

NOTE to Parents:

At the end of this text is a short chart I made that compares these two amazing heavenly creatures, very briefly showing the information in this text.

## **Cherubim & Seraphim, Amazing Heavenly Creatures** (Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1 & 10; Revelation 4)

by  
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There are some amazing looking, real creatures here on the earth and in the ocean, aren't there? Just think of a giraffe or an octopus! They are amazing, aren't they?!

Well, the Bible sometimes talks about 2 other different kinds of very amazing looking, real creatures. But these are heavenly creatures. They are called cherubim and seraphim. I thought today we'd talk just a little about these two amazing heavenly creatures, about what we hear about them in the Bible. Would you like that? What do they look like? What do they do?

Okay, then. Let's start with the cherubim. We're told more about the cherubim than we are about the seraphim. (Some Bible translation say "cherubims" ana "seraphims", but most don't have the "s" at the end of the words.) Anyway, just one of these creatures, these cherubim, is called a cherub. Two or more are called cherubim. The Bible also calls them "living creatures". So cherubim are real, live creatures, aren't they?

Well, the first time we hear about cherubim is back way at the beginning of the Bible. Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden because they had sinned by eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God had told them not to eat. You remember that, don't you? Well, after they left the Garden of Eden, the Lord placed cherubim with a flaming sword that turned every way to keep Adam and Eve from coming back into the Garden of Eden and eating from the tree of life. It doesn't say in Genesis what the cherubim looked like, but later in the book of Ezekiel, the prophet Ezekiel actually saw cherubim, and he tries to describe them. So let's look at what he said about them, all right?

You see, two times the prophet Ezekiel had visions in which he saw cherubim. The first time, Ezekiel says that he saw a whirlwind coming with fire -- and in the middle of the whirlwind there were 4 cherubim! There was something like burning lamps that went up and down among them, and lightning went out! The cherubim were bright and shiny like the color of highly polished brass or Obronze. And as they moved, they were looking like lightning. And the cherubim went straight, not turning.

But what did the cherubim themselves look like? Well, both times Ezekiel saw them, he tried to describe them. I'll try to combine his two descriptions here. Ezekiel said that the cherubim

looked sort of like men. --But, each of the cherubim had 4 faces! Wow!! Imagine that, creatures with 4 faces! One of their faces was like the face of a man. It sounds as if probably this face was on the front of their heads. But then on the right side they had the face of a lion. On the left side was a face like an ox, and they also had a face like an eagle. It sounds to me as if this face is on the back of the head. Four faces on each cherub!

As if that isn't amazing enough, then Ezekiel says that each cherub had 4 wings! Two of their wings stretched up and touched each other, and the other two wings covered their bodies. And under each wing was like a man's hand, and they could use these hands.

Now, when the cherubim were flying, their wings made a very loud noise. But when they were just standing, they would put their wings down. And their legs were straight, but they had feet like a calf. That sounds to me as if they had hooves instead of regular feet. And they were all shiny, like polished brass. And I'll bet you can't guess what else they had! Why, their bodies, back, wings, and hands were full of eyes! Just imagine! Four faces, four wings, full of eyes! They really sound amazing, don't they?!

Then Ezekiel seems to have had a hard time trying to describe something else about the cherubim that he saw. He said there were wheels with them, one wheel beside each cherub. And there was another wheel inside of each wheel. Wheels within wheels! The wheels were shiny, like jewels, and these wheels moved when the cherubim moved. The wheels had high rims. And what do you think these rims had?! Why, these rims were also full of eyes! Ezekiel says that the spirit of the cherubim was in the wheels, but I don't really know what that means.

But what did these cherubim that Ezekiel saw do? Well, it seems that in some way they made sort of a base under God's throne, sort of like a chariot that God could ride on if He wanted to. You see, the first time Ezekiel saw the cherubim, he saw like a throne above the four cherubim, and Ezekiel heard a voice, and he saw sort of like a man with a great brightness upon the throne. Ezekiel says this was the glory of the Lord. Then the second time Ezekiel saw cherubim, he said that the throne of the Lord and the glory of the Lord were above the cherubim. Though the glory of the Lord could move away from the cherubim.

Now, how many cherubim are there in heaven? I don't know, because the Bible doesn't tell us that. But Ezekiel saw four cherubim, so we know that there are at least 4, don't we? The cherubim are truly amazing creatures, aren't they?! By the way, some people think there may be different kinds of cherubim, but the Bible doesn't say.

Another thing about cherubim. Do you remember when we talked about the Tabernacle? There were two rooms, weren't there? And the ark of the covenant was in the second room, the Holy of Holies, wasn't it? Well, the lid to the ark of the covenant was called the Mercy Seat, and do you remember what was on top of the lid? Yes, the Mercy Seat had like statues of 2 cherubim on top of it, remember? These statues of cherubim were made out of solid gold, and they faced each other. And their wings were stretched up over the Mercy Seat. And God actually talked to Moses there in the Holy of Holies from above the golden cherubim. Yes, this ark of the covenant seems to

have been a sort of picture of heavenly things, a sort of picture of the real cherubim with God's throne above them. And later King David even spoke of the ark of the covenant as if it were God's footstool.

But we saw that four of the real cherubim seem to be under a throne of the Lord and can carry Him around on the throne if He wants them to. Of course, the Lord doesn't need to be carried, does He?! But it would be a great honor to be allowed to carry Him, wouldn't it? I don't know what the cherubim do when they aren't carrying God's throne. The Bible doesn't say, but perhaps they serve Him in some other way then. After all, cherubim guarded the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, didn't they? (Imagine, at the Garden of Eden, cherubim with a flaming sword that turned every way! How awesome!) Anyway, that is what the Bible tells us about how cherubim look and what they do.

Oh, but there is just one more thing. There is something very startling that I'm going to tell you about one particular cherub. From what both the prophet Isaiah and the prophet Ezekiel write in the Bible, it seems that the devil, Satan, had once been a cherub!! But then he got proud, and he wanted to be like God! Imagine that! Why, no one can be like God except the Lord God Himself, can they?! So now, Satan is no longer a glorious cherub serving the Lord God, but instead he is an evil creature who wants us not to worship the Lord. Isn't that terrible?! And this happened because of his pride. Pride like that is very bad, isn't it?

But now let's talk about the other amazing, real, live, heavenly creatures that the Bible tells us about, the seraphim. One of these creatures is called a seraph. More than one are seraphim. And the word means "burning". I'm not sure, but I don't think that means that they are actually fiery with flames, I think probably it means that they are very bright and shiny, like fire. But, again, I'm not sure.

We aren't told so much about the seraphim as we were about the cherubim. The seraphim seem to look somewhat like cherubim, but there are some big differences between them that the Bible tells us about. What are those big differences?

Well, the prophet Isaiah actually had a vision of heaven, and he saw the seraphim. Yes, first Isaiah says that he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. And he saw seraphim standing above this throne. And then Isaiah tells us that the seraphim have six wings! That's two more wings than the cherubim have, isn't it?! And Isaiah said that the seraphim use two of their wings to cover their faces, two of their wings to cover their feet, and they can fly with the other two wings. They also have hands that they can use. Also, they are full of eyes in their front and back. Six wings and full of eyes! Wow!

But the number of wings isn't the only big difference between the cherubim and seraphim that we are told about. You see, Isaiah wasn't the only human to see the seraphim. No. In the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, it says that the apostle John also saw seraphim. John calls the seraphim "living creatures". We don't know how many seraphim there are, but John saw four of them, so there are at least 4 seraphim, aren't there? And John mentions another big

difference.

Yes, John said that he saw the throne of God in heaven, and Someone was sitting on the throne. And there were thunderings and lightnings coming out of the throne and a rainbow was around the throne, and there were 7 lamps burning before the throne. And around the throne were four living creatures, the seraphim, and they each had six wings (just as Isaiah told us). Then John said that one of these seraphim was like a lion, one was like a calf, one had the face of a man, and one was like a flying eagle.

Now, this sounds sort of like the four faces that each of the cherubim had, doesn't it? But each of the seraphim only have one face. Also, while the cherubim looked sort of like men, that wasn't the way the seraphim were. No. John says that one of the seraphim was like a lion, one like a calf, one like a flying eagle, and one had the face of a man. Wow!

Now, where did both Isaiah and John say these seraphim were? That was different from the cherubim, too, wasn't it? Where had the cherubim been? Yes, except for the ones guarding the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, the cherubim we heard about in the Bible were under a throne of God that could move, sort of like a chariot. Remember? Well, the seraphim aren't under the throne, are they? No, the seraphim are above and around God's throne that is in the heavenly throne room.

But what do these four seraphim do there in the Lord God's heavenly throne room? Well, they have loud voices, and they get to praise the Lord all of the time, day and night! Isaiah heard one of the seraphim call out loudly to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And John heard the seraphim shout to each other, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" And they give honor and glory and thanks to the Lord on His throne. What a privilege for them to be able to do this! But from something else Isaiah said, the seraphim can also do other things that God tells them to do, too.

And that's about all we know about the cherubim and seraphim, those amazing, real, live, heavenly creatures! Though they are very different from anything we've ever seen, they sound very splendid and awe inspiring, don't they? And wouldn't you like to be able to see them there in heaven? Well, did you know that someday you may be able to see them?! But how might we be able to see the cherubim and seraphim? After all, they are in heaven, aren't they?

Well, remember we are all sinners, so we shouldn't be able to go to heaven, should we? But God the Father loves us so much that He sent Jesus, God the Son, to earth to die on the cross for our sins. And Jesus did this because He loves us so very much, too. Of course, Jesus didn't stay dead, did He?! No! Three days later Jesus was alive again, and hundreds of people saw Him alive! Then a while later Jesus went back to heaven where He is now, still alive.

And if we believe this and if we trust in Jesus to forgive our sins, He will. And then someday we will be able to go to heaven! And there the Lord will be on His throne with the seraphim around Him, praising Him. Perhaps then we will see the cherubim under His throne, too. But the best part is that we'll be with the Lord! Be with Him forever!

Did you enjoy hearing about those two kinds of real, live, amazing heavenly creatures? I hope so. I certainly enjoyed telling you what the Bible has to say about them!

## COMPARING CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM

CHERUBIM

(singular is cherub)

(word of uncertain origin)

(Spoken of as "living creatures")

Gen. 3:24

Guarded tree of life after the Fall.

Eze. 1:4-26

Came in middle of a whirlwind & fire.

Looked like a man.

Each had 4 faces:

Face like a man.

Face like a lion on right side.

Face like an ox on left side.

Face also like an eagle.

4 wings, 1 on each side.

2 stretched up & touched another.

2 covered bodies.

Man's hands under wings on 4 sides.

Wings made very loud noise when going.

They let down their wings when standing.

Legs straight.

Feet like a calf's (hoof?).

Shiny like polished brass.

Something like burning lamps went up & down among them & lightening went out.

Went "straight, not turning" wherever the spirit went.

Moved looking like lightening.

One wheel on ground beside each creature.

Wheels gleaming, like beryl stone.

Another wheel in the middle of or bisecting each wheel.

Had high "rims" full of eyes around them.

The wheels moved with the creatures.

The spirit of the creatures in the wheels.

An "expanse" above their straight wings.

A voice & like a throne above the "expanse" with "One" on it.

Eze. 10:1-22

Throne of the Lord above them.

Glory of Lord above them.

Glory of Lord could move away from them.

A fire with coals under them between wheels (this time at least).

Creatures didn't turn; went where the head looked.

Full of eyes on body, backs, hands, wings, & wheels.

Wings made loud noise.

Man's hands, which they used, under wings.

Four faces: of cherub, man, lion, eagle.

Same creature as in Eze. 1 (v. 20,22).

Eze. 28:13-15

The devil was a cherub.

SERAPHIM

(singular is saraph)

(Strong's - "burning")

Isa. 6:1-6

Above God's throne.

6 wings:

2 cover face,

2 cover feet,

2 flies with.

One cried to another, "Holy, holy, holy..."

Loud voice.

Has hands that can be used.

Rev. 4:6-9

"Living creatures".

1st creature like a lion.

2nd creature like a calf.

3rd creature face of man.

4th creature like a flying eagle.

In midst of God's throne & around it.

Full of eyes before & behind.

6 wings.

Didn't rest but always sing, "Holy, holy..."

