



**PROPHECY AND REVELATION**  
**CONCERNING**  
**SERAPHIMS, THE WAY**  
**OF**  
**THE TREE OF LIFE,**  
**AND**  
**CHERUBIMS**

A study of prophetic truth that addresses the following questions:

- What does the Bible teach concerning these vital subjects?
- Are seraphims and cherubims angels? What truly are these beings?
- What are the roles of the seraphims and the cherubims?
- What about the tree of life? Where is it today? How does man access it?

Earl R. Borders

**Seraphims,  
The Way of the Tree of Life,  
and  
Cherubims**

by Earl R. Borders

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# Table of Contents

<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>Identifying the Seraphims</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>Description and Attributes of the Seraphims</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>The Way of the Tree of Life</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>The Cherubims and Mercy Seat</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
<b>Cherubims Are the Redeemed of All Ages</b> .....	<b>11</b>

## CHAPTER ONE

### IDENTIFYING THE SERAPHIMS

*Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.*

*2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.*

*3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

*4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*

In this passage of Scripture text, the great Messianic Prophet Isaiah received a vision that reveals many great and precious truths. We want to focus on verse 2, where the sacred writer declared, "Above it stood the seraphims." In considering what verse 2 denotes as the seraphims, several questions come to mind, such as: What are these seraphims? Are they angelic beings or what type of beings are they? Do the Scriptures speak of them elsewhere? What is their purpose? and What do they do?

Sad to say, there is much confusion and many misconceptions about these beings that the Prophet called *seraphims*. The Apostle Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 14:33 that "God is not the author of confusion." Jesus taught in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." What does truth free you from? Well, it is not sin, because 1 John 1:7 says, ". . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The blood is not what makes us free in the instance that Jesus was speaking of in John's Gospel, because He said "the truth shall make you free." Truth frees us from falsity; it frees us from false teachings and religious error.

As we examine this Scripture, I trust that God will help you to have a heart and mind open to truth and that you are willing to lay down religious teachings or traditions contrary to the sound teachings of God's eternal Word. Many times we embrace ideas from Babylonian heritage that we never stop to examine until we hear the truth.

Our lesson text commences in Isaiah 6:1 with the words, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw . . . ." Why did he say that? To give a reference in time, or a historical perspective; yet it goes far deeper than that. This text, as with all Scripture, has divine significance. In Proverbs 30:5 the Wise Man said, "Every word of God is pure," teaching us there is divine design and intent and truth incorporated in every word within the sacred Scriptures. This case is no exception.

King Uzziah was the eleventh king of Judah. He came to the throne at the tender age of sixteen and reigned fifty-two years. To substantiate this, 2 Chronicles 26:3 declares, "Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem." History tells us he reigned from 809 B.C. to 758 B.C.

During Uzziah's reign, the people enjoyed great peace and prosperity. Verse 5 says, "And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper." (I might digress to say this is still a good formula to follow today, and it will still have the same effect in our day, because God's Word is timeless and immutable.) When Isaiah wrote, "In the year that king Uzziah died . . . ," he was letting us know that an era had ended and a new time had commenced.

At the death of Uzziah, Israel was given up to hardness of heart. As a kingdom and country, they were given to devastation and annihilation by the imperial power of the world. Jerome, the famed church historian, observed that "the year of Uzziah's death should be the year in which Romulus was born and only a short time after the death of Uzziah that Rome was founded. The national glory of Israel died out with King Uzziah and has never been revived." It was against this backdrop that our text took place, and the picture was a dismal one. It was a time of national sadness and gloom, with only dark bodings looming on the horizon.

The Lord in His graciousness turned the scene, and Isaiah said in Isaiah 6:1-2: ". . . I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne . . . Above it stood the seraphims." Isaiah looked down through the prophetic telescope of time and saw a bright and brilliant day, the Gospel Day, a day when the Lord would be high and lifted up in His people. Many scholars refer to the Isaiah account as the "Gospel of Isaiah," because it is so filled with Messianic prophecy and looks to the day in which you and I live.

When Isaiah "saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne," this was in the form of a vision, or a spiritual revelation. He did not literally see God. We know this because of what the Lord told Moses in Exodus 33:20 when he asked that he might see God. God said, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." Also, nine hundred years subsequent to the writings of Isaiah, the Apostle John wrote in 1 John 4:12a, "No man hath seen God at any time."

We find in Isaiah 6:2 the beings denoted as *seraphims*, and they had six wings. Ezekiel's account portrays the same beings, but he revealed a different aspect and different attributes (Ezekiel 1:5-8), which we will deal with in later chapters. Ezekiel 1:1

states, "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." Again, the writer did not see God personified, but he was merely saying that the visions were of divine origin, or that God was the originator of them.

In Revelation, Chapter 4, these same creatures are portrayed. John wrote in verse 8, "And the four beasts [the Greek says 'living creatures'] had each of them six wings about him." Revelation 9:17 gives us insight to the language employed in the Revelation as well as prophecy: "And thus I saw the horses in the vision . . ." What Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John received were spiritual visions.

Visions and dreams have a different nature than literal occurrences. When Pharaoh had his dream, he saw things representative of a famine used in a symbolic nature (Genesis 41:17-24). Visions and dreams have a nature that is not literal but symbolic, to convey truths to us.

Again, Isaiah 6:1 states, ". . . I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne . . ." The Hebrew word here for *Lord* is not the common word "Jehovah" but the word *Adonai*, which means "for greater reverence," and it literally means "the Lord of all." We see several things in this text that are familiar in other Scripture passages, and it begins to give us insight into what we are seeing.

Verse 2 says, "Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings." Verse 3 says, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy . . ." We see a very similar vision in Revelation 4:2, which reads, "And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne [just like Isaiah saw]."

Revelation 4:6-8 reads: "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 [the Greek says 'living creatures'] full of eyes before and behind. 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. 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 . . ."

Notice here the similarities between Isaiah's writings and John's writings. We can throw out the thought of this having anything to do with the eternal realm, because the eternal realm does not have day or night. This is something for here and now, while time yet stands. Verse 8 says they each had six wings, and "they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy." In the Revelation John saw almost the identical representations that Isaiah saw.

Isaiah penned in Isaiah 6:2, "Above it stood the seraphims." What are these? Are they angelic beings as many suppose? The word *seraphims* is mentioned only twice in the entire Bible: in Isaiah 6:2 and Isaiah 6:6. As with all Hebrew names, there is a divine significance to this term. The actual Hebrew word is *seraph* and literally means "burning," from the root meaning "to set on fire."

The same Hebrew word is used in Numbers 21:6 and 8: "And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. . . . And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent [the same Hebrew word as used in Isaiah and translated as *seraphims*], and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." The fiery serpent on the pole was not an angelic being, and neither are these seraphims in our text. *Strong's Concordance* tells us these seraphims are symbolic. Let us see what they represent.

The word *seraphims*, or the Hebrew word *seraph*, means "burning." Who is to be burning? In Luke 12:35 Jesus said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Whom was He addressing? Luke 12:22 states, "And he said unto his disciples . . ." Who are to have their lights burning? The disciples, or those who are committed to the discipline of Jesus Christ in their lives.

The word *disciple* is from the Latin word *discipulus*, which comes from the same root that the English word *discipline* comes from. True disciples are those committed to observing and adorning the discipline of Jesus Christ in their lives. In Luke 12:49 Jesus said, "I am come to send fire [another rendering says 'to set the world on fire'] . . ." When did He send that fire and to whom was it sent? He set it on fire on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:3-4 says: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . ." Fire represents the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit came into the hearts and lives there on that day, set them on fire, gave them new life, and made them living creatures. The disciples, or the saints, were lit and became burning. The seraphims are the saints, not some supposed angelic beings.

Isaiah was in an era of time when there was rank apostasy. God said in Isaiah 1:11, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full [another rendering says 'I have had enough'] . . ." God had had enough of their religious performance without reality. They were still doing the things He had commanded in the Mosaic law, but those things had lost meaning and reality and had become a form of godliness so repulsive that God had had enough of it. So He said in Isaiah 1:15, "I will hide mine eyes from you."

In our Scripture text, as in much of Isaiah's writings, the Lord turned the Prophet to a brighter day when the Lord would be high and lifted up (He is only high and lifted up when the people of God lift Him up). Speaking of the fiery, brass serpent that Moses put on a pole as a type of Christ, Jesus said, "And I, if I [like that brazen serpent in the wilderness] be lifted up from

the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Today God has men with a message that will lift up Jesus Christ, and it will still heal and bring life to mankind.

Though this day spoken of in our text was a dark hour in Hebrew history, Isaiah was viewing a brilliant day, this Gospel Day, a day of light, and we live in the brightest period of that day, the time of the evening light. The Bible tells us "at evening time it shall be light" (Zechariah 14:7). The church will never go out of visible view again. The enemy wants us to feel that this is a dark and dismal day, but this is a glorious time! This is the day of Revelation.

Remember that the word *seraphims* in Isaiah 6:2 is the same Hebrew word used for the fiery, brazen serpent that was set upon a pole in Numbers 21:6. What is the picture? In John 3:14 Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." How was the serpent lifted up in the Book of Numbers? It was lifted in obedience to God's Word. God's man acted on God's Word and erected a pole. Just as God used human instrumentality in that day, so He does in this day. Who are the ones set on fire? It is a picture of the saints. God has a man who hears the Word, preaches it, and then the people take on the message and become the ones set on fire, and they lift up Jesus Christ. When they lift up Jesus Christ, a lost and dying world can be healed and live because they can see the burning ones.

How is Christ lifted up? His body (the church) is lifted from a dead state in trespasses and sins and raised up to sit together with Him in heavenly places. (Read Ephesians 2:1 and 6.) When others look on the saints and see the burning in their lives, that draws them to Jesus Christ. I repeat, the seraphims are not angelic beings but saints.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DESCRIPTION AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE SERAPHIMS

In Chapter 1 we answered the questions: What are these seraphims? Are they angelic beings? and What type of creatures are they? In this chapter let us consider these seraphims' description and attributes. How many seraphims are there? We need to do as Isaiah 34:16 says: "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate [for every dark saying in God's Word, there is a mate somewhere else in His Word that will bring light to it]: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them."

Isaiah 6:2 says, "Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings." Where else are these beings depicted? Revelation 4:8 says, "And the four beasts [The word *beasts* confuses some people. The Greek word is **zoon** (which means 'a living creature'), not the word **therion** (which means 'a wild, vicious beast'), which is used in Revelation 13:1 and 13:11 when it talks about the beastly, hideous creatures.] had each of them six wings . . ." Here are the same living creatures, or seraphims, and there are four of them. Remember that they represent the saints.

Ezekiel saw the same thing in Ezekiel 1:5a, which reads, "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures [the same thing Isaiah and John saw]." Again, who are these living creatures? Romans 6:11 tells us, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Those who have Jesus Christ have life. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The living creatures are those who have experienced the saving graces of Jesus Christ and are alive unto God. When the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, He took men who were dead, gave them life, and set them on fire. They became living creatures.

The four beasts are the living creatures. Revelation 5:8 states, "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts [or living creatures] and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." If these creatures have "vials full of odours which are the prayers of saints," who is holding the vials? The saints. Who are the creatures? The saints.

Revelation 5:9 says, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us . . ." These four creatures that John spoke of in Revelation, Chapter 5, and that Isaiah called *seraphims* (**seraph**, the burning), the ones set on fire in Isaiah, Chapter 6, are the redeemed of all ages.

The question that arises is, Why, according to Revelation 4:8 and Ezekiel, are there only four? When you go back into the Old Testament economy, old Israel was divided into four major divisions. As they journeyed, they had the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle, or the tent where the Lord's presence dwelt, and they had it in the midst of the camp. Then they took the twelve tribes and broke them into four major divisions and camped on all four sides with the ark and the presence of God in the midst, or in the middle of the camp. Those four divisions in which they camped represented all of Israel, or all the people of God. In this New Testament dispensation, these four divisions, or four living creatures, represent all of New Testament Israel: those who have the presence of God in their midst. It portrays the people of God, or the church, down through the ages of time.

Numbers, Chapter 2, tells how the twelve tribes of Israel were broken down and camped and how each of the four major divisions had an insignia, or a standard. The standards of those four divisions were the same symbolic expressions that represent these living creatures. For example, Judah was a lion's whelp and had the lion standard. Each of these four living creatures was one of the insignias that identified part of the camp of Israel.

What is the lesson? Though the Gospel Day consists of seven distinct time periods, it has had only four major epochs: the morning time, the dark day, the cloudy day, and the evening time. As we look at the description of the saints in these various ages, we can see the predominant condition of each epoch. Revelation 4:7 says, "And the first beast was like a lion [a lion is the king of beasts; it knows no fear, and it is a conquering beast, which was a picture of the morning-time church that Revelation 6:2 says 'went forth conquering, and to conquer'], and the second beast like a calf [a calf is a sacrificial animal, portraying the sacrificial nature that the church manifested during the eras of persecution and martyrdom], and the third beast had a face as a man [this portrays the saints in bondage to man and man rule during the dark night of papalism and the cloudy day of Protestantism], and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle [this portrays the evening-time church, revealing that the church has risen above the old, earthly level and can soar to the highest mountain; an eagle is the only creature that can fly right into the face of the sun, which is where the church is going—soaring into brighter days, or brighter and brighter truths]."

Thank God, we do not have to walk in darkness, groping in religious confusion. Jesus said in Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it shall be given you." However, between the asking and the receiving, 2 Timothy 2:15 instructs you to "study," and then God will bless your efforts.

The fourth beast, which is like an eagle, is not a molting eagle but a flying eagle. This depicts the evening-time church and her move back to a position of the full light of the glorious Gospel of Christ.

What about the Old Testament brethren? Jesus said you will "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom" (Matthew 8:11). How did they get in? This beast had "eyes before and behind" (Revelation 4:6); we look back to Calvary and they looked forward to Calvary, but the focal point of it all is Jesus Christ and the work wrought on Calvary. The Old Testament brethren gained a reprieve for their sins one year at a time. Hebrews 10:3 declares, "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." Once a year they sacrificed a lamb, an atonement lamb, and their sins were reprieved one more year. When Jesus died on Calvary's tree, the first thing He did was made the spirits of just men (those Old Testament justified brethren) perfect, or complete, and brought them in. That is the reason Hebrews 12:23 says, ". . . to the spirits of just men made perfect."

The first thing the blood did was this: it went back and took the Old Testament brethren's sins that were rolled up to the foot of the Cross and made those justified men perfect, or complete. Hebrews 12:23 refers to the church as the "general assembly" because there are two chambers. For example, in the state legislature, we have a House and a Senate. When the House convenes, you say, "The House is in session," and when the Senate convenes, you say, "The Senate is in session." When they both come together, you have a "General Assembly." In Jesus Christ, when the Old Testament and the New Testament met together, the church became the general assembly and church of the firstborn. So in reality, the Old Testament brethren are incorporated among the redeemed of the morning time.

In Isaiah 6:2 and in Revelation 4:8, why do these creatures have six wings? A wing is a manner of conveyance; it is designed for transport. Look where these wings are: "Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain [which means 'two'] he covered his face . . ." (Isaiah 6:2).

Two wings portray two things: First, in the face of deity the saints are always aware of their position and exhibit humility. Isaiah 57:15 says, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Second, when it says "with twain he covered his face," it shows us that not only do they exhibit humility in the face of deity, but they cover the mind to protect the thinking, transport evil thoughts away, and convey proper, wholesome, and godly thinking to a proper place in the saint's life. Isaiah saw them with their wings over their faces. Peter put it in these terms: "Gird up the loins of your mind" (1 Peter 1:13).

Look at the next description in Isaiah 6:2: ". . . with twain [or with two] he covered his feet . . ." We all know that feet are what we walk with. There are two wings and two feet. What does this tell us? The saints are very cautious about how they walk. In Psalm 119:101 the Psalmist said, "I have refrained my feet from every evil way . . ." Those wings portray being lifted from the quagmire of sin and raised to a spiritual place, or being resurrected in Jesus Christ and being lifted above the position of this old world. Psalm 116:8 says, "For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." The way you walk has much to do with whether you stand or fall. Wings denote a divine manner of conveyance to enable us to do things we cannot do in our own human strength.

What about the last two wings in Isaiah 6:2? ". . . and with twain he did fly." These wings are designed to keep us above the level of this old world so that we can stay in the presence of God and enjoy His fellowship; they are the Word and the Spirit. We read in Isaiah 6:3, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy . . ." Why did he say the word *holy* three times? Because man is a threefold being. Through this experience that Jesus Christ came to bring, we can be holy in spirit, holy in soul,

and holy in body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). It is only because of the Holy Father, the Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit. When you let each one have His rightful place in your life, it will be "holy, holy, holy, . . . the whole earth is full of his glory." Where is that glory? When the Revelator got a picture of the church, he spoke of her as "having the glory of God" (Revelation 21:11). The glory of God resides in the saints, or the church.

This is a beautiful, encouraging picture that Isaiah saw of our day. It portrays the experience that the saints have that enables them to be a part of God's seraphims so they can live pure lives and be holy in soul, spirit, and body and enjoy the presence of God on a daily basis. They are set on fire, showing a world that is dead in trespasses and sins that one can live a victorious life in Jesus Christ. These seraphims that our lesson text speaks of in Isaiah 6:2 that were set on fire portray the experience and the position that the redeemed hold in this Gospel Day. It is a heartwarming and encouraging vision of the experience that we are privileged to enjoy as the redeemed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE WAY OF THE TREE OF LIFE

*Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*

*23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*

*24 So he 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.*

This passage of Scripture records the outcome of the sobering account of the expulsion of man from the Garden of Eden. When we think of "the tree of life," these questions come to mind: What is this tree called "the tree of life"? Why was man removed from its presence? What type of life did this tree give? and Where is this tree today? We want to examine the biblical answers to these questions.

Genesis 2:17 states, ". . . for in the day that thou eatest thereof [speaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die." That was the command, and Adam violated it and partook of the tree. Genesis 3:12 says, "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Genesis 2:17 states, ". . . in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Physically, Adam lived nine hundred thirty years. Genesis 5:5 says, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." This teaches us that it was not physical life that was forfeited that day. Therefore, we must conclude that it was not physical death that came upon Adam, but spiritual death.

How do we know this was spiritual death? God, speaking through the Prophet, declared in Ezekiel 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." Someone may say, "Since Adam transgressed and fell, every child is born into this world with a sinful nature." No, because God said, "All souls are mine." God puts the soul in each child at conception, and to say there is sin in the soul is to make God the minister of sin. The Scriptures ask, "Is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid" (Galatians 2:17). He does not create a soul with sin in it.

To further clarify what type of death took place, let us read James 1:15, which says, "Then when lust [or desire] hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The type of death that occurred in the Genesis account was spiritual death. Again, Ezekiel 18:4 says, "The soul that sinneth, it [the soul] shall die." This substantiates the fact that the death that Adam sustained was spiritual death.

The tree in Genesis 3:22 was called "the tree of life." This is not speaking of physical life, because Adam lived more than nine hundred years without it. Thus, physical death was not a result of the fall of man. Many are under the misconception that this was a result of man's fall. Someone may say, "Man sinned and thwarted the plan of God." No, physical death was always in God's plan. He knows "the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10). Centuries later Paul penned, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Corinthians 13:8). God has foreknowledge of everything that everyone has ever tried to do to thwart His plan and had it incorporated in His plan. Nothing takes Him by surprise.

Genesis 1:28, which was prior to the fall, states, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth . . ." The word *replenish* means "to make full or complete again as by furnishing a new supply." Why did God command to fill the earth complete again, or furnish a new supply? Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die . . ."

You may ask, "How can you bring Hebrews 9:27 back in the Genesis account, at the very dawn of Creation, when it was penned centuries later?" We must recall the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 119:89, which says, "For ever, O LORD, thy word



is settled in heaven." Notice that this was written in the present and continual tense. The words "for ever" take in eternity past and eternity future. We are in a little space called time, but before time was eternity, and after time is eternity.

Psalms 90:2 says, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting [this means from everlasting past to everlasting future], thou art God." This is just a space cut out called "time" when He set the earth in place and formed the mountains, but before that was everlasting, and after time ends is everlasting. His Word was forever settled in eternity past. In other words, before a word of it was ever penned, it was already settled in Heaven.

Jesus prayed in John 17:5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was [eternity past]." John 1:1 states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Scriptures teach that God inspired men to write them and bring them to men (2 Timothy 3:16). The Book of Hebrews was settled in Heaven before the world began. Therefore, it reveals that physical death was always in God's plan.

Man's physical composition did not change after the fall of man. The Apostle Paul called our bodies "corruptible" in 1 Corinthians 15:53, which reads, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." It was corruptible and mortal to begin with; that is the reason man was told to replenish the earth before there was a commandment and before he fell. This body was always designed for death and decay.

The tree of life that our lesson speaks of in Genesis 3:22 was not to sustain physical life, for Adam continued to live after he was denied access to the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:22 states, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." How can one live forever? In John 11:26 Jesus, speaking on the occasion of Lazarus' being dead and in the tomb, said, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Eternal life is in Jesus Christ. What type of living forever has always been in God's plan? Spiritual life, or eternal life, in Jesus Christ.

Second Timothy 1:9 says, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." His "purpose and grace" was before the world began. Before God ever created a man (Isaiah said He knows the end from the beginning), He knew what would occur. Therefore, He made a plan of salvation and slew in His mind's eye the Lamb, Jesus Christ, before the foundation of the world (see 1 Peter 1:19-20) so that grace would be available to mankind and he could have spiritual life and live forever.

Too many people cannot see salvation any further back than the Cross of Calvary in A.D. 33, but God instituted it in His mind before the world began. Again, 2 Timothy 1:9 says, ". . . which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." It was implemented in the mind's eye of God in eternity past. Verse 10 says, "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." God's plan is that man might have life, and He made that life available through the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He brought down God's purpose to man and the grace whereby to secure it.

Now let us look closely at what our text denotes as "the tree of life." In Genesis 3:22 we read, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." Up to this point, man had not been a partaker of the tree of life; however, he disobeyed God's command and became a partaker of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So God was saying, "lest he . . . also" partake of the tree of life.

Adam, initially, was innocent, so there was no need for him to partake of the tree of life, no more than little babies need spiritual life, because they are in a state of innocence. "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). He works with everyone who comes into this time world the same way He worked with Adam. After Adam partook of evil, he was no longer innocent. Spiritually, he was "dead in trespasses and sins," as Ephesians 2:1 says. Therefore, he needed life, and it was vested in that tree. One cannot have life when he has sin; they are opposites. Once sin entered the picture, Adam was not in a condition for life, because certain conditions must be met.

Every person who comes into this time world enters in the same state in which Adam was created. Someone may say, "Don't you know that a person is born with a sinful nature? Don't you know that man has inbred sin that needs to be cleansed?" The Scriptures do not teach that. What do the Scriptures teach? According to one scholar, approximately three thousand years after the fall of man, Solomon penned in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." The Hebrew word for "upright" is *yashar* and means "righteous, or in right standing." Each child who comes into this world enters in an upright state, or a state of innocence. Remember, God said, "All souls are mine," and He does not put sin in a soul. God is not the author of sin. Where does the burden of sin lie? Again, Ecclesiastes 7:29 says, "They have sought out many inventions." When an individual comes to an age of accountability, as when Adam was given a power of choice, and he exercises the choice contrary to God's known will, then sin is conceived.

Ezekiel 28:15 says, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." This Scripture also shows us that every child who comes into this world is created perfect and upright, or without sin.

"The tree of life" was in the midst of the garden, the Paradise of God, and because of man's innocence, he had no need to avail himself of it. However, after sin came into the picture, he was not in a condition to access life, because he had sinned. Once man partook of sin, he was unfit to partake of life. Since sin and life are incompatible, he had to leave the presence of God and life. However, before Adam left, God gave a bright prophecy in Genesis 3:15, when He said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." God became the first Messianic Prophet and prophesied of Christ's coming of the seed of a woman, which Galatians 4:4 tells us was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. God gave man a prophecy of a brighter day. He did not forever bar man from the tree of life, but He showed him the way of life. Genesis 3:24 says "to keep *the way* of the tree of life." Thus, many assume that the way was to be kept shut, but this phrase does not say that. In reality, it was to be kept open, to show man it could be accessed but that there was only one acceptable way.

What is the tree of life? What can give sinful man life? Proverbs 3:18 says, "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her." What was Solomon speaking of in this text? Verse 13 tells us, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom . . ." Here he let us know that the tree of life is wisdom, but what is wisdom? Wisdom is not a thing, but a person. First Corinthians 1:24 says, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Christ is wisdom, and wisdom is the tree of life. Proverbs 3:19 says, "The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth." Ephesians 3:9 states, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." The Lord by wisdom, or by Jesus Christ, founded the earth. The tree of life was a type of Christ. Everything that was lost through Adam was restored through Jesus Christ.

What is the way to life? First, we need to understand that Christ is life. He is the tree of life; the life is vested in Him. In 1 John 5:11-12 John wrote: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." That life is in Jesus Christ. This "tree of life" was the focal point of the entire garden. Genesis 2:9 tells us it was "in the midst of the garden." Jesus said in Revelation 2:7, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." When the Revelator described the city, the church, which is paradise restored, he saw "in the midst . . . the tree of life" (Revelation 22:2). The focal point of it all is Jesus Christ! All devolves around Him. It is He whom man must access.

How can you get to Him? The way is through the flaming sword. Ephesians 6:17 talks about "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The fact that it is flaming indicates the working of the Holy Spirit, the anointing and the unction. The sword itself is the Word, teaching us that man's access to Jesus Christ and life comes by the Word and the Spirit, or the flaming sword.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE CHERUBIMS AND THE MERCY SEAT

*Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*

*23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*

*24 So he 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.*

There are many misconceptions concerning the cherubims spoken of in verse 24. *Webster's New World Dictionary* gives this definition of the word *cherub*: "any of the second order of angels, usually ranked just below the seraphims." In the previous chapters on seraphims, we found that, according to the Bible, seraphims are not angels. You may ask: "Does the Bible teach that cherubims are angels? and Where does the Bible teach that there are ranks and classes of angels?" The truth of the matter is that the Bible does *not* teach that cherubims are angels or a class of angelic beings. In reality, the Bible does not teach ranks, or classes, of angels.

Someone may say, "The Bible talks about *archangels*." The Bible never employs the term *archangel* in the plural; it is used only in the singular. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel." Who is the archangel? and Who will descend with a shout? According to this Scripture, it is the "Lord himself." The word *arch* in the Greek means "master or chief," and the Lord Himself is the Master or the Chief of angels. How do we know? In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53).

The only other place the word *archangel* appears in the Scriptures is in Jude 9, which refers to "Michael the archangel." The word *Michael* means "one who is like God." Who does that describe? In John 14:8 when Philip said, "Lord, shew us the Father," Jesus said in verse 9, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Why? He is the One who is like God. Hebrew 1:3 says that He was "the express image of his person." Who is like God? Who is the Master of angels? Who is the archangel? Jesus Christ is the one.

Other than Christ, there are no other ranks, categories, or classes; all other angelic beings are just angelic beings. Also, everywhere the word "angels" appears in the Scriptures, it *never* relates to winged creatures. Therefore, these winged creatures are something other than angelic beings. Where do the Scriptures teach that cherubims are angels? and Where does the Bible teach ranks and classes of angels? The truth is, the Bible teaches neither.

The word *cherub* (singular) is mentioned twenty-seven times in nineteen verses. In the Hebrew, *cherubim* serves as a plural, and it, along with the English plural *cherubims*, is mentioned sixty-five times in the Scriptures in fifty-seven verses. This lets us know that the teaching of these cherubims is important in the Scriptures. Why did these cherubims appear on the scene? Because verse 24 says "he drove out the man." Why did God do that? Verse 22 reads, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." There are some truths that we must understand to clearly view this verse. In Revelation, Chapter 22, we can see the tree of life. John was in the midst of receiving a vision. Revelation 9:17 states, "And thus I saw . . . in the vision . . ." Revelation 1:1 tells us the nature of that vision: ". . . he sent and signified . . ." The word *signified* means "revealed by signs." *Webster's Dictionary* tells us that a sign is a symbol. Therefore, the nature of this vision is symbolic.

What was John viewing when he saw that scene? To properly understand it, we must go to Revelation, Chapter 21, where it began. Revelation 21:2 says, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Here we see, in figurative expressions, the institution of the church coming down from God out of Heaven on the Day of Pentecost. How do we know that? John said, "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem." What is Jerusalem a figure of? Hebrews 12:22-23 tells us: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God [Revelation 21:2 calls it the 'holy city,' which is the same entity], the heavenly Jerusalem [which is the same as the New Jerusalem that John spoke of], and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly . . ." These expressions denote the various attributes and facets of what the Hebrew writer called in the next phrase the "church of the firstborn." He was showing the divine nature of God's church, how she came down from God out of Heaven.

When did the church come down from God out of Heaven? Acts 2:1-2 says: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." This is a picture of the morning time when the church came down from God on the Day of Pentecost and was instituted in A.D. 33. The Holy Ghost came down from God out of Heaven. Romans 8:10 tells us that the "Spirit is life." On the Day of Pentecost, God let the New Jerusalem come down out of Heaven. Through the personality of the Holy Spirit, He gave life to the believers and quickened them and made them new creatures so they could live and walk in newness of life.

What do the Scriptures teach that these cherubims are? Hebrew was predominantly the original language of the Old Testament. The words *cherub* and *cherubims* come from the Hebrew word **chaoth**, which means "the living ones." The root from which the word is derived means "a brilliant appearance." What a fitting and encouraging picture for the Lord to portray to Adam and Eve, who at this juncture were, as Ephesians 2:1 says, "dead in trespasses and sins." That was a very dark hour for man; he had just succumbed to sin, and fellowship with God had been broken. Sin caused man to be removed from the presence of God, but God in His faithfulness showed him a brighter day. He showed him there was still the tree of life, but that he must access that tree through the flaming sword—the Word and the Spirit of God—which is the only way to access Christ and life.

What are cherubims? Why did the Lord place them there? Another rendering of the word *cherubims* (found in Genesis 3:24) means "to come near or to serve." *Cherubims* mean "the living ones." Angels, or angelic beings, neither live nor die, but these creatures have life and a brilliant appearance. Let us consider where these beings figure predominantly in the Old Testament. In Exodus 37:6-9, where Moses was getting instruction concerning the articles and the furnishings that were to go into the tabernacle, we read: "And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims."

What did the Apostle Paul say about the articles of the old Mosaic law? In Galatians 3:24 he wrote, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ . . ." The focal point of every article in the old Law was to point us to Jesus Christ and the reality of this Gospel Day. In Hebrews 9:24 the Hebrew writer, writing to Jewish converts in the first century who were very familiar with the articles of Hebrew worship, said, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with

hands, which are the figures of the true." What was the old literal tabernacle? A figure. The Amplified Bible says "only a copy and pattern and type of the true One." When God gave the design for all of the articles in the old tabernacle, those things, according to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:11, "happened unto them for ensamples [or the Greek texts say 'types']." They were for our learning, to serve as types, to point us to Jesus Christ and His vicarious work.

Now, let us survey Exodus 37:6-9. Verse 6 says that "he made the mercy seat of pure gold." This mercy seat was a lid that sat on top of the Ark of the Covenant. The Hebrew word for *mercy seat* is **kaporath**, which means "to cover or to atone." Verse 7 states, "And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat." In Exodus 25:17-19 the command says: "And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof." The cherubims were made of the same piece of gold and of the same quality gold that the mercy seat was made of.

Why were the cherubims and the mercy seat of one piece? Because you cannot separate Christ from His church. They are one body, and the body has the same purity that Christ has. Exodus 37:7 says they were "beaten out of one piece." The two cherubims were connected to each side of the mercy seat. They were one with the mercy seat. Verse 9 says they "covered with their wings over the mercy seat . . . even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims." I want you to understand the literal picture, and then I will deal with the spiritual aspect.

Exodus 26:34 reads, "And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place." The old tabernacle was divided into two rooms: the holy place was the first room where the priests ministered, and the second room was the holy of holies, or the most holy place, where only the high priest went once a year. The ark was right beyond the veil, right at the entrance to the second room.

Hebrews 9:4 tells us that the ark contained "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." Over the top of the ark was a lid, which was the mercy seat, and it was made of beaten gold. At each end of the mercy seat was a cherubim of the same gold that the seat was made of, with the cherubims facing each other and leaning with their wings arched over the ark of God.

What was this mercy seat? Hebrews 9:3-5 says: "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

What is the "mercyseat" that Hebrews 9:5 and the Exodus account speak of? The root meaning of "mercyseat" here in Hebrews is the same word that is used for "propitiation" in 1 John, Chapter 2. First John 2:2 says, "And he is the propitiation for our sins." To whom does this refer? Verse 1 refers to "Jesus Christ the righteous." Who does the mercy seat typify? Remember, the word for "mercyseat" is *kaporeth*, which in the Hebrew means "to cover or to atone." Christ is the only One who can atone for our sins; He is our mercy seat. He is the One whom the pure gold typifies. Exodus 37:6 says, "And he made the mercy seat of pure gold," denoting purity.

According to 1 Peter 1:19 Christ was "a lamb without blemish and without spot." The gold was pure in the old tabernacle, and so is the antitype, Jesus Christ. Exodus 37:7 says, "And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat." Christ was a lamb without spot and blemish, and when one gets connected to Christ through real salvation, he is also without spot and blemish. Read Ephesians 5:27, where Paul spoke of the church "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Again, Exodus 37:7 says, "And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them . . ." What does "beaten" mean? Pressure was applied to form these into the image that God wanted them to be. Similarly, it takes striving to enter the Kingdom of God and to conform to the image of Christ.

Notice that those creatures were connected to the mercy seat. In other words, they were connected to Christ, or they were one with Christ. In John 17:20-22 read what Jesus said in His high priestly prayer, just before the Roman soldiers seized Him in the garden: "Neither pray I for these alone [speaking of His disciples], but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they [the church] also may be one in us: [Christ was speaking about the saints being one and being unified with Him, just as those cherubims were 'made out of one piece.' They were of the same gold that Christ was, and they were in unity with Christ, the mercy seat.] that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." What do the cherubims represent? They represent the people of God that He has conformed to the image He desires them to be, a heavenly image, so that they can be one with Him. You cannot separate Christ from the church.

Look how the cherubims were positioned. Exodus 37:9 says, ". . . even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims." They were not facing the world; they were facing the mercy seat. They constantly had their eyes on Christ. Exodus 37:9 says that they "covered with their wings over the mercy seat." Again, the mercy seat was the lid of the ark, and the

cherubims were on each end with their wings covering the mercy seat. Let us see what happened between those wings and the mercy seat. In Exodus 25:22 God said, "And there I will meet with thee, and will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony . . . ."

God's presence, the Shekinah glory cloud, came in and met over the mercy seat and under the wings of the cherubims. Between the mercy seat and the shelter of those wings was where the presence of God came in. What does that portray? God meets man through Jesus Christ under the shelter of the church, because He is in the midst of the church; that is where His presence is. In the safety and the shelter that the church provides, the presence of God can work in a free manner. He met with man overshadowing that mercy seat. Numbers 7:89 says, "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him." When God wanted to speak to Israel, His presence overshadowed the mercy seat. This teaches us as a type that the only way man is going to hear the voice of God is through Jesus Christ. His voice cannot be heard out in Babylon. He overshadowed that mercy seat and came in under the wings, under the shelter of those cherubims. The presence of God will not just speak anywhere, but He speaks in the safety, shelter, and seclusion that the church brings.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHERUBIMS ARE THE REDEEMED OF ALL AGES

In this chapter we want to examine these cherubims a little farther. Ezekiel also received a vision and saw these cherubims. In Ezekiel 10:15 he said, "And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar." He equated these cherubims with the "living creature" that he saw by the "river of Chebar," which reverts right back to Ezekiel, Chapter 1, where he received a vision of what he called in Chapter 10 "cherubims." Ezekiel 1:1 states, "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar [this is what he was referring to in Chapter 10], that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God [he was merely saying his visions were of God, or of divine origin]."

Ezekiel 1:2-12 says: "In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures [this is the vision to which he was referring]. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. 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.

"And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. 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 [you find the same description in Revelation 4:7]. 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. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went."

Many truths are contained in this, but let us see if we can identify these cherubims. Verse 1 says that Ezekiel "was among the captives." Here Ezekiel was in Babylonian bondage; he had been carried away. This was another dark hour in Hebrew history. (One thing about the faithfulness of God is that whenever we get in a dark hour, He will show us a brighter time as He did Ezekiel.) God let Ezekiel see a bright day when He gave him, what verse 1 calls, "visions" of a brighter age.

Let us look at what he saw. Ezekiel 1:4 states, "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself . . . ." God let him look down through the ages of time to this bright day, which commences in verse 4 with a whirlwind. In Acts, Chapter 2, we can see that it was prophetically fulfilled. Verses 1-2 read: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind . . . ." This whirlwind that Ezekiel saw was the rushing mighty wind that occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

What else did Ezekiel see? He said in verse 4 that this wind "came out of the north." What does this mean? The north is a very cold climate. When God came on the scene, Israel was in a very cold condition. Only fifty days earlier, they had slain the Lord of Glory and said: "Let him be crucified. . . . His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:23 and 25). What else did Ezekiel say in verse 4? He spoke of "a fire infolding itself," or a fire that was radiating brilliantly. What was this fire that followed this wind? It was the same fire that followed the wind in Acts, Chapter 2. Acts 2:3-4 reads: "And there appeared

unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . . ." This "fire infolding itself" is a picture of the advent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. What we see in Ezekiel 1:4 is a prophetic expression of the Day of Pentecost. Ezekiel 1:5 tells us, "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures." This fire produced living creatures. There were no living creatures until this fire came. One hundred twenty people assembled in the Upper Room. They were the same ones who were getting ready to appoint an Apostle, but they were not enjoying spiritual life. There was no life until the Giver of life came, which is the Holy Spirit. He is God's Agent to bring the life of Christ to mankind.

The fire produced the four living creatures, and the fire represents the Holy Spirit; He is the One who brings life. Romans 8:10 says, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life . . . ." This fire, which was symbolic of the Holy Ghost, came on the Day of Pentecost and brought life to those who were assembled. When He moved in and filled their hearts and lives, they became living creatures. Second Corinthians 3:6 says, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The Holy Spirit took men who were not enjoying life, and through His advent into their lives, made them living creatures.

What are the living creatures that Ezekiel 1:5 wrote about? Ezekiel 10:15 reads, "And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature . . . ." Cherubims are the living creatures. Remember that the word *cherubims* means "the living ones." Romans 6:11 says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." They were the living creatures because they were alive unto Jesus Christ our Lord. What type of creature will the Spirit of God make you? Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The only way you can get in Christ is through the Spirit, and the Spirit is life. When He comes, He brings the life of Christ to you and you become a living creature.

What does the "living creature" or "cherubims" that Ezekiel 10:15 spoke of represent? Ezekiel 1:10 tells us, "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."

In Revelation, Chapter 4, we can see the same description. Revelation 4:6-7 says: "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 [or the Greek word is **zoon**, meaning living creatures] full of eyes before and behind. 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." This is the same representation that Ezekiel saw.

Revelation 5:8-9 tells us what the four beasts are: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts [the four living creatures] and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they [the living creatures] sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood . . . ."

Who did Ezekiel say the living creatures are? They are the cherubims. Who are the cherubims? When we see a picture of these four living creatures, they are the redeemed of all ages, or the body of Christ, the church. There was no life until that infolding fire came that Ezekiel saw in Ezekiel 1:5, a figurative expression of the Holy Spirit who was Christ's Agent to bring life to men. Ezekiel 1:5 says that "out of the midst . . . [of the fire, the Holy Spirit produced the] four living creatures." Ezekiel 10:15 says those living creatures are "cherubims," or the living ones.

Notice the characteristics attached to these living creatures, the redeemed. First, each one had life. You are not a part of the redeemed if you do not have life. There is more to salvation and redemption than forgiveness. There is remission, and there must be regeneration; that is where the Holy Spirit comes in. It is one thing to have the blood remit the sins that are past, but quite another to have the Spirit of God come in and bring life so that you can rise in newness of life. Every one of these creatures had life because they had come in contact with the Holy Spirit.

Second, Ezekiel 1:7 tells us that "their feet were straight feet." Everyone who has life produced by the Holy Spirit lives holy. Their "straight feet" denote that the kind of life they received was the power to live holy. Hebrews 12:13-14 says: "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness . . . ." Some are weak, or lame, and therefore, they have trouble walking straight, or living holy. If they see you not living right, they may turn out of the way completely. However, if they see you making straight paths for your feet, they can be inspired and encouraged to realize that holiness is possible.

Why must they have "straight feet"? It is because they are walking on a straight street. Revelation 22:1 tells us that right in the midst of the city of God, the church, He had a "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal." Revelation 22:2 tells us that right in the midst of the river was a street. There are only two streets in the Revelation: one in the middle of Babylon and one in the middle of the church. The word *streets* (plural) never appears in the Book of Revelation. However, the word *street* appears twice: one street in Babylon (Revelation 11:8), which denotes the broad way (Matthew 7:13), and one street in the church (Revelation 22:2), which denotes the narrow way (Matthew 7:14). To stay on that street and to keep from falling off it, you must have straight feet. In other words, you have to live holy, because the street is a highway. Isaiah 35:8 says it is the highway of holiness. The only way you can stay on this highway is with holiness. If you veer from holiness, you will get off the street.

Ezekiel also stated in Ezekiel 1:9, "Their wings were joined one to another." If a person is truly walking in holiness, the natural by-product is unity. They were joined one to another. Paul said in Ephesians 4:16, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together . . ." Their wings were joined together. This unity lets us know that I cannot go without you, and you cannot go without me, because we are one. Those cherubims over the mercy seat were one piece, not only with Christ but also with each other. They faced the mercy seat and each other. If you cannot face your brother, you cannot face Christ.

Ezekiel 1:9 says, "They went every one straight forward." What does unity produce? It produces progress. Why is there not more progress in the church today? There is not enough unity. Where there is unity, there is progress.

How can these living creatures walk in complete holiness and have perfect unity today? What is the key to holiness and unity? Ezekiel 1:12 tells us, "And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went." The key to holiness and unity is Holy Ghost leadership. If I am led of the Spirit and you are led of the Spirit, He will not tell you one thing and me another. Each of us has straight feet, and we are going the same direction and walking on the same street. Again, Ezekiel said, "Whither the spirit was to go, they went," depicting Holy Ghost leadership.

Ezekiel wrote in the latter part of verse 12, ". . . and they turned not when they went." When the Holy Ghost leads or enlightens you, do not turn back on it. You must go straight forward with what He told you, because He is not going to tell you anything different.

This vision that Ezekiel received was of the Gospel Day, and in it he saw these brilliant creatures. In a dark hour of Israelite history, the Lord turned Ezekiel's mind to a people and a day that would be glorious. This is exactly what happened in the Genesis account. What is the picture in our text in Genesis, Chapter 3? Man was expelled due to sin. God who is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4) portrayed that man is not irrevocably doomed. He portrayed bright hope. Genesis 3:22 lets us know that the tree of life is a reality, and verse 24 tells us there is "the way to the tree of life." However, there is only one way that it can be accessed, and that is through the flaming sword.

What is the lesson? Man's access to life resides in Christ. Christ is this tree of life, and man's only route to spiritual life is in Jesus Christ. Man's only route to Christ is through the flaming sword—the anointed, unctionized, Spirit filled Word. It is not through church joining, signing a card, shaking a preacher's hand, or any other religious moves. For man to have life, he must get to the tree of life, Jesus Christ. The only way we can get to Jesus Christ—Isaiah said it and the Book of Romans elaborates on it: "Who hath believed our report?" (Romans 10:16). Romans, Chapter 10, says that believing the report is obeying the Gospel. Peter said that the only way one can be born again is by having the heart purified by obeying the truth through the Spirit (1 Peter 1:22-23). Thus, this takes you right back to the flaming sword—the Spirit and the Word. That is the only access man has to Jesus Christ, or to life.

The access to life is through Christ, and the access to Christ is through His Spirit and His Word. As a witness to this life in Christ stand these cherubims (or the living ones) of which verse 24 speaks. These are the living creatures as Ezekiel 1:5 and Revelation 4:8 depict them. They stand at the east of Eden as a witness to light and life. By coming through the Word and the Spirit to Jesus Christ, man can have life, be one with Christ, and be restored to a position where he can enjoy the Eden of God. This is a prophetic picture of hope.

In conclusion, these cherubims are a picture of a people who embrace the message and enjoy life. This lesson is symbolic and prophetic, showing to fallen man that he was not irrevocably doomed. There is hope and redemption, but there is a way that man must now access it since sin has entered the picture. The life is in the tree. The tree of life is Jesus Christ, and man's only access to life is through the Word and the Spirit. These four cherubims stand as witnesses to the fact that the power of the Word and the Spirit can redeem people and produce a church, which is the body of Christ, that can be God's light—the living and shining ones in this world.

God did not close man out in a dark hour without hope and without light; He gave hope and light. In reality, the cherubims of this text and the seraphims of Isaiah, Chapter 6, and the living creatures of Ezekiel, Chapter 1, and Revelation, Chapter 4, depict the same ones—the redeemed of all ages, the church of the Living God, the body of Christ. They are merely revealing different attributes.

When John saw a picture of the church in Revelation, Chapter 21, the first comment he made was, "having the glory of God," because it is beautiful to see lives transformed by the Word and the Spirit and made alive, living in holiness and unity, and going forward conquering and to conquer. It is a beautiful and encouraging picture. No doubt, it encouraged Adam, Ezekiel, and John, and if you will see it as it is, it will encourage you.