

A God and the cherubim:

❖ Messengers of fire.

- Imagine being illuminated by a light so intense and special that all your thoughts and emotions were laid bare. That's what Isaiah experienced when he saw God's throne. His reaction? "Woe is me! I am about to die!" (Isaiah 6:5 NKJV).
- Then a fiery being (in Hebrew, *seraph*) stops singing the holiness of God, takes a burning coal from the altar, and assures Isaiah that his sin is forgiven (Is. 6:1-7 NKJV).
- Of course, the cherub didn't forgive Isaiah's sin. He simply conveyed God's message, for that is the function of a cherub.
- And from then on, it was also the role of Isaiah (Is. 6:8). It is interesting that Jesus said of John the Baptist, another messenger of God: "He was a burning and shining lamp" (Jn. 5:35).

❖ What do cherubim do?

- The Bible first introduces us to the cherubim immediately after Adam and Eve's sin. What work did God give them? (Gen. 3:24)
- They were to "guard the way to the tree of life." That is, to prevent humans from entering the Garden of Eden. However, their presence was not intimidating. They made the gate of Eden a miniature representation of the divine throne, from which grace emanates.
- The word translated "placed" (*shakan*) is used to indicate that God "dwells" in the Sanctuary. From this comes the word "*shekinah*" which designates the glory of God manifested in the ark... between the cherubim! which represented God's throne (1 Chron. 13:6; Isa. 37:16).
- And what do they do at the throne? They worship and carry out God's direct orders on behalf of those who will inherit salvation (Rev. 4:8; Rev. 5:8-9; Heb. 1:14).

❖ A reflection of God's glory.

- The descriptions of the cherubim surrounding the throne of God recorded by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John have great similarities:

Isaiah 6:1-4	Ezekiel 1:5-14	Revelation 4:6-8
Beings of fire (<i>seraphim</i>)	Fire torches	Living beings
Six wings	Four wings	Six wings
They praise: "Holy, holy, holy"		They praise: "Holy, holy, holy"
	Four faces: man; lion; ox; and eagle	Like a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle
They fill the temple with smoke	They shine	Full of eyes

- The cherubim shine and glow (the "eyes" are symbols of brilliance), reflecting God's glory. All of God's creatures were designed to reflect His glory, both human beings, made in His image, and the angelic beings who sit beside His glorious throne.

B The cherubim and humanity:

❖ Lion, calf, man and eagle.

- The description of the cherubim matches the standards of the four main tribes that camped on each side of the Sanctuary (Ezek. 1:10; Rev. 4:7).
- The New Jerusalem is described with the same layout: 12 gates, three on each of its four sides. (Rev. 21:12-13).
- God wants to surround himself with his people, just as he is surrounded by the cherubim.
- God wants us to dwell with Him. This will only become a reality when Jesus takes us with Him at His Second Coming (Rev. 21:3).
- But we don't have to wait until that moment to feel at the throne of God (Eph. 2:4-6).

❖ Replacing the fallen.

- Unfortunately, not all cherubim have performed their duties properly. There was one who, filled with glory and splendor, thought that all that glory came from himself, rather than from God (Ezek. 28:14, 17).
- Lucifer and his angels were on the "mountain of God," but they were expelled from it. Their place will be taken by those who remain faithful to the Lamb (Rev. 14:1).
- At this wonderful miracle, the heavenly beings sing in unison: "You are worthy [Jesus] ... because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth". (Rev. 5:9-10 NIV).