

BFF328 The Cherubim on the two ends of the Mercy

Scott Moore: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I'm well, how are you?

Scott: Good. I was just saying before we started recording that I look forward to these even when I'm just editing them. I'm so edified by our studies because I find myself now reading through the Bible and noticing stuff that I never would've noticed if it wasn't for this. Very cool. Let's keep going, man.

Steve: I'm the same way. If nobody else gets anything out of them, I have been permanently affected by digging into God's word in a whole new way. If I didn't have these commitments to our podcast, I wouldn't get myself up at these really early hours, and put in the time. You'll see today, we're studying the cherubim, which I would have thought, "Yeah, this is just a couple of angels."

Steve: However the more you dig into the word, there's so much there, and it is so impactful. For those of you that are interested in digging into the word, I recorded on Zoom a video commentary -- I guess, you'd call it tutorial -- explaining how to use Bible Hub which is the main source of my studies.

I have a regular Bible program that I use, and I can do English concordance studies in it. I can do a little bit of interlinear, but the Bible Hub enables me to go much deeper.

Scott: I thought you had to go to seminary, and learn Hebrew, and all that to be able to do what you're doing.

Steve: There's a couple things that help me having had some exposure to Hebrew, absolutely, like today, for example. Cherub is singular. Cherubim is plural. When you see I-M at the end of a word, that's a Hebrew way of showing plurality. You have the seraphim and the nephilim. In English, we just put a S at the end of it. We would say angel, angels, whereas in Hebrew the plural of cherub is cherubim.

Knowing that kind of thing does help, but without much knowledge of Hebrew or Greek, you can still learn a lot from just delving into Bible Hub because they have the English transliteration of it.

Scott: Awesome.

Steve: Thank you, Father, for Your deep word, Your practical word, Your inspired word. Thank You for leading us on this journey into the Tabernacle, which is a sacred place, a Holy Place. We're seeing things that perhaps in a way that even the people of Israel didn't see or understand at that time. Thank You for removing the veil from our eyes so we can see Jesus, and not have to have a wall between us and God.

I pray today that You remove more of the veil, so to speak, and help us to see more of Jesus, and see more of Your purposes in this study. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: We're in the Most Holy Place. We have proceeded from the courtyard, past the place where they offer the sacrifices, and the basin. We've come into the Holy Place where we saw the bread of His Presence in light of the golden lampstand.

We're not exactly sure if the altar of incense was in this room or the Most Holy Place, but we are now in the Most Holy Place. We've talked about the ark. Even as I studied the ark for our last podcast, I continue to think more about it.

A couple of thoughts that I had before we jump into the cherubim is that you have this combination of the ark holding the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, which is the law, but I remember what it says in Galatians 3:24, "The law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith."

Now, I don't know if I understand this concept fully, but the law brings us to Christ. The law exposes our need for Christ. In Romans 7 we read one of the clearest expositions that Paul makes in describing our sin nature. He says, "What then shall we say? That the law is sin?" By no means! If it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin, for I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'" We get that.

At the end of the seventh chapter, 24th and 25th verses, it says, "Wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord." Then you have the wonderful eighth chapter that starts off with there being no condemnation to those in Christ, Jesus, etc., and talking about the Spirit of God coming upon us.

I think the law not only exposes our need for Christ, but it also reveals Christ to us because He is the mercy. If we didn't have the Decalogue sitting there telling us, "You shall not covet," we wouldn't appreciate Christ's mercy on top of the Decalogue.

Then I thought of Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace." Isn't that a beautiful picture of the mercy? You and I know that they keep trying to put that word "seat" in there. Think of the "mercy" as the throne of grace, where we receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus is the throne of grace. He is the mercy that covers the law. What a beautiful picture. To reiterate, John 1:14 and 17 said, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen His glory. Glory is of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Grace and truth meet in Jesus. The law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Now, on top of the ark, and on top of the mercy, are two cherubim. There are two references in Exodus the 25th chapter and the 37th chapter. They're almost word for word.

"You shall make two cherubim of gold, of hammered work. You shall make them on the two ends of the mercy. Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end of one piece with the mercy." I also couldn't find the word "one piece"

either. Really interesting to me how these things that I assume are in scripture. When you look at it, Scripture just doesn't say that.

"They shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy with their wings. Their faces, one to another, toward the mercy shall the faces of the cherubim be."

Cherubim is plural for cherub. There are two of them on each end facing each other. I think it's a different picture in the temple, but we're not going to go into that right now.

We're in the Holy of Holies, the Most Holy Place. We have the two cherubim looking towards each other with their wings overshadowing or spread out above the mercy. I'm doing this with my hands. I actually can't help myself. Nobody's looking, but my hands are spreading out, because this is what the wings are doing.

There's a couple aspects of this picture that we we can explore further. There are wings, faces, and angels.

The word, "cherubim" is used several times as they were woven into the tapestry. Exodus 26 says, "You shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet yarns and fine-twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it."

Before the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies he had to go through the veil that had cherubim worked into it. Earlier in the 26th chapter and also in the 36th chapter, it says, "All the craftsmen among the workmen made the tabernacle with ten curtains. They were made of fine-twined linen, and blue and purple and scarlet yarns with cherubim skillfully worked."

If I'm standing in this Holy of Holy Place, and I look up at the ceiling there are cherubim. If I come through the veil, there are cherubim. What did these cherubim look like?

The first thing I thought of when I was meditating on this topic and searching the scriptures was that Moses knew what these cherubs looked like. We know that the tabernacle is based on what God revealed to Moses. Then Moses passed on what he observed to Bezalel and Oholiab. Then they taught the craftsman who embroidered the cloth, and they fashioned the golden images. I don't think they were like Amish dolls that had no faces. I think they had form.

It's interesting that they stretch their wings and spread them out. They're above the mercy, but they're upward, and yet their faces are towards each other, and they're kind of bowed towards the mercy.

There's a lot in that image of these angels, these cherubim, because they're above the mercy as if to encircle it and put their arms around it, but they're also above, and their wings are upwards because this is where God is. God is in heaven.

Their faces are toward each other, and yet they're bowed. This is what you're supposed to do in the presence of royalty. I've seen enough movies, even though I've never been in the courts of the kings in England and stuff. You never turn your back,

and walk away from royalty. You always keep facing them out of deference, and out of respect.

Here are these angels, these cherubim, and they're bowing in reverence, and yet their faces are towards Him. I get that. That's what we would want to do. God may say, "Look up at Me son." That's for Him to do. If we're in His presence, our arms are spread up just like the cherubim. Our hands are open. Our faces are towards Him, and yet bowed. Beautiful image.

The next thing I thought of was, when you think about cherubim and angels, you are reminded that this is God's place. This is His throne on earth as it is in heaven. This is a heavenly room on earth. This is a portal into the presence of God.

God came down from heaven into this room with His angels all around him. This is what He does in heaven. He's surrounded by angels.

I found a couple Psalms that depict this. Psalm 93:5 says, "Your decrees are very trustworthy. Holiness befits Your house O Lord." Psalm 65, "Blessed is the one You choose and bring near to dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, the holiness of Your temple."

This is a holy place. It's a good place. It's magnificent. The first time that that word "cherubim" is used is in Genesis 3:24. "He drove out the man and at the east of the garden of Eden, He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."

I used to think there was one angel there, but He uses the word "cherubim," which is plural.

The word for wing is "kanaph," which not only means wing, it means extremity. I'm going to explore this word and concept a little. Numbers 15, Jehovah said to Moses, "Speak to the people of Israel and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each extremity."

Corners is the same word as wing. The tassels are on the extremities of their garments.

"It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of Jehovah to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to do, and then remember to do the commandments." You had these little blue cords on their corners of their garments. Hold that thought.

In Malachi 4:2, it says, "For you who fear My name, the Son of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings." This line is from, In the third verse of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" a hymn by Charles Wesley, the words are: "Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace, Hail the Son of Righteousness, Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings."

What an interesting picture? It normally would be strange to think of God having wings, but maybe he was saying with healing in the corners of His garment or the tassel of each corner.

Remember that woman who had this disease that she could not be healed from. She touched the corner of Jesus garment. She touched the extremity, perhaps the tassel, and she was healed.

“Behold, a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment: for she said within herself, If I do but touch His garment, I shall be made whole. But Jesus turning and seeing her said, **Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole.** And the woman was made whole from that hour. (Matthew 9:20–22)

See what a beautiful picture that is. I don't owe this to my own study. I remembered a man named Brandon Aldrich years ago, gave a study on this. I heard him speak on it. I was so intrigued by it because you wonder, what was so important about touching His garment? But when you couple this with the Son of Man having healing in His wings or in His extremities, and Exodus these pieces come together, and paint a really interesting picture. Perhaps that's why this woman, was healed when she touched that tassel on the Son of righteousness wings.

Scott: It's amazing how some of these little things, seemingly little things are significant. That just reminded me of there's a description, I forget where it is, but of the river of life flowing and the trees by it are planted like forever green and their fruit is 12 kinds of fruit.

It says, "The leaves of the tree are for healing of the nations." I know that's a total rabbit trail from what you're talking about, but it reminded me of how this little thing -- the leaves -- are for the healing of the nations.

Steve: I think you and I are going to be standing by that stream.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: I love you bringing it up. It's a beautiful picture. I think about this a lot because it also says, "Out of the hearts of believers, the innermost part, the belly, right inside of us, flow rivers of living water." I like to think of that when I'm praying that there's living water flowing out to people that need it.

Two more thoughts, Psalm 18. I'm going to read a section, verses 6 through 12, but the whole Psalm is good. It's the same text that you'll find in 1 Samuel 22.

Here's what it says, "In my distress, I called upon Jehovah; to my God I cried for help. From His temple, He heard my voice and my cry to Him reached His ears. Then the earth reeled and rocked, the foundations also the mountains trembled and quaked because He was angry. Smoke went up from His nostrils and devouring fire from His mouth, glowing coals, flame forth from Him.

"He bowed the heavens and came down. Thick darkness was under His feet. He rode on a cherub and flew. He came swiftly on the wings of the wind. He made darkness

His covering, His canopy around Him, thick clouds dark with water. Out of the brightness before Him, hailstones and coals of fire broke through His clouds."

It goes on to say how then God delivered him. David in Psalm 18 was praying. "God helped me in my distress. I called upon You. I cried for help. He heard, and He came down. He rode on a cherub, and He came swiftly on the wings of the wind."

These cherub are not just hovering, you might say, or just standing in the temple with their arms outstretched, with their faces respectfully looking at Him, but here they are carrying God.

Then there's another expression that's used several times when you study this word "cherubim." It appears at least seven times and says that God was enthroned. It says, "enthroned upon the cherub," or "in the presence of the cherubim."

Yet, I looked up the word for "enthroned," and I found out it didn't really mean "sit." I don't know why we have this thing about making a throne on the mercy where He's sitting. It means "sit" a couple of times, but it's used hundreds of times. It means to dwell, to abide, to inhabit, to live, to remain, to stay.

That's the beautiful part of this where He's not just enthroned on this mercy. He is inhabiting. He is fully present. He is in the Most Holy Place. I don't think He's sitting on the cherubim. I think He's in their presence. I think He's dwelling in their midst. That's the picture that I get when I looked up all these hundreds of references. I didn't look up all of them, but a bunch of them.

God is living in this Most Holy Place. He's in the presence of these cherubim. He's underneath, you might say, their wings. He's the object of their affection, of their adoration, of their faces.

Not only the Tabernacle, by the way, but 31 times the word "cherubim" appears in Ezekiel. A bunch of times it appears in 1 Kings 6:8 and 2 Chronicles 3 talking about the temple because they also have cherubim. The temple is where He dwells with the cherubim.

Scott: The idea of Him sitting there, I need to be careful because I'm no expert on this stuff, but that almost sounds like it's limiting to God. The word "dwell" just makes it sound so much more like, "Oh, well, of course. This is God. He's dwelling here." The idea of him just sitting there like it's a chair though makes it sound like ordinary almost. Does that make sense?

Steve: Absolutely. It must be something in us that wants to see him sitting on top of that or something as a king, but I think His presence is filling the room.

Scott: That's consistent with the other things you and I talked about how the priest couldn't even be in the room when His Holiness filled the room, you know?

Steve: Yup. Amen. Good job. I agree. I see I wouldn't have known that if I hadn't dug deeper.

Scott: Yeah, it's interesting. If you googled the images of the cherubim on the ark, I thought there was one consistent picture that we would have from the description,

but there's tons of different ways that people have drawn this or made models of what they think it's supposed to look like.

Steve: Only Moses and Oholiab and Bezalel knew, and some day we will, but I'm not sure we're going to be worried about cherubim because we're going to be able to see the presence of God in the face of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Thank You, Father, for this study. Thank You for the sense of awe, the sense of holiness that fills us, that this is the Most Holy Place, and there are cherubim all around, in the fabric, in the veil, and the two at both ends of the mercy.

Thank You for this invitation to see into what it looks like to be in the presence of God, and into Your throne. Thank You for dwelling among us. Thank You for abiding with us, and thank You for that wonderful passage we're still looking forward to in Revelation when it says "The tabernacle of God will be with us, and us with You."

This is just one more step closer to that picture of that coming to be. We worship You. Thank You for the blood of Jesus. Thank You for the blood of the man who made it so that we could draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, and find mercy and grace to help in time of need. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scott: Amen. That's our show for this week folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.