

Sunday, February 23, 2014

**From the book “The Ministry of Salvation” (8)**

## **The Source of Evil in the World**

**If God existed before all ages, and he is good, where does evil come from?**

God existed before all ages and He is perfect in His goodness, Holiness and all His attributes, He is also the creator of the universe. Therefore, His creation is also good as He created it. Here, the question poses itself about the source of evil, Satan, who tempted man to fall into disobedience.

The book of Ezekiel says:

*“Son of man, takes 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.” (Ezekiel 28:12-19)*

Although the text in this passage was directed towards the king of Tyre, it in fact speaks about Satan in a symbolic way, as it states about him: *“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.”* It is obvious that this text is making reference to Satan and not to the king of Tyre, as the king of Tyre can never be referred to as *“the anointed cherub who covers”*. Additionally, the king of Tyre was a gentile and didn’t know God, so we can’t say about him: *“You were perfect in your ways”*. Therefore, the reference here is made to Satan who was a perfect cherub until he fell in pride and disobedience so he fell from heaven *“God’s mountain”*.

In the book of Isaiah:

*“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.” (Isaiah 14:12-15)*

Here, the text references the King of Babylon, however, it symbolically refers to Satan as well. It is clear that the sin of pride was the cause of Satan’s fall. *“For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will be like the Most High.”*

*We also find reference to the falling of the Satan in the New Testament: “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” (2 Peter 2:4).*

Here, we recognize that Satan was a cherub who fell with his rank angels, became the source of evil in the world, and became envious of God’s gifts to man, as in the book of Wisdom: *“But by the envy of the devil, death came into the world: And they follow him that are of his side.” (Wisdom 2:24-25).*

These are the same words that are used in the prayers of St. Basil’s liturgy:

**“O God the Great and the Eternal, who formed man in incorruption, and death which entered into the world by the envy of the devil, you have destroyed...”** (Prayer of the reconciliation St Basil’s liturgy)

Through Satan’s envy to man, sin and death entered the world when the serpent tempted Eve.

Someone may wonder: “Why did God not save Satan as he did with man?” The answer is this: Satan is different from man in his nature. When Satan fell, according to his nature, he was determined and challenging to God, and had no inclination to repent. On the contrary, man fell out of weakness and temptation, and then he repented and asked for the salvation.

**Hence, Satan was one of the cherubs, but pride entered his heart so he fell from his rank with his angels, who became the angels of evil or the evil spirits or devils. Perhaps this took place when all the angels went through a test set by God, which Satan and his soldiers had failed. Because of Satan’s fall, he became the source of evil in the world until Christ comes in his second coming where he will throw Satan in the eternal fire which was prepared for him and his angels.**

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