

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #76

"The Ascension: Its Significance for the Angels"
(Scriptures from NKJV)

Ezekiel 28:11-19:

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. 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."

Isaiah 14:12-17:

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?'

INTRODUCTION: After looking at the significance of the ascension as it relates to Christ Himself and to Christian believers, we now move to examine its relationship to the angels. The role of angels in our study began back in lesson twenty-four under the title of the "Unconditional Election of Angels." This broadened out into the eternal purpose of God to elevate a Man, namely the God-Man, to a position of superiority over the angels. The ascension of Christ to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high is the fulfillment of that purpose. We have covered all of the data from the creation and fall of the angels and the warfare between the kingdom of Christ and that of Satan. We have examined how Satan thought he could dethrone God and take over the supreme position of ruler of the

universe as held by God Himself. We have followed this warfare through the Old Testament down through the New Testament. We have looked at his attempts to destroy the seed line through which Christ was to come. Then when that failed, how he tried to get Christ to forsake the task for which He came into the world. This culminated in His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and now His ascension to His throne where He now reigns as King and Lord over all things relating to the government of the universe.

Before we move into any new material, I think it proper to refresh our thinking with what we have learned thus far. For this reason, I am calling this lesson "A Brief Review or Summary of God's Role for the Angels in the Scheme of Redemption."

A. A REVIEW.

1. What we have learned about angels.
 - a. They are beings of pure spirit without tangibility, meaning they cannot be sensed by means of touch or sight. They are invisible except in special circumstances.
 - b. They are God's representatives and messengers bearing His word to men.
 - c. They affect providence, work miracles and bring about judgments on earth.

2. We also learned several things about their nature.
 - a. They were created as a higher order of being than that of man. They were created with superior strength and wisdom.
 - b. They were created as holy, good, upright and immortal.
 - c. They were created to be servants of God, to serve His will and to serve the needs of man in a special way.

B. THE FALLEN ANGELS.

1. While all the angels were created for the service of God, not all remained obedient to that service.

2. The Scriptures inform us that an insurrection has taken place in their ranks and to this day a spiritual warfare or conflict continues between the holy and unholy groups.
 - a. On the one hand is God and His elect angels (I Timothy 5:21) which remained holy, faithful and obedient to God.
 - b. On the other hand, a great multitude (one-third-Revelation 12:4) of the angels is in rebellion against God and His Christ. They are said to have not **"kept their first estate, but left their own habitation"** of place of abode. (Jude 6).

3. As the elect angels have God as their head, so these fallen angels are also joined

together under a head. This being is known by many names, but always singular. They are, Lucifer, Satan, Diabolus, Beelzebub, the Devil, the dragon, the old serpent, the wicked one, the god of this world, the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the accuser of the brethren, the tempter, the adversary, Abaddon, Apollyon, the enemy and the avenger.

4. Those angels who followed their head in this rebellion are known as devils in the King James Version, and demons in the other translations. They are always referred to in the plural.

5. This is an ongoing warfare. How did it begin?

C. SATAN AND THE FALL.

1. Satan before the fall.

a. In our two texts, we find prophecies directed at human kings, namely Tyre and Babylon. But suddenly the subject clearly changes.

(1) In Ezekiel 28, the subject is said to have been a cherub in Eden.

(2) In Isaiah 14 the subject is addressed as Lucifer. Only one being in the universe fits this description and that is the Devil.

b. In Ezekiel 28 a description is given of Satan before his rebellion.

(1) He was in verse 12 the very sum of creature perfection. **"You were the seal of perfection."**

(2) He was **"full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty."**

(3) He was a created being and not God. Verse 13, **"on the day you were created."** NOTE: There is an infinite distance between a "creature" and the "Creator."

2. Satan's Office.

a. We have seen that there are all sorts of ranks and offices existing in the spiritual realm of angels. The Bible mentions Principalities, powers, dominions, thrones, etc.

b. A question emerges: Before the fall, what was Satan's rank or office? Verse 14 leads us to conclude that he was the **"anointed cherub who covers,"** meaning that he held the highest rank and office of any created being, be it that of angel or man.

(1) He is a **"cherub"** - Beings with special access to God.

(2) He is the **"anointed"** - distinguished above all others to the office of God's "Messiah and King."

(3) He was the covering cherub - v. 14 **"who covers"** means to protect all of the creation, especially man. He was committed to care

for, uphold, sustain and protect man. He was to be man's Savior or deliverer!

c. The lesser angels, like servants in a great household, are given limited spheres of authority, but Satan was God's chief steward. He was given authority over all the rest and possessed a greater dignity, power and honor than that of any other creature.

3. The Nature of Satan's Fall.

a. In spite of his great honor and high position, Satan rebelled and fell into sin. From what source did his sin arise?

(1) Not from God. Ezekiel 28:15 declares he was created without sin - **"You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created."**

(2) Augustine's answer: From the wills of created beings. Cf. The five **"I wills"** in Isaiah 14:13, 14.

b. The question remains, "How could a perfect being be tempted to sin?"

c. The answer given, "Any being who is not God is finite and dependent as a creature. All such beings are vulnerable to the temptation to aspire to be like God, infinite and independent."

d. Compare God: None is greater than God. Thus He cannot be tempted to think of Himself above that which He should. But this is not true of us. Every moral creature can be tempted to believe that we are deserving of receiving more honor than what we are getting.

e. This is precisely the origin of Satan's sin. He became filled with self pride in believing that He was worthy of being like God. In Ezekiel 28:17, we read, **"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor."** Satan's beauty caused his heart to be lifted up. That is, He aspired, as a creature, to be like the highest, infinite and independent. This pride translated itself into the rebellious five **"I wills"** of Isaiah 14.

f. So, upon his rebellion, Satan is cast out of his office and becomes the head of a rival kingdom, populated by the angels who followed him, and the multitudes of fallen men whom he would deceive.

g. NOTE: Jesus said He saw Satan fall from heaven like **"lightning"** (Luke 10:18). He speaks of Satan's **"kingdom"** (Matthew 12:26) and He says that hell was prepared for **"the devil and his angels."** (Matthew 25:41). Paul calls Satan the **"god of this world"** in II Corinthians 4:4, and **"the prince of the power of the air"** in Ephesians 2:2).

h. Main Point: The kingdoms of this world are earthly, physical reflections of Satan's kingdom and their heads are human reflections of Satan. (Cf. Tyre and Babylon).

i. Question: What is the character of Satan's kingdom as opposed to God's

kingdom? In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus says that those "great" in Satan's kingdom exercise authority or lordship, ruling as they please. In contrast, those who are "great" in Christ's kingdom are those who become servants and give themselves to the needs of others.

j. So before the fall Satan ruled over a kingdom where humility and servanthood were the ruling principles. But with his fall, he heads a kingdom which is now opposite to that existing before. It is one of pride and dominion. It is live for yourself, think of yourself, make sure that your self interests are considered first in priority.

4. The occasion of Satan's fall.

a. We know there was a fall and what it involved. It was pride, but what exactly was the occasion of it?

b. We reached the conclusion that it occurred when God revealed His purpose to the angels that in due time, He would exalt the lowly creature man to a position above that of the angels. This can be concluded by connecting Psalm 8 with Hebrews 2:5-9. God would achieve this through His Son becoming one with man, embracing not the nature of angels, but of men. This would result in the angels, which were higher in honor than man, to become subservient to man, and especially that Man in this great work of God. Satan, the highest of all creatures, looked down upon this lowly creature man and could not bear it that man would one day rule and reign over him. He says, "I will ascend," but "I will not descend."

c. Question: Why would he feel that way toward us?

(1) First, because he sees how limited we are, time bound, space bound, we must eat, we must sleep, we get sick, and we even die.

(2) Second, because he sees how weak we are: on one occasion, one angel destroys 185,000 men in one night.

(3) Thirdly, he sees how dumb we are: our sensual side dominates while our spiritual side is dull. He is more like God than we are.

d. So Satan, who was created to be man's minister, protector, champion, yes, even man's Savior or Messiah, instead went to man and deceived him into believing that he also could ascend to a more god-like being. In so doing, he brought about death upon man.

C. CONCLUSION OR RESULT.

1. God's plan to put a man on the throne, thus elevating man above the angels, has now evidently been ambushed, thwarted, smashed. Satan believed that since God had placed man under a probationary period before confirming him with everlasting life, if man failed in his obedience, God's justice would require Him to destroy His creature Man. If He fails to do so, then He would have to forfeit His wisdom in failing to perform His plan. In

either case, it would reveal that God is not the all-sufficient Being He claims He is. This would allow Satan to take over the position occupied by the Most High God!

2. But in making this plan, Satan did not know that God's plan was to bring forth His Son out of a fallen ruined race as opposed to a pure holy race. He has other attributes which are to be revealed to men and angels in addition to His wisdom and justice. These are love, grace, mercy, etc.

3. It is now that we begin to see the amazing love of God toward the world of fallen mankind.

4. What our fellow creature, Adam, refused to do for us, the Son of God, who was infinitely higher, yes the Creator Himself, stepped in to provide for us a life of perfect obedience in our place. He looked down upon us and saw us, not as Satan did, in our perfect unfallen condition, but in our worst condition: filthy, defiled, ruined, rebellious, self-centered sinners, worthy of death.

5. If ever there was one who could say, "I am too good for this," "I deserve better than this," it was the Son of God! "I refuse to bring shame upon my holy character and allow men and angels to laugh and mock Me."

6. Yet, He, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, said, "I will go, I will descend," thus laying aside His glory, He emptied Himself of that glory! He put on our nature, and being found in fashion as a man, He became - not a Lord, a tyrant, or a ruler, but a Servant! He comes not to be ministered unto, but to minister, not to take from others, but to give to others, namely His life as a ransom for many.

7. Whereas Satan said "I will," watch as the God-Man, Jesus Christ faces the cup of agony in the Garden and says, **"Not My will, but Thy will be done!"**

8. Whereas Satan was "lifted up" in pride, we see Christ humble Himself down into the infinite depths of humility! Whereas Satan rebelled, Christ becomes obedient, even to the death of the cross.

9. What is the result of all this? God has highly exalted Him to the very office from which Satan fell! Christ is now the anointed One, the first of every creature. He is now Lord, Christ, King! He has been exalted, not just to the very position which Satan held, but far higher than Satan ever was, because while Satan could approach the throne, Christ sat down upon the throne!

10. What does this mean for us?

First: We shall be saved from the wrath to come, because He has answered all charges against us and freed us from the dominion of Satan's kingdom.

Second: We shall through Him, be saved to a place, a rank, a position far above that of the angels. We shall sit and reign with Him! This is because we will be perfect servants which God has recreated us to be. This is what Paul means when he says in I Corinthians 6:3 - ***"Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"***

Thirdly: We shall have a body, not like this one which is weak, dishonorable, corruptible, earthly, but a spiritual body like that of our Lord Jesus Christ has since His resurrection.

Fourthly: We shall be like the angels, just as powerful, wise, and glorious as they are, but we shall still be men, able to enjoy the physical things of the creation!

This is the inheritance of the saints. This is what lies ahead of this life on earth. This is the glory that one day shall be ours in Christ. Don't miss out on this. Repent and trust Christ today.