

Handout: Ezekiel Lesson 10

The chief author of sin, then, is the devil, the author of all evil. Not I but the Lord has said, "The devil sins from the beginning." Before him no one sinned. Nor did he sin because by nature he was of necessity prone to sin, or else the responsibility for sin would reflect on him who created him in this way, but after being created good, he became a devil by his own free choice, receiving that name from his action. Though he was an archangel, he was afterwards called devil (slanderer) from his slandering, and though he was once a good servant of God, he was afterwards rightly named Satan, for Satan is interpreted "the adversary."

Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, 2.4

Ezekiel's oracles against the nations served two purposes:

1. Ezekiel reminded the exiles that Yahweh is the Divine Judge of all nations.
2. When Nebuchadnezzar fulfills all the oracles, both the exiles and the nations "will know that I am Yahweh" (repeated in 24:24, 27; 25:5, 7, 11, 14, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23, 24, 26; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15).

Chapter 28 divides into three oracles against the Phoenician city of Tyre and ends with a promise of restoration and safety for Israel. Each oracle begins with the announcement statement "The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows" (verses 1, 11, and 20). Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre for 13 years from 586-573 BC.

Oracle 1: Charges and judgment against the ruler of Tyre (28:1-10)

Oracle 2: Lament for the fall of the King of Tyre (28:11-19)

Oracle 3: Charges and judgment against Sidon (28:20-23)

Concluding passage: Israel's restoration and security from her neighbors (28:24-26)

Ezekiel 28:11-19 ~ Lament for the Prince of Tyre

Like all laments in Scripture, this one divides into two parts with verse 15b as the transition from the first to the second part:

Part 1: A description of past glory (verses 12b-15)

Part 2: An account of the disaster, which is justified punishment (verses 16-19).

Notice how the focus of the lament changes from the "king of Tyre" in verse 12 to the "cherub" [living creature] in verses 14 and 16.

In the lament, there are obvious references to the fall of man through the temptation of Satan from Genesis Chapter 3. The oracle compares Prince of Tyre to Adam in his fall, to Satan in his former perfection and in his pride that evolved into wickedness, and his desire to be divine. The perfect creature in Part 1 becomes a winged-creature/cherub in Part 2. The "mountain of God" becomes "holy precincts" and "precious stones" from the real world are replaced by "red-hot coals" from which the cherub is ultimately banished (verses 14 and 16). Part 2 describes the sin and punishment of the cherub/winged creature described in Part 1 to have sinned "in commerce." The judgment in Part 2 is before royal peers "a spectacle for kings" (verse 17) and "before all the eyes that saw you" (verse 18). Part 2 describes the sin and punishment of the creature in which the series of punishments is graded: expelled from God's mountain, hurled to the ground, consumed by fire, and reduced to ashes.

→ over

Two short oracles complete Chapter 28: An oracle against Sidon (28:20-23) and a second oracle of hope for Israel (28:24-26).

In Chapters 29-32, Ezekiel receives seven oracles predicting Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt and Egypt's loss of power and influence in the region. King Nebuchadnezzar invaded and plundered Egypt in 572 and again in 568 BC. All the oracles except Oracle 3 begin with a date, and all are announced by the word-formula, "the word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows..." They all end with the announcement formula, "...they will know that I am Lord Yahweh" or "they will know that I am Yahweh" except for the allegory of the Cedar Tree in Oracle 5.

- Oracle 1, December/January 588/87 BC (29:1-16)
- Oracle 2, March/April 571 (29:17-21)
- Oracle 3, (30:1-19)
- Oracle 4, March/April 587 (30:20-26)
- Oracle 5, May/June 587 (31:1-18)
- Oracle 6, February/March 586 (32:1-16)
- Oracle 7, March/April 586 (32:17-32)

The first oracle divides into three parts with each part announced by the phrase "the Lord Yahweh says this" (verses 3, 8, 13):

Part 1: Announcement of the charges against Egypt (29:1-7)

Part 2: The judgment against Egypt (29:8-12)

Part 3: The restoration of Egypt (29:13-16)

Oracle 2 is out of sequence and is the last oracle of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry. The second oracle announces that Nebuchadnezzar has already taken his army to Tyre. The siege lasted from 586-573 BC and ended in a treaty. But now, in March/April 571 BC, Yahweh announces as compensation for only a partial success against Tyre (verse 18), that Nebuchadnezzar has permission to plunder Egypt.

Chapter 30 has oracles 3 and 4 of Egypt's 7 judgment oracles with each oracle introduced by the phrase: *The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows:*

Oracle 3: Announcing Yahweh's Day of Judgment for Egypt (30:1-19)

Oracle 4: The defeat and exile of Egypt (30:20-26)

Oracle 3 divides into four parts with each part identified by the repeated phrase *Yahweh says this...*

Part 1 announces the coming of "the sword" in verses 1-5.

Part 2 announces the extent of territory to suffer destruction verses 6-9.

Part 3 announces the extent of bloodshed within Egypt in verses 10-12.

Part 4 announces the destruction of Egypt's pagan idols in verses 13-19.