

Angels and Demons

Lesson Four: Cherubim and Seraphim

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Introduction: Who are these Angelic Creatures?

“Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee, Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea; Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee, Who was, and is, and evermore shall be” – **“Holy, Holy, Holy”** by Reginald Heber, 1826

- A. Though never directly referred to as angels, these angelic or angel like creatures of the heavenly host play an interesting role in the divine order of God.
- B. Though not to be worshipped, the cherubim and seraphim serve as a great example to us of what it means to be *totally* obedient and devoted to the Lord!

I. The Cherubim.

- A. Great and powerful angelic guardians
 - 1. “Cherubim” (plural for cherubs) are great and powerful angelic beings (Heb: k^rruwb – compound of *ke* – like to & *rab* – great, powerful – cf. **Ps 147:5**).
 - 2. The cherubim were stationed by God to “*guard the way to the tree of life*” (**Gen. 3:22-24**); mankind forbidden to partake of the tree of life.
 - 3. Notice that God did not destroy the tree of life, but rather places it under the protection of the cherubim for safe keeping, in reserve for the future.
 - 4. “*The tree of life*” (i.e. eternal life) will be offered to those who “*do His commandments*” (**Rev. 22:14**, KJV); unlike Adam and Eve who did not.
- B. Used as symbols for God’s power and guardianship.
 - 1. Two cherubim, as ornaments made of gold, were placed on top of “*the mercy seat*” (i.e. the golden cover of the Ark of the Covenant which was also made of gold) (**Ex. 25:10-22; 37:7-9; cf. Heb. 9:5**).
 - a. The Ark of the Covenant was where “the testimony” or the tablets of stone of the 10 commandments were stored (**Ex. 25:16**).
 - 2. Between the two cherubim is where God promised Moses He would speak with him about His commandments (**Ex. 25:22; cf. Num. 7:89**).
 - a. The Lord of hosts “*dwells between the cherubim*” (KJV) or “*is enthroned above the cherubim*” (NASB) (**1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Ki. 19:15; 1 Chron. 13:6; 28:18; cf. Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16; Ezek. 1:26-28; 9:3**).
 - 3. Artistic designs of the cherubim were also embroidered on ten curtains in the tabernacle (**Ex. 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35**).
 - 4. For the temple, two golden cherubim were made for the inner sanctuary (**1 Ki. 6:23-28; 8:6-7; 2 Chron. 3:10-14; 5:7-8; cf. Ezek. 41:18-25**).
 - a. Each cherub was 15 feet tall (10 cubits) with a wingspan of 15 feet (10 cubits), each wing being 7 ½ feet (5 cubits) long!
 - b. “*Their outspread wings reached from wall to wall, while their inner wings touched at the center of the room*” (**1 Ki. 6:27**, NLT).
 - 5. The walls of the inner sanctuary, the two doors for the entrance, and the two doors for the entrance of the temple itself were carved with engravings of the cherubim (**1 Ki. 6:29-35; cf. 2 Chron. 3:7**).

6. Even furnishings for the temple, specifically ten bronze water carts, were carved with engravings of the cherubim (**1 Ki. 7:29, 36**).
- C. The cherubim represent the qualities of the highest forms of God's creation that were made to serve the Lord with great power and speed.
1. *What do the cherubim look like?* The visions of Ezekiel provide for us the most details in all of Scripture (**Ezek. 1:4-28; cf. 10:1-22; 11:22**).
 2. In Ezekiel's vision, he saw four living creatures or four cherubs, each having four faces, four wings, and bronze feet like a calf (**Ezek. 1:5-7**).
 3. Each of the four different faces on each cherub (man / lion / ox / eagle) represents a distinct quality that each of these creatures possesses (**v. 10**).
 - a. Face of a man = Intelligent; Face of a lion = Courageous; Face of an ox = Hardworking; Face of an eagle = Keen eye-sight
 4. Cherubim had four wings; under each wing were human hands (**v. 8**).
 - a. Each cherub had two pairs of wings; one pair reached to touch the wings of another cherub, the other pair covered its body (**v. 11**).
 - b. Their wings may have been used for flight: "...*They lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight*" (**Ezek. 10:19a**).
 5. Like all angels, the cherubim is very fast (**Review lesson 1**): "*the living beings ran to and fro like bolts of lightning*" (**v. 14**).
 6. Each had one wheel beneath them, where the spirit was located, covered with eyes on its edges with a second wheel turning within it (**vs. 15-21**).
 7. God sits on His throne which is above the crystal like expanse which is just above the cherubim (**Ezek. 1:22-28; cf. Ps. 18:10 / 2 Sam. 22:11**).

II. The Seraphim.

- A. Angelic creatures intensely devoted to the worship of the most holy God.
1. "Seraphim" (plural for Hebrew word seraph = "to burn") are angelic beings ardently and zealously committed to the worship of God.
 2. Only the vision of Isaiah specifically mentioned the seraphim by name, providing for us a brief description of its characteristics (**Isa. 6:1-7**).
 3. In contrast to cherubim, the seraphim has only one face each (**v. 2**), six wings instead of four (**v. 2**), and speaks for God as His messenger (**v. 7**).
 4. Each pair of wings had a specific purpose: One pair covered his face, another covered his feet, and another pair was used for flying (**v. 2, 6a**).
- B. The seraphim are evidently the living creatures described in Revelation 4 that unceasingly worship God before the throne (**Rev. 4:6-8**).
1. Each creature is covered with eyes in front and back, even on the wings; whereas the eyes of the cherubim were only on its wheels.
 2. Each creature has only one face, instead of four like the cherubim.
 3. Each creature has six wings instead of four like cherubim.
 4. Most significantly, they are heard worshipping God for His holiness (**Rev 4:8/Isa. 6:3**) in contrast to cherubim who did not speak, but mainly served.
 5. Whenever seraphim worshipped the Lord, God's people did too (**Rev. 4:9-11**); apparently seraphim provide leadership in the worship of God.

Conclusion: May the Example of the Cherubim and Seraphim Cause Us to Think Upon the Greatness of God!