneth Stevenson and Michael Gluerup, *Ezekiel, Daniel*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 13 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 95.

²² I of course don’t think the “prince” is the devil, but the king. For other Fathers see Jerome, *Homilies on the Psalms* 14 (Ps 81), *Against Jovinianus* 2.4; John of Damascus, *Barlaam and Joseph* 7; Ambrose, *On Paradise* 2.9; Augustine, *City of God* 11.15 (all in Stevenson’s volume); Book of John the Evangelist (James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 188); Gospel of Bartholomew 4.24, 55; and with the Jews see 2 Enoch 29:3-5’ Apocalypse of Abraham 6:14-15 and others. On the Apocalypse see Andrei A. Orlov, “[The Fallen Trees: Arboreal Metaphors and Polemics with the Divine Body Traditions in the Apocalypse of Abraham](#),” *Marquette University* (n.d.).

“*Cherubim* are shining divine beings who guard the throne of God; their appearance is partly human and partly animal.”²³ “The description of cherubim is drawn from Akkadian/Babylonian throne iconography due to the historical Babylonian context of Ezekiel and the Mesopotamian literary context of the Eden story. The term comes from Akkadian/Babylonian *karibu*.”²⁴ Never, not even a single time, does the word cherubim refer to a human. That point needs to sink in. The king of Tyre is not being *likened* to a cherubim, let alone stand apart from one.²⁵ He is *called* a cherubim.²⁶ It is difficult for me to see how this is textual manipulation taken out of context? It says what it says.

It continues. “I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God” (14b). This is the main biblical text that teaches us that Eden actually had a mountain. Remember, the Garden was “in” Eden (Gen 2:8), but Eden was bigger. It had a mountain, and why not? There was a river that flowed from

²³ Douglas Van Dorn, *The Unseen Realm: A Question & Answer Companion* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015).

²⁴ This was the note added by Mike to the question. It is n. 29.

²⁵ The LXX actually says he was “with [*meta*] the guardian cherub.” That is, he was “with” the cherubim, not the cherubim himself. This is actually one of the sources from his people think the person in mind is Adam in the Garden. There is no “with” in the Hebrew. Heiser says, “That perspective is workable with parts of the description, but not all of them” (*Unseen Realm*, 77), but see the next note. For resources on the Adamic (i.e. the “protoplast,” great word) background see Orlov, n. 29.

²⁶ Heiser again, “This view depends on rejecting the traditional Hebrew text of the passage” (*Unseen Realm, Expanded Edition*, 90).

Eden river's have their source, most of the time, in mountains. And by the way, it is where the river flowed that we find the origins of the precious gems with its gold, bdellium and onyx (**Gen 2:11-12**).²⁷ But the **mountain idea is also that of the divine council**. Here, it is worth comparing to the Isaiah passage. The Day Star, son of Dawn said, "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God..." (**Isa 14:13**). Stars are often identified as heavenly beings in the Bible (**Jdg 5:20; Job 38:7; Dan 8:9-10; Rev 1:20; 12:3-4**). "I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the *mount of assembly* in the far reaches of the north" (**Isa 14:13b**). The mount of assembly. That's **the divine council!** It's also where we get Armageddon, but that's for another time. "North" is the word *saphon* and it directly links to Baal's mountain.²⁸

And that's the idea here in **Ezekiel 28:14** as well. "I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the

²⁷ **Going Deeper.** This was in the land of Havilah. One of the few ancient references to Havilah outside the Bible is found in *Pseudo-Philo* 25:11-12 (1st cent A.D.). It is fascinating. It talks about the days of Kenaz (Caleb's father) when the Amorite (giants) brought up from this land "precious stones. . . crystal and prase," some of which "*shone. . . as if it revealed the water of the deep lying beneath it,*" and put them in their *sanctuaries*. These stones were of too much value to estimate. They were lamps without artificial light, so bright that "even if one of the Amorites [giants] was blind, he would go and put his eyes on it and recover sight."²⁷ The stones were also said to have been found laying upon seven "sacred nymphs [idols]" (in Scandinavian and Greek mythology, for instance, the nymphs hung out by the World Tree and were teachers of wisdom) who "when called upon, showed the Amorites [including Nimrod] what to do every hour." Fascinating.

²⁸ See **Meredith G. Kline**, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 49-58.

midst of the stones of fire you walked.” Stones of fire! That’s our nine stones from earlier. Those are the angelic beings we discussed. These are the members of the council. This king of Tyre is somehow in Eden on the divine council not only clothed with the stones, but walking in the middle of angelic beings. How could that possibly refer to a human in any era, even metaphorically, especially one who was made this way, not one who became this at the right age when he was installed as king? Curiously, ignoring the accents of the Masoretic text, which were added later, we can actually translate this as, “And I set you in the holy mountain; a divinity you were.”²⁹

Ezekiel continues. “You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you” (Ezek 28:15). While this could theoretically refer to Adam, we’ve already seen that lament it to *a cherub*,

²⁹ Greenberg explains, “Disregarding the accents, the MT of vs. 14b^{αβ} may be resegmented thus: *wnttyk bbr qdš / ’lby m hyyt*, etc. ‘and I set you in the holy mountain; a divinity you were.’ Separating *qdš* from *’lby m* does not fundamentally change the sense. ‘Holy mountain’ is a valid construction by itself, and *’lby m* will mean ‘divinity,’ a generic term for transhumans; e.g., angels—Gen 32:3, 29, 31. According to the MT, then, the inhabitant of God’s garden/mountain was a divine being, a cherub. The Hebrew is unexceptionable, but the clash with the preceding oracle, which mocks the claim of Tyre’s ruler that he is divine, is too much for most commentators.” That’s because they confuse the two oracles as referring to the same person. As I’m arguing, they don’t. See Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 22A, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 584. Thanks to Caleb Song for this find! I missed it during the preached sermon.

someone likened to a serpent. It most certainly could not refer to any human post-Adam, because we are all sinners. But it could refer to any number of heavenly beings in the Garden, couldn't it?

Vs. 16 is one of those that **anti-satanic readings really jump at.**³⁰ “**In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned.**” First, though, where is Adam ever depicted as filled with violence? Cain? Sure. Adam? Never. Let alone trading things. But someone will ask, *where is Satan ever depicted like this either? It must be a human king!*

Not so fast. In Enoch, and frankly in nearly all ancient religions, the angels (gods) “**trade**” **forbidden heavenly secrets with humans!** These include things like metallurgy, weapons, cosmetics, sorcery, herbology, astrology, medicine, and so on (see **1En 8-9; 69**). In exchange, they receive worship, wives, and illicit power. The result is **violence** on earth (**Gen 6:11**) and the corruption of the divine order. God then judges them by binding and casting them down. The ship is the earthly outworking of this heavenly corruption:

³⁰ For example, “**One issue in favor of this view is that the king is described as one involved in a thriving trade practice, which would be questionable for Adam as well as Satan, but certainly characteristic of the king of Tyre (28:16).**” **Mark Rooker**, *Ezekiel*, ed. Max Anders, vol. 17 (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2005), 199.

Tyre becomes the marketplace for cosmic goods (trees from sacred mountains, gems, etc.), mirroring the cherub's misuse of divine resources.

You might admit that this is fascinating, but say there's none of that until Genesis 6. What about Genesis 3? Isn't the serpent there trading with our parents? Isn't he offering knowledge of good and evil (“your eyes will be opened”) and the promise of god-like status (“you will be like gods [KJV], knowing good and evil”) in exchange for worship and allegiance if Eve and Adam will just shift their trust from Yahweh to the serpent's word? By eating the fruit, they grasp at the divine prerogative (wisdom, autonomy, godhood) that was not given to them. The serpent is trafficking in divine knowledge and authority. He is trading. He offers it to humanity at the cost of rebellion against Yahweh. The result is immediate violence—a curse on the ground, pain in childbirth, murder in Gen 4, expulsion from Eden. It's literally the Genesis 3 story being played out before our eyes, but only when you acknowledge that kings can be angelic and that they, too, trade things with us.

This was the sin of the devil, and it is to the devil, to Satan, the serpent, the Nachash that this must refer. He had

a high place and threw it away for the same reason the human king of Tyre and the human king of Babylon will later throw theirs away — **pride**. This says nothing about the later ascent to ruler of the world that John and Jesus will run into. This is primordial. And it is real. It is historical, not anti-historical! And Ezekiel knew about it. Why wouldn't he? Why shouldn't we expect a detailed treatment of the origin of the satanic in the OT? His own Scripture told him about it!

“So I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the mist of the stones of fire” (**Ezek 28:16**). This king of Tyre is cast away just as Satan was cursed in Genesis 3. That doesn't refer to his ultimate defeat in Revelation 20 *primarily*, but to **his first fall** back in Genesis 3. Adam, Even, and Satan were *all* kicked out of Eden, is the implication, and Satan no longer had access to the divine council in the same way. So I assume, stealing the idea from my friend Sharon Gilbert, that he started his own **infernal council**, a council made up of other fallen entities like himself—the council the Greeks refer to as

Olympus and the Canaanites talk about when Baal builds his palace on Mt. Zaphon.³¹ But that's not here.

Here, we have **his original fall**, a fall that was the archetype of the later prince of Tyre and of the city-ship of Tyre. “Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground...” (**Ezek 28:17**). Remember the curse? “On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life” (**Gen 3:14**). **To the ground!** Highest exalted heavenly cherubim priest thrown all the way to the ground. “I expose you before kings, to feast their eyes on you” (**Ezek 28:17b**). What kings? Human kings? *Maybe*. Heavenly kings? *Likely!* “By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries” (**17c**). **Sanctuaries** is where we get the idea of holy service, like the Levitical priests. He is their heavenly counterpart, wearing a pagan priestly ephod rather than a godly one of twelve stones.

³¹ I do think the figure in **Job 1:6** and **2:1** is likely this same person, though we can't be sure. It is ha-satan, and must be a function, not a proper name since it has the article. However, that figure must be *someone*. And his role there is identical to his name: the accuser. In this way, perhaps God cast Satan away from being a member of the council and confined him to a prosecutorial lawyer role (lawyers and Satan kind of go together, right?). Meanwhile, he starts his own “infernal council” like we see in the Baal Cycle or at Olympus with other fallen beings, in mockery and perhaps foolish rivalry to God.

But like Nadab and Abihu, **he sinned** and, “I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you” (17d). Remember, here is still a prophecy here, and I believe it has its fulfillment at the second coming described in **Revelation 20:10**, “And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Thus, “All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; and you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever” (**Ezek 28:19**). And thus we come to the end of the laments against Tyre: its ship, its ruler, and its king.

One question still lingers. If this is the king of Tyre, how can he be Satan? This is an interesting question that if you understand the divine council worldview you can answer fairly easily. For in the Scripture, each nation/city is given a son of God to rule over it (**Deut 32:8**). These peoples were actually under their respective *elohim*/patron deities. And as such, **they would have known** about this entity, just as you and I know about Satan—the ruler of this world, because the whole world is under his influence! When he falls, all

others are appalled that one like this could fall, especially those other *elohim*-kings who knew him as a peer.

It is well-known that [the city of Tyre had a patron deity](#). His name was [Melqart](#). His name actually means, “[King of the City](#),” a compound of *melek* and *qrt*—city. We’ve seen that he has *aspects* of Nergal and Hades, but not in the fullest sense. In most sources, he is a culture hero and is likely [Hercules](#), who in the ANE was a specific form of Baal—the Baal of Tyre. [Not “The” Baal](#), but the *baal* (lord) of *this* city. That’s why Alexander wanted so badly to offer sacrifices to him ([Arrian](#), *Anabasis of Alexander* 2.16–24; [Strabo](#), *Geog* 16.2.23).

But if you know about Hercules, you will know that [he is a demi-god](#), the equivalent of the [Nephilim](#) in the Bible, the son of a god and a woman. For the Greeks, he was Zeus’ son though the lesser demi-god Alcmene, herself a granddaughter of Perseus, son of Zeus, yet also considered [mortal](#). At the allotment of the nations, it wasn’t the demigods who got anything, though. It was the sons of God—entities just like Satan/Baal/Zeus. But Plato gives us a way to understand what could have happened.

And Poseidon, receiving for his lot the island of Atlantis, begat children by a mortal woman, and settled them in a part of the island ... He also begat and brought up five pairs of twin male children; and dividing the island of Atlantis into ten portions, he gave to the first-born of the eldest pair his mother's dwelling and the surrounding allotment, which was the largest and best, and made him king over the rest ... And he named them all; the eldest, who was the first king, he named Atlas, and after him the whole island and the ocean were called Atlantic.

(Plato, *Critias* 113c-114b)

What I'm suggesting then is that the king of Tyre is ultimately not Hercules, because he wasn't around in Eden. It is *his father*. It is Zeus, aka Satan, the Serpent. He's the one that gave Tyre to Hercules, like Poseidon gave Atlantis to Atlas. That resolves all the problems and allows to fully understand how you can in fact get a satanic interpretation from **Ezekiel 28:11-19** without taking things out of context or just making them up.

So that's my argument and I don't think I've been doing horrific exegetical assassination to the text. Therefore, let me address why any of this matters. Reading the king of

Tyre in **Ezek 28:11–19** as a **regular human ruler** (with cosmic language as mere hyperbole) versus a **real fallen supernatural entity** (a cherub-level elohim / patron “son of God” behind the throne) changes the entire theological weight of the passage, the book of Ezekiel, and the Bible’s storyline.

First, it **flattens and ignores the text’s own literary structure**, as we must read not just the last two laments together, but also the first of the three. But there is a deliberate escalation when understand that they must be read together. We move deliberately from an *earthly* ship that equates to corporate human pride, to a *human* prince, an individual mortal who claims divinity but is told “You are a man,” and finally to a *cosmic* king, a cherub in Eden, created blames, among the stones of fire, who is cast from the holy mountain. Earth → human → heaven, with the human standing between, like an intercessor who was supposed to rule over his people justly on behalf of the elohim. The nine stones of fire also literally “cover” the third lament, turning his original glory in corruption, fall, and ashes.

Second, it **restores the divine council worldview** that so many do not understand. The human-king view keeps the passage isolated in history. The supernatural view plugs it directly into the Bible’s cosmic narrative of nations allotted

to “sons of God” (*elohim*; **Deut 32:8-9**), God judges the corrupt gods of the nations (**Ps 82**), and real “princes” over nations, supernatural patrons, such as the prince of Persia, Greece, and Israel (**Dan 10:13, 20; 12:1**). Tyre’s patron. This makes Ezekiel 28 part of the **larger story** of the gods of the nations being judged so the nations can be reclaimed (**Deut 32:43; Rev 5:9–10**). The human-only reading turns it into a local morality tale.

Third, it **explains the Eden language**. It isn’t a generic royal flatter. It is the exact language of Genesis 2-3 plus the divine council. A human king was never in primordial Eden. A demigod like Hercules/Melqart wasn’t either. But a Watcher-class cherub who fell through pride fits perfectly — the same nachash/serpent pattern that began the rebellion. The supernatural reading connects Genesis to Ezekiel to the gospel.

How so? By **deepening the gospel** and its entire redemption arc. The human king view is at best a moral lesson: *Don’t be proud like this ancient king*. The supernatural view: the gods who were allotted to the nations are real powers, they really exist, but they are judged and cast down. Christ has disarmed them (**Col 2:15**). The same pride that corrupted the cherub of

Tyre is the pride Christ crushed on the cross so that the nations can be reclaimed and know that “I am the LORD.”

This returns the passage to **cosmic hope**. The gods fall so that “**all who know you among the peoples are appalled ... you have come to a dreadful end.**” This becomes the prelude to “**the nations will rejoice with his people**” (**Deut 32:43**). That’s the redemption thread we’ve seen seeing build throughout these oracles.

If it’s just a human king, the meaning stays safe and small. If it’s a real fallen cherub — one of the powers that ruled the nations — the meaning becomes big: pride isn’t just a personal flaw; it’s **the root sin that corrupts both human empires and the spiritual powers behind them**. Pride is no small thing. It has satanic roots. It has cosmic scope. When you are full of pride, you are ultimately acting like Satan himself. But Christ’s victory is cosmic. The gospel reclaims what arrogant nations, haughty human princes, and prideful gods lost.

Oh, and there’s one more reason. Believe it or not, of all people, it is **Hal Lindsey** got this part right. He said,

In 1966 a friend of mine submitted a manuscript to a well-known publisher. It was rejected with the explanation that the subject was a dead issue and no one believed in that sort

of thing any more. The book was entitled *The Dark Prince*, and it presented a very real spiritual being who is sometimes called Satan.

Would anyone dare to say this is a dead issue today?

Recently [1972] a brilliant young Englishman named Os Guinness began searching through the vast libraries of London for literature on witchcraft, magic, and the occult. He found that most major works on history listed these subjects as phenomena which were almost extinct and had been dealt a deathblow by the Renaissance and modern science. However, beginning about 1967 he discovered a veritable explosion of literature and documentation on the subject.³²

In good Hal Lindsey fashion, he of course starts making some **wild leaps** in how he unfolds the meaning of the fallen cherub and its supposed connections to Antichrist and the like. But he got a couple of things right. He explains that there was a **massive desupernaturalism** wave that swept through liberal and then conservative seminaries over the course of a 150 years. That, in turn, created a **theological vacuum** that has seen the ironic rise of both new age prac-

³² See **Hal Lindsey**, *Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1972), 26-36.

tices where people don't think they are actually doing anything spiritually harmful and all out satanic activities though the influx of eastern and western paganism.

In the middle of all this, **Christians have lost their ability to think about these things clearly.** Many just look at you with a blank stare or even get angry, saying you are taking things way out of context, seeing fables, making things up, and even being dangerous or even heretical. I've tried to show you that isn't true. But more, I'm trying to show you that we must recover a supernatural reading of the early church. They weren't stupid. They were in touch with the dangers and deceptions and worldviews that we have forgotten.

Ezek 28:11-19 is **the very center**, the literary heart of the entire book of Ezekiel for a reason. This is a serious matter and one we must get right. That reason isn't because some unnamed king from a town most have never heard of decided to get a little cocky. That's there, *with the prince/ruler of Tyre*, but that isn't the chiastic center of the book. The *cherub* story is. Why? Because it takes us back to the Garden itself, to the original spot where we humans fell at the deceiving hands of the Satan himself. This is inspired commentary on Gen 3!

His pride drags us [straight back to Eden](#)—to the root of everything broken. Don't be deceived: pride isn't just a bad habit or a moral failing. It is the primal sin that shattered creation itself and plunged the world into chaos. It is an extremely serious matter, the most deadly of the seven deadly sins. Only the supernatural view of this story allows you to see the fullness of its severity.

If we will recover this, we will have the legs again to speak the Word of the LORD with its full power, so that the gospel might once more tear down powers and principalities through the message of Christ and his work in defeating this creature. Or, we can play it safe and watch the culture continue to slip away on our watch knowing we have the remedy right here in a gospel that saves people out of the clutches of this satanic evil. What direction will we choose?

Appendix: Stones of Fire Table

Stone (ordered by MT then LXX additions)	MT-Hebrew (9 stones)	LXX-Greek (12 stones)	Vulgate-Latin (9 stones)	Syriac-Peshitta (12 stones)
1. (Carnelian or Ruby)	אֶדֶם (Odem / carnelian/ruby)	σάρδιον (sardion / carnelian)	sardius (sardius / carnelian)	swmq' or srdwn (red stone / carnelian)
2. (Topaz or Chrysolite)	פִּטְדָּה (Pitdah / topaz/chrysolite)	τοπάζιον (topazion / topaz)	topazius (topaz)	zrg' (shining or reddish / topaz-like)
3. (Aquamarine/Diamond)	יָהָלֹם (Yahalom / aquamarine/diamond)	σμάραγδος (smaragdos / emerald)	iaspis (iaspis / jasper)	zmrqd' (emerald)
4. (Beryl or Chrysolite)	תַּרְשִׁישׁ (Tarshish / beryl/chrysolite)	— (shifted; chrysolithos later)	chrysolitus (chrysolite)	— (or descriptive equivalent)
5. (Onyx)	שְׁהָם (Shoham / onyx)	ὄνυχιον (onychion / onyx)	onyx (onyx)	onyx-like or brwl' variant
6. (Jasper)	יָשָׁפֶה (Yashpneh / jasper)	ἰάσπις (iaspis / jasper)	— (jasper earlier as iaspis)	yšpwn or yšph (jasper)
7. (Sapphire/Lapis Lazuli)	סַפִּיר (Sappir / sapphire/lapis lazuli)	σάπφειρος (sapheiros / sapphire)	sapphyrus (sapphire)	spyl' (sapphire/lapis)
8. (Carbuncle or Emerald)	נֹפֶכֶח (Nofekh / carbuncle/emerald)	ἄνθραξ (anthrax / carbuncle/garnet)	carbunculus (carbuncle)	— (or zmrqd' emerald variant)
9. (Emerald or Beryl-like)	בָּרָקֶת (Bareqet / emerald/beryl-like)	— (emerald earlier as smaragdos)	zmaragdus (emerald)	— (emerald earlier)
10. (LXX: Ligure)	—	λιγύριον (ligyrion / ligure)	—	nq' t' or qrwstlws (crystal/ligure-like)
11. (LXX: Agate)	—	ἀχάτης (achates / agate)	—	qrkdn' (chalcedony/agate variant)
12. (LXX: Amethyst)	—	ἀμέθυστος (amethystos / amethyst)	—	— (or descriptive purple variant)
13. (LXX: Chrysolite)	—	χρυσόλιθος (chrysolithos / chrysolite)	— (chrysolitus earlier)	tršyš-like or brwl' (beryl/chrysolite)
14. (LXX: Beryl)	—	βηρύλλιον (beryllion / beryl)	berillus (beryl)	brwl' (beryl)

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