

Doctrine of the Cherubim

1. Cherubim are a classification of angels.
2. Contrary to popular myth cherubim are not cute chubby little babies with wings. They are mature, fearsome creatures with great power and speed.

Special Note.

“im” is a plural ending of words from Hebrew. Examples include **cherubim** (Hebrew kērūb) and **seraphim** (Hebrew sērāpīm), as well as **kibbutzim** (Hebrew qibbūs, gathering), communal settlements in Israel, and **goyim** (Hebrew gōy, people, nation), an offensive name for a non-Jew.

3. The cherubim had definite representation and responsibilities within the divine economy.

Representation

- Images of cherubim were embroidered on the inner covering of the Tabernacle.
 - ❖ *Exodus 26:1 Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.*
- Images of cherubim were woven into the fabric of the veil of the curtain separating the holy place from the holy of holies in the Tabernacle and in the Temple of Solomon.
 - ❖ *In the Tabernacle. Exodus 26:31 And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made:*
 - ❖ *In the Temple. 2 Chronicles 3:14 And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon.*
- Images of cherubim were placed on the cover of the Mercy Seat with out-stretched wing tips touching each other and with their faces looking downward.
 - ❖ *Exodus 25:20 And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.*
- In Solomon’s Temple, statue images of the cherubim, covered with gold, looked toward the House of the Lord.

- ❖ *1 Kings 6:23 And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits [18 ft.] high. 24 And five cubits [9 ft.] was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits [9 ft.] the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits [18 ft.]. 25 And the other cherub was ten cubits [18 ft.]: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size. 26 The height of the one cherub was ten cubits [18 ft.], and so was it of the other cherub. 27 And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. 28 And he overlaid the cherubims with gold. 29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.*
- ❖ *2 Chronicles 3:10 And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work, and overlaid them with gold. 11 And the wings of the cherubims were twenty cubits long: one wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub. 12 And one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub. 13 The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits [36 ft. total]: and they stood on their feet, and their faces were inward.*
- Images of cherubim were engraved on the wall of the Temple.
 - ❖ *1 Kings 6:29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.*
 - ❖ *2 Chronicles 3:7 He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls.*
- Images of cherubim were engraved on the doors of the Holy Place in the Temple.
 - ❖ *1 Kings 6:32 The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees. 33 So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall. 34 And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. 35 And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.*

- Images of cherubim were engraved on the bronze carts that carried the basins.
- ❖ *1 Kings 7:29 And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges there was a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work.*

Responsibilities

- Cherubim were positioned at the East End of the Garden of Eden to guard the Tree of Life. *Genesis 3:24 So he [the LORD] drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*
- In the Revelation the cherubim (as the four living creatures of Ezekiel 1:5-11) were ready to implement the will of the One that sat upon the throne.

Revelation 4 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. 6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

4. The Bible does not describe how the cherubim looked. The implication is that they were well known to society. In the contemporary art in Ancient Near East, winged creatures are found in Egypt and in Assyrian art. They are depicted as human figures with outstretched wings attached to the arms.

5. According to Ezekiel's vision, and it is only a vision and not real physical figures, the four living creatures, if they are cherubim, are of unusual appearance.

- *Ezekiel 1:5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. 6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. 7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. 8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. 9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. 10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. 11 Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.*



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6. By way of spiritual application it is possible that the four faces of the cherubim represented God's providence among men:

- ❖ The face of the man: wisdom and intelligence
- ❖ The face of the ox: strength and sacrifice
- ❖ The face of the lion: kingly authority
- ❖ The face of the eagle: swiftness and far sightedness.

Special Note.

Some of the early church fathers thought they saw in the living creatures a reference to the gospel writers.

- ❖ Matthew was represented by the face of the lion as he wrote of the Lord's kingly authority.
- ❖ Mark was represented by the face of the ox as he wrote of the Lord's strength, service, and sacrificial life.
- ❖ Luke was represented by the face of the man for the Lord was wise and intelligent.
- John was represented by the eagle for in his gospel men are taken higher and father into spiritual realities of our Lord and Savior.

7. The cherubim are among those angels which desire to look into the gospel.

- *1 Peter 1:12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

8. In poetic language the psalmist said that God rode upon a cherub as a form of divine transportation.

- *Psalms 18:10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.*

9. It has been suggested by more than one Bible scholar that the Anointed Cherub of Ezekiel 28, which describes the fall of the Ethbaal the Prince of Tyre c. 588 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar, provides a veiled reference to Satan.

- *Ezekiel 28:14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.*

18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

10. In another vision, Ezekiel saw cherubim and every cherub had two faces.

- *Ezekiel 41:18 And it was made with cherubims and palm trees, so that a palm tree was between a cherub and a cherub; and every cherub had two faces;*

11. The word Cherub is also used in Scripture to refer to an undetermined people in Babylon from which individuals returned to Judea with Zerub-babel.

- *Ezra 2:59 And these were they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, and Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, and their seed, whether they were of Israel.*
- *Nehemiah 7:61 And these were they which went up also from Telmelah, Telharesha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, nor their seed, whether they were of Israel.*