

Paradise Lost and Restored: Who is Satan? (Part 1)

Ricardo Campos, Teaching Elder Grace Chapel, Orange, CA April 27, 2014

I. Introduction

Satan and God are known as mortal enemies. But imagine a time when Satan and God were actually friends? Believe it or not, there was actually such a time, a time when God and Satan were close. In fact, God took special care when He made Satan. He was the most gifted angelic being God ever created, so special that God even entrusted him with His very throne...but then one day Satan caught a glimpse of himself and he thought that he should be God.

II. In the Beginning God Loved Satan.....but then Satan Rebelled Against Him

Is Satan real or a myth created by man? People's beliefs about Satan vary. Some see him as a harmless character dressed in a red jumpsuit sporting horns, a red tail, and a pitchfork. Others look at the Bible and see Satan not as evil but an obedient servant of God. Or they support the idea that people throughout millennia have used someone or something called Satan as a way to define their enemies during their struggles, religious or otherwise (e.g., Elaine Pagels in her book *The Origin of Satan*, p. 39, 182). Some think Satan is the invention of Christianity, who one day may even be done away with (e.g., Peter Sanford in his book *The Devil: A Biography*, p. xv-vi, 278, 283). Still others don't believe in Satan at all, not even as a myth (e.g., Caseagainstfaith.com, *The Implausibility of Satan*, <http://www.caseagainstfaith.com/the-implausability-of-satan.html>).

Satan: frightening monster or beautiful creature whom God loved?

Satan: the most beautiful and wisest creature God made, though some see Satan as a terrifying creature, the Bible actually gives a different picture of Satan. When God made Satan, He made him *the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty*. That's not all, God also created a special covering for Satan; it was made of precious stones including diamonds and emeralds, Ezekiel 28:12-13. Far from ugly, Satan was not only the wisest creature God made, he was the most beautiful and was constantly accompanied by many precious stones.

Satan: a righteous and loved (and loving) servant of God, today Satan and God are adversaries; Satan wants to destroy everything God has. But it wasn't always this way. From the way God made Satan—the special care and attention He took to make him—it's clear that God loved him. But this isn't the only way we know that God loved Satan. God also entrusted Satan with two very important roles: he was the worship leader over the entire angelic host. How do we know? The precious stones covering Satan were also worn by the high priest (Exodus 28:15-21), who was the worship leader of the Temple. God also made Satan special musical instruments that he used in worship, Ezekiel 28:13. Thus, the stones and instruments God made for Satan indicate that he led the angels in worship.

The other unique role God gave Satan was as protector of His very throne. In fact, God anointed (*messiahed*) him for this position. That is, God appointed Satan the #1 cherub, which also meant that he was ranked above all the other angelic beings. And he alone was entrusted with God's throne. How do we know? The phrase *mountain of God* in Ezekiel 28:14 refers to God's throne, cf. Exodus 4:27; Psalm 2:6; Isaiah 2:2 (also, the mercy seat over which God appeared and served as His throne, was covered by the wings of two cherubs, Exodus 25:17-22). As the precious stones served as a covering over Satan, so God chose Satan to be His covering...God loved Satan.

Did Satan love God in return? Yes, he did. God created him a perfectly righteous being and Satan faithfully served God this way, Ezekiel 28:15. Thus, Satan was not only the wisest and most beautiful creature in all of creation; he enjoyed the highest and most privileged position. The only one above him was God. Thus, the current animosity between God and Satan was not always there. In the beginning, God loved Satan and Satan returned that love with his faithful service.

Satan, God's loving servant, rebels against Him, how could Satan have gone from a loving and faithful servant to God's mortal enemy? God had showered him with so much love: He took special care when He made him, granted him the most beauty and wisdom of any of His creatures, and gave him a privileged position, second only to God. So how did it all go wrong? Ironically enough, it was Satan's beauty and splendor that caused his downfall.

Before God tells us about the tragedy of Satan, He tells us another tragedy concerning someone He calls the *prince of Tyre*, Ezekiel 28:1-10. Who was this prince? Like Satan, he possessed enormous wisdom. He used this wisdom to become tremendously wealthy, especially by means of merchant trading—he went from port to port increasing his wealth, Ezekiel 27. He had become so rich and he was so wise—wiser than even Daniel whose wisdom was incredible, Daniel 5:11-16—that he swelled with pride, so much pride that he proclaimed himself a god and ascribed to himself divine authority. Because he did this, God utterly destroyed him. In fact, the foreign nation that God used to destroy him made a mockery of his magnificent wisdom and splendor, Ezekiel 28:6-10. Therefore, the beautiful wisdom that he possessed became his downfall.

Having told us this story, God then begins speaking of another individual He calls the *king of Tyre*, Ezekiel 28:11-19. But the first thing He says about him is that his story is a lament, a cause for sorrow, which means that what Satan did to God brought Him sadness. As you read on, you might think that God is talking about the prince He just spoke of. But this individual is not human; He's a created cherub—the prince was a human who died, Ezekiel 28:9-10, but the king of Tyre was a magnificent cherub who held an anointed position with God, Ezekiel 28:13-15. As God unfolds this story it sounds a lot like the prince. The king of Tyre possessed even more wisdom and beauty than the prince. In fact, since he was an angelic being, he possessed more wisdom and beauty than anyone else in the universe. But one day, this cherub caught a glimpse of himself and his splendor was too much for him to bear. So he decided that being #2 in all of creation was not enough. He was going to be #1; He was going to be God, Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:15, 17.

What did this cherub do, how did he attempt to overthrow God and sit on his throne? Like the prince of Tyre, the cherub dealt in trading. But he didn't go from port to port, instead, he went from angel to angel trading his lies about God for their loyalty. And since this cherub was the father of lies and a master manipulator, he managed to get one third of the angels to follow him, John 8:44; Revelation 12:3-4. But as with the prince, God would not stand for this cherub's sinful pride and He destroyed him, Ezekiel 28:16-19. And like the prince, the cherub's wonderful wisdom and beauty became a grotesque sight to behold, Ezekiel 28:19.

God loved Satan, but then Satan wanted to be like God, which is exactly what he taught Adam and Eve, Genesis 3:5.

III. Conclusion

You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever.