

## Angels, Cherubim And Seraphim

**Seraphim:** 'Above Him (the Lord) stood the seraphim; each had six wings; with two wings he covered his own face, and with two wings he covered his feet and with two wings he flew; and one seraphim cried to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with tongs from off the altar'. With it he touched my mouth and said, "Behold this has touched your lips; your iniquity and guilt are taken away and your sin is completely forgiven"' (Isaiah 6:2, 3 & 6).

The above verses describe the seraphim; they have six wings and can fly. They have faces and feet. They can obviously see, hear and speak. The four wings covering their faces and feet show us they worship God and the words they spoke were words of worship. The two wings with which they flew, shows service to God, plus the conversation with Isaiah confirms that. Their role is both worship and service. The verses also tell us seraphim are male. They are only mentioned in the scriptures as being in pairs. They are all holy; there is no scriptural verses that tell us any seraphim have ever rebelled against God.

This is a study of angelic beings that are actually named in the Bible. This text is not about the Angel of the Lord Who has been identified as Jesus our Messiah Who existed long before He was born on earth. For more about the Angel of the Lord, see the sermon on this website titled: 'Jesus, Son of God; Angel of the Lord'.

The scriptures we have selected from the Bible describe the actions and outcomes of just three holy beings; seraphim, cherubim and angels. Angels do not have wings but they can fly. Cherubim have two wings and seraphim have six wings. They are all part of the heavenly hosts and all stand before God. We notice all of the heavenly beings are spoken of as 'he' not 'it' so the references are all in the masculine gender. We cannot usually see them unless God opens our eyes into the spirit realm (2 Kings 6:17). There are two whole, huge, spiritual kingdoms out there, full of heavenly beings, and of which humans play only a small part. There is the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 4:20) and there is the kingdom of darkness (Ephesians 6:12). People have the Spirit of God within them and that makes us spiritual beings too (Acts 13:52). Humans are not God's only creation, and there are more than just angels in heaven. There are seraphim, cherubim, the wonderfully unusual four living creatures, and creatures like horses (2 Kings 6:17) so it is logical there are other creations up in heaven too.

**Cherubim:** 'God drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword that turned every which way, to guard the way to the tree of life' (Genesis 3:24).

There are 69 references to cherubim throughout the Bible, and they are different to angels and seraphim. Cherubim are always in pairs, except when they are physically with God our Creator. Cherub is singular; cherubim is plural. Cherubim have two wings with which they fly, and have a hand like that of a

man's under their wings (Ezekiel 10:8). Their role is pure service to God. However, when the Israelites were told to make the ark of the covenant, they were instructed to make images of two cherubim of solid beaten gold and place them onto the ark on either side of the Mercy Seat; and the stance of the golden cherubim was that of worship (Exodus 25:18 to 22; 37:7 to 9). The cherubim were to show the glory of God (Hebrews 9:5). The glory of God rests upon the cherubim (Ezekiel 9:3). The linen curtains for the tabernacle had cherubim carefully embroidered into the fabric (Exodus 26:1; 36:8). The linen veil also had cherubim woven into the fabric (Exodus 26:31; 36:35). Here is a little thought; there is no scripture that tells us God had to describe the cherubim to the Israelites, so make the cherubim, the Israelites must have known what they looked like. We are strictly forbidden to make images of any kind (Exodus 20:4) but in this case, the Lord instructed the images of the cherubim to be made to show His glory. 'When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard His Voice speaking to him from above the Mercy Seat that was upon the Ark of the Covenant from between the two cherubim' (Numbers 7:89).

When Solomon built the temple, he made images of cherubim from olive wood overlaid with gold (1 Kings 6:23 to 28; 2 Chronicles 3:10 to 13). He placed the Ark of the Covenant beneath the huge wings of the golden cherubim (1 Kings 8:6 & 7; 1 Chronicles 28:18; 2 Chronicles 5:7 & 8). There were cherubim carved into the wall panels and doors (1 Kings 6:29, 32 & 35; 7:29 & 36; 2 Chronicles 3:7). The linen veil in the tabernacle had cherubim woven into the fabric (2 Chronicles 3:14). In the New Jerusalem, in a new temple there will be images of cherubim (Ezekiel 41:18, 20 & 25).

The Lord God sits in heaven above the cherubim (1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chronicles 13:6; Psalm 80:1) and He also sits enthroned among the cherubim, they serve Him and are obedient to His instructions (Psalm 99:1; Isaiah 37:16; Ezekiel 10:1 to 10:22; 11:22). Sometimes the Lord God rides upon a cherub (2 Samuel 22:11; Psalm 18:10).

There was an Israelite man named Cherub (Ezra 2:59; Nehemiah 7:61).

Although most people assume the devil was once an archangel, the scriptures actually say he was once a beautiful, anointed cherub who covered the throne room with music (Ezekiel 28:14 to 19; Isaiah 14:9 to 20). He was never an archangel; that is an assumption not based on scripture. According to the scriptures, he was the only cherub who rebelled and was expelled from heaven; all the other cherubim have remained holy.

**Angels:** There are references to angels scattered throughout the Bible. Angels are often very human looking, and have several roles unlike seraphim and cherubim who are 'specialists' in their given fields. The Lord in His sovereignty sends angels to do a vast array of deeds. Firstly though, we will deal with the archangel Michael.

From what we can read in the Bible, Michael is the one and only archangel. Michael was (and still is) the defending Prince over Israel (Daniel 10:13 & 21; 12:1; Revelation 12:7). He was the one and only angel who was ever named as

the (one, singular) archangel (Jude 1:9). Further to that, the scriptures say that when Jesus returns to earth, He will return with a shout from the (one, singular) archangel (1 Thessalonians 4:16). There were about nine Israelite men named Michael (Numbers 13:13; 1 Chronicles 5:13 & 14; 6:40; 7:3; 8:16; 12:20; 27:18; 2 Chronicles 21:2; Ezra 8:8).

Gabriel is an angel; the special messenger who stands in the presence of God. If he was an archangel, the scriptures would have said so. Instead, he was simply called, 'Gabriel' (Daniel 8:16) and he identified himself as, "I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God." It was Gabriel who explained the vision to Daniel (Daniel 8:16), and he looked so human, Daniel described him as having the appearance of a man (Daniel 8:15 and Daniel 9:21). It was Gabriel who told Zachariah, his wife Elizabeth would have a son who was to be named John (Luke 1:11 to 19). Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she was going to give birth to Jesus (Luke 1:26 to 38). It is not written in the Bible that Gabriel was an archangel; that is an assumption not based on scripture. He was a messenger in just the same way as the angel who was sent to the Apostle John. 'And He sent and communicated the Revelation through His (messenger) angel to His servant John' (Revelation 1:1).

The very first mention of angels in the scriptures, is when they were sent to spy out Sodom to see if the sin there was as bad as God had heard it was, and it was the angels who pulled Lot and his family out of danger (Genesis 18:1 through to 19:29).

Every little child has his/her own angel. 'Beware that you do not despise any of these little ones (children), for I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of My Father Who is in heaven' (Matthew 18:10).

Angels worship God and there are millions of them. 'And I saw and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, saying in a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive all the power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing"' (Revelation 5:11). Jesus said, "Do you suppose that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will immediately provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53). Twelve legions would have been about 80,000 angels. 'Then suddenly there appeared with the angel, an army of the troops of heaven' (Luke 2:13). Angels are totally obedient to God, and they praise Him. 'Bless the Lord, you His angels, you mighty in strength, who do His commandments, obeying the voice of His Word' (Psalm 103:20). 'Praise Him all His angels, praise Him all His hosts – His (heavenly) army' (Psalm 148:2).

We are strictly forbidden to worship angels. To do so could cause us to lose our prize of salvation. 'Let no one rob you of your prize, insisting on false humility and worshipping of angels' (Colossians 2:18). Angels are servants of God like we are, as the Apostle John found out when he attempted to worship an angel. 'I fell at his feet to worship him but he said, "You must not do that! I am another servant with you and with those who have accepted the testimony borne by Jesus. Worship God!"' (Revelation 19:10). And again John attempted to worship

an angel. "You must not do that. I am a fellow servant along with you and with your people, with the prophets and with those who are mindful of the messages of this book. Worship God!" (Revelation 22:9).

Angels are spirits sent to minister to God's people. 'Aren't the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent out in the service of those who are to inherit eternal life?' (Hebrews 1:14). 'Behold, angels came and ministered to Jesus' (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13). 'And there appeared to Jesus an angel from heaven, to strengthen Him in Spirit' (Luke 22:43).

God has given angels a type of power we humans do not have. 'The angels struck the men with blindness so that they groped for the door' (Genesis 19:11). Their power can cause the earth to shake. 'And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel descended from heaven' (Matthew 28:2). 'During the night an angel opened the prison doors. (Acts 5:19). 'I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth ... and with a loud voice he called out to the four angels who had been given authority and power to harm the earth and sea' (Revelation 7:1 & 2).

Angels guide us. 'He will send His angel before you' (Genesis 24:7). 'The Lord, in Whose Presence I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way' (Genesis 24:40). 'Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared' (Exodus 23:20). 'Behold, My angel shall go before you' (Exodus 32:34). 'An angel said to Philip, "Rise and proceed southward at midday on the road that runs from Jerusalem down to Gaza"' (Acts 8:26). 'The angel said to Cornelius, "Now send men to Joppa and have them call for Peter"' (Acts 10:5). 'Suddenly an angel appeared to him (Peter) and a light shone in the place where he stood. The angel gently smote Peter on the side and awakened him saying, "Get up quickly, tighten your belt, bind on your sandals and wrap your cloak around you and follow me." The chains fell off Peter's hands and Peter went out following the angel. They passed through the first guard and the second, then the iron gate swung open of its own accord then the angel left him (Acts 12:7 to 11).

When God gave the children of Israel manna to eat, they were actually eating angels food. 'Everyone ate the bread of angels. God gave them food in abundance' (Psalm 78:25).

Angels are witnesses to our conduct. 'I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Messiah Jesus and of the chosen angels that you guard these rules without personal prejudice or favour, and do nothing from partiality' (1 Timothy 5:21). 'Whereas, even angels, though superior in might and power, do not bring a charge against them (wicked people) before the Lord' (2 Peter 2:11). People who have accepted Jesus as their Messiah, along with holy angels will live in heaven. 'You have come to Mount Zion, even to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless multitudes of angels in festal gathering' (Hebrews 12:22).

God sends angels to protect us. 'He will give His angels charge over you to accompany and protect you in all your ways. They will bear you up on their

hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone' (Psalm 91:11 & 12). 'My God has sent His angel and has shut the lion's mouths so that they have not hurt me' (Daniel 6:22).

Angels ascend and descend continually from heaven, to earth and back to heaven to receive instruction from God and do His will. Jacob's dream was prophetic. 'Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!' (Genesis 28:12). An angel was coming to earth to speak to Daniel, when he was set upon by the demonic ruler of Persia and had to be assisted by Archangel Michael. After delivering his message to Daniel, the angel said he had to return to heaven (Daniel 10:11 to 21).

Angels can appear to us looking so much like humans, they do not look at all strange to us when we see them. Some early church believers had angels join them for meals and the angels were so human-like, their hosts did not know they were entertaining angels. When Jacob met angels, he knew they were angels and he did not seem at all surprised to see them. 'Jacob went on his way and God's angels met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's army!"' (Genesis 32:1 & 2). We have already read about when Daniel met Gabriel and said he had the appearance of a man (Daniel 8:15). 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for some have entertained angels without knowing it' (Hebrews 13:2). However, sometimes they can be frightening. 'An angel ... came and rolled the boulder back and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his garments as white as snow. Those keeping guard were so frightened of him that they trembled and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be frightened ... "' (Matthew 28:2 to 5). When the righteous have their new resurrected body, they will look the same as the angels do now. 'In the resurrected state there is no marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven' (Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25). 'For believers cannot die again and are angel-like or equal to angels, and being sharers in the resurrection, they are children of God' (Luke 20:36). These scriptures reveal to us, just how alike angels and humans are in appearance.

Angels can appear to us in dreams like they did to Joseph several times. 'An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream' (Matthew 1:20) ... 'And when they had departed, behold, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream' (Matthew 2:13) ... 'Behold, an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph' (Matthew 2:19).

The Lord Jesus will tell the angels about His followers. "I tell you, whoever declares openly and freely, and confesses that He is My worshipper, and acknowledges Me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge him before the holy angels. But he who disowns Me before men, will be disowned in the presence of the angels" (Luke 12:8 & 9). "Even so I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10). 'He who overcomes shall be attired in white garments, and I will not blot his name from the Book of Life; I will acknowledge him as Mine and I will confess his name openly before My Father and before His angels' (Revelation 3:5).

Angels can bring swift judgement from God upon wicked people. 'The angel went forth and slew 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians' (Isaiah 37:36). 'The Son of Man will send forth His angels and they will gather out of the Kingdom of God all causes of offence and all who do wickedly' (Matthew 13:41). 'So it will be at the close of this age; the angels will go forth and separate the wicked from the righteousness, and they will cast the wicked into the furnace of fire' (Matthew 13:49). 'Herod arrayed himself in his royal robes, took his seat upon his throne and addressed the crowd. The people shouted, "It is the voice of a god not a man!" And at once an angel smote Herod because he did not give God the glory and Herod was eaten by worms and died' (Acts 12:21 to 23).

The Law given to Moses was ordained by angels. 'You, who received the Law as it was ordained and delivered by angels, yet you did not obey it!' (Acts 7:53). 'What was the purpose of the Law? It was because of sin and it was intended until the Seed (Jesus) should come ... the Law was arranged, ordained and delivered through angels by the hand of Moses' (Galatians 3:19).

Angels are the ones who take us to heaven. Jesus called them 'reapers'. 'The harvest is the end of this age, and the reapers are the angels' (Matthew 13:39). 'And He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they (the angels) will gather His elect, His chosen ones from the four winds – from one end of the earth to the other; but of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father' (Matthew 24:31 & 36; Mark 13:27 & 32). 'And it occurred that Lazarus the beggar died and was carried by the angels to heaven' (Luke 16:22).

It displeases angels when women in the church have authority over men. 'Man was not created from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created on account of woman, but woman for the benefit of man. Therefore the woman should have authority on her head, so she does not displease the angels' (1 Corinthians 11:8 to 10).

Angels reveal the glory of God. 'So the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels' (Matthew 16:27). 'When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory' (Matthew 25:31). 'Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels' (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). 'Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone all around them' (Luke 2:9). "For I tell you, you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man!" (John 1:51).

When we speak in tongues we speak in languages of both men and angels. 'I speak in the tongues of men and of angels' (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Angels were witnesses to the first coming of Jesus after waiting a long time to be shown the mystery of the salvation message, and when the Lord returns, He will come with mighty angels. 'The great mystery is, God was made visible in human flesh, justified in the Holy Spirit, was seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world and taken up into glory' (1 Timothy 3:16).

'These things have now been made known to you by those who preach the Gospel by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Into these things, the very angels of heaven longed to look' (1 Peter 1:12). 'The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in a flame of fire' (2 Thessalonians 1:7).

The book of Hebrews (1:3 to 7 & 13) reveals Old Testament prophecies regarding Jesus and His relationship with angels. 'Jesus sat down at the right hand of the divine Majesty on high, taking a place and rank, He Himself became superior to angels and He inherited a Name more excellent than they have. For which of the angels did God the Father ever say, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You?"' (Psalm 2:7). And again, "I will be to Him a Father, and He will be to Me a Son?" (2 Samuel 7:14). Moreover, when He brings the Firstborn Son again into the world He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Psalm 148:2). Referring to the angels He says, "It is God Who makes His angels winds and His ministering servants flames of fire" (Psalm 104:4). Which of the angels has God ever said, "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies your footstool?" (Psalm 110:1).

Mankind was made a little lower than angels but those who believe in the Lord will be crowned with glory. For a very short time, Jesus Himself was ranked lower than the angels. 'For some little time You have ranked Man lower, or inferior than the angels; now You have crowned him with glory and honour and set him over the works of Your hands. But we are able to see Jesus, Who was ranked lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because of His having suffered death, in order that by the grace of God, He might suffer death for every person' (Hebrews 2:7 & 9). 'He has now entered into heaven and is at the right hand of God with all angels, authorities and powers subject to Him' (1 Peter 3:22).

Angels can indirectly bring healing, although it is always the Lord Himself Who heals people. 'An angel of the Lord went down into the pool at appointed times and stirred up the water; whoever stepped into the water first was healed of whatever disease he had' (John 5:4).

This world was never intended for angels to inhabit. Their rightful place is in heaven. 'For it was not to angels that God subjected the habitable world' (Hebrews 2:5). When some angels did decide to leave their rightful place in heaven and come to earth, because of their disobedience they were bound in chains and sent to hell to await the final judgement, and they will end up in the eternal lake of fire with the disobedient cherub, the devil himself. Hell was created for the devil and his angels, and there is no redemption or deliverance available to the angels who disobeyed. 'For God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them into hell, delivering them to be kept there in pits of gloom till the judgement and their doom' (2 Peter 2:4). 'The angels who did not keep their own first place of power but abandoned their proper dwelling place (heaven), these angels God has reserved in custody in eternal chains under thick gloom of utter darkness until the judgement and doom of Judgement Day' (Jude 1:6). 'Begone from Me you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matthew 25:41). 'For as we know, Jesus did not take hold of the fallen angels to give them a delivering hand' (Hebrews 2:16).

It seems that each church or assembly mentioned in the Book of Revelation had its very own angel. Whether or not that is true today is debatable. There are some wonderfully dedicated people in church, who live their lives as close to the Lord as they possibly can. There are churches where there is a powerful anointing and miracles flow in abundance, but sadly, some modern churches are so carnal it is doubtful a holy angel of God could tolerate the sin. However, the seven churches or assemblies in Revelation each had its own angel who were called stars. 'The seven stars are the seven angels of the seven assemblies and the seven lampstands are the seven churches' (Revelation 1:20); 'To the angel of the church in Ephesus ...' (2:1); 'To the angel of the church at Smyrna ...' (2:8); 'To the angel of the church at Pergamum ...' (2:12); 'To the angel of the church of Thyatira ...' (2:18); 'To the angel of the church at Sardis ...' (3:1); 'To the angel of the church at Philadelphia ...' (3:7); 'To the angel of the church at Laodicea ...' (3:14).

After the angels of the seven churches were mentioned in Revelation, the rest of the angels spoken about in Revelation were worshipping God, carrying out judgements on the wicked people still on earth, or they were serving God in some way. Finally, the last time angels are mentioned in the Bible, is when Jesus says He sent the angel as a witness of His testimony, to be told to the churches, and to reassure people everywhere, Jesus really is the Jewish Messiah Who sprang from King David's lineage. 'I, Jesus, have sent My messenger angel to you, to witness and to give you assurance of these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright Morning Star' (Revelation 22:16).

Amen and God bless you.

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