

The First Sin in the Universe



Pride vs Humility (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

In my talk yesterday I explained that there are various kinds of laws that operate in the universe, both physical laws and spiritual laws. Most of the physical laws we have some kind of concept on; for instance, the law of gravity. A normal person does not step out of a fourth floor window and expect not to fall. Such a person knows that there is a law at work in such a situation which will inevitably cause him to fall to his own great hurt. I pointed out that in these cases we do not really break these laws, these laws break us. A person never breaks the law of gravity. But a person who ignores the law of gravity will be broken by that law.

I pointed out too, that there are spiritual laws which are equally universal, which apply in every area of the universe and in every situation, and in every one of our lives individually.

In particular, I focused yesterday on one specific spiritual law that operates in the universe at large and in the life of each one of us individually. The law is stated by Jesus Himself in Matthew 23:2:

> "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (NIV)

I explained that humility is a decision of will. It's not an emotion. It's not a pious religious feeling. It doesn't rest in the area of the emotions. The Bible always says, "Humble yourselves... humble yourselves." In other words, it's something that we have to do. It originates in the will and it's expressed in appropriate action.

I gave the example of the man invited to the wedding feast. If he was proud, he would seek out the most honorable place. If he was humble, he would seek out the most lowly place. In each case it was a decision expressed in action.

Now today I am going to speak about the first occasion in the history of the universe that we see this law at work, the law that whoever humbles himself will be exalted; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, abased or humiliated.

We're going to go back now, in our study, before human history at a time when I believe man had not been created, when the heavens were in being and all their hosts. But the human race, as we know it, had not yet come upon the scene of history. We're going to go back to the first sin. We're going to go back to the record of a prophet, the particular prophet Ezekiel. We need to bear in mind that the ministry of the prophet not merely reveals things in the future that we could not otherwise know, but it also reveals things in the past that we could not otherwise know. And in this particular case we're going to be looking at things in the distant past, revealed through the prophetic ministry which we could not in any other way know.

Now let me make certain basic statements. The first sin in the universe was pride. Not drunkenness, not immorality, not even murder, but pride—and pride led to rebellion. You see, the inner comes before the outer. And one of the important features of the Bible is that it not merely reveals outer actions, it always lays bare the inner causes. Pride was the inner cause that led to the outer act of rebellion against God.

This first sin took place in heaven, not on earth. It was committed by an angel, not a human being. And the pride that caused this sin arose from the wisdom and the beauty which had been imparted by the Creator Himself. Now this situation is described in the 28th chapter of Ezekiel which speaks in succession of two persons. The first is the prince or the ruler of the city of Tyre, the second is the king of Tyre. The first person is clearly revealed to be a human being. Even though he claims to be a god, the Scripture emphasizes he is a man. But the second person, the king of Tyre, never was a human being; he's clearly an angel, a fallen angel. Now I'm going to read what Ezekiel says about this second person, the king of Tyre, and I want you to pick out the clear indications, as I read, that we're dealing here with a fallen angel, a cherub. Reading in Ezekiel 28:11–17:

> "The word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.'"" (NIV)

Just let me point out the following about this particular, unique being, this cherub. Verse 12, it states that he excelled in wisdom and beauty, perhaps the wisest and the most beautiful of all God's creatures. Verse 13 states he was in Eden, the garden of God. Verse 14 states that he was a guardian cherub, not a man. Verse 15 emphasizes that though he was so wise and so beautiful, he was nevertheless a created being. He was not a god. And then remarkably, verse 16 says, "widespread trade led to violence."

Now this word for trade is a very interesting word. We need to understand it. Let me take a moment to explain it. Literally, it means "going to and fro," and then it came to be used for trade because traders go to and fro. However, it's directly related to another word used several times in the Old Testament and that word is translated "slanderer or talebearer." Let me give you two examples. Leviticus 19:16:

> "You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people." (NASB)

The same related word. Proverbs 11:13:

> "He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets." (NASB)

So, the root thought is somebody who goes about slandering, carrying tales, making slanders. And when we go back to the scene in heaven which was pictured in Ezekiel 28, we get a vivid picture of what must have taken place. And now I'm offering you my own personal understanding of this passage.

This cherub, whose name at that time was Lucifer [the bright, the shining one, the light-bringer, the morning star] was, the Scripture indicates, in charge of one-third of God's created angels. But he was so wise and so beautiful; he was not content with this position of subordination to God Himself. He felt that he had a right to equality with God and so he began to promote rebellion. He went about amongst those angels, and he must have said to them something like this, "Listen, God doesn't really appreciate your wisdom, your strength; you could have a higher position. God doesn't appreciate my

wisdom or beauty either. I'm worthy of a higher position. I'll tell you what, if you'll follow me, I'll establish myself in equality with God." And so in this way, he promoted rebellion against God, and the Scripture reveals clearly that both he and the third of the angels that followed him were driven out from the presence of God because of their rebellion. But notice that the root of rebellion was pride; it was his beauty and his wisdom that caused his pride. His pride caused his rebellion. When he exalted himself, he was cast down.

I want to look at a parallel description also found in the prophets. In the prophet Isaiah, it describes the same situation, the same scene in heaven before the human race came into being, a scene which involves this same created being, this cherub who exalted himself in rebellion against God. In Isaiah 14:13–15, we have this prophetic revelation which lays bare the inner motivation of this cherub, this angel:

> "You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God: I will sit enthroned on the mount of the assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit." (NIV)

Notice again the principle "He that exalts himself will be humbled," and notice the inner motivation that's laid there. Particularly notice one phrase that occurs five times, the phrase "I will." Let me read those words again. "I will ascend to heaven; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly; I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." See, it's the will of the creature set in opposition to the Creator that is the essence and root of the whole problem. The motivation is pride, the action is rebellion. What was the ultimate aim? It's expressed in that fifth "I will." "I will make myself like the Most High." The creature wanted equality with the Creator. He exalted himself and, as a result, he fell.

Today we do not know him as Lucifer, the bright and shining one, the glorious one, the one whose responsibility and special privilege it was to herald the dawn. But we know him as Satan, the adversary, the resister, the opponent of both God and man, the one who resists God's purposes and God's people everywhere in the earth, the one who is incorrigible in his rebellion, the one who is in total, irreconcilable opposition to Almighty God.

What is the lesson? It's a fearful lesson. It's a lesson that pride and rebellion can turn the most beautiful into the most evil. Here was the most beautiful and the wisest of God's creatures. But when his heart was exalted in pride and he was turned against God in rebellion, he fell. Remember, whoever exalts himself will be humbled. But whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

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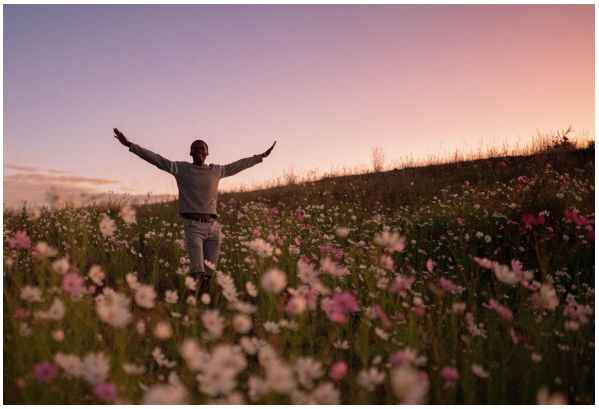
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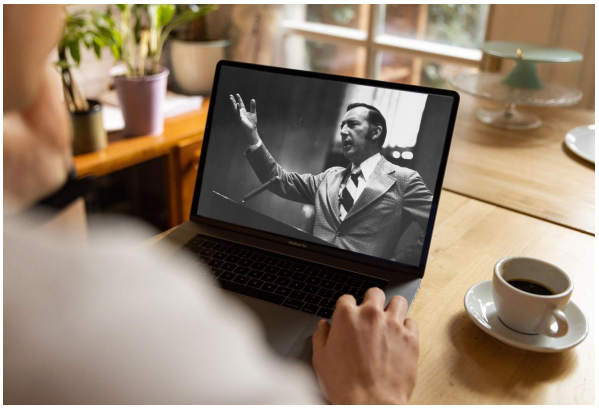
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