

5445U

OKANAGAN FALL CAMPAIGN

THE CHERUBIM, IN HISTORY, TYPE AND PROPHECY

Speaker: Bro. John Siviour

Study 1: Keeping the Way of the Tree of Life

Reading: Genesis 3:22-4:15

Thank you brother Mike and good afternoon, brethren and sisters and young people and friends.

It is a pleasure to join with you over the next few days, as we consider God's Word, and particularly on the theme of the 'Cherubim'. In whatever age God's servants have lived, they have been provided for and instructed with signs, with visions, with specifically provided information, so that they can discern the message of divine revelation. We are no exception! We have received the revelation of God in **total**, we have the whole bible from Genesis to Revelation, God's Word, God's Way for men and women, the way of truth. We'll find as we go through this theme on the cherubim, we will go from Genesis to Revelation, and we've gathered, that we might encourage each other in these last days. So little time left for us, that we might be encouraged to hang on; the return of our Lord is at hand, the day of the kingdom will come and we've been privileged in these last days, to have an understanding of these things.

If ever a subject was relevant for the living of the last few days, it is this study. If we go to our bibles, we find that the word 'cherubim' (3742) occurs many times in the Old Testament. 64 times there in the plural, the word 'cherubim' is plural, in our bible in the AV it has 'cherubims' but, you forget about the (s), the 'cherubim' is plural, the 'cherub' is singular and occurs quite a few times, but only **once** in the New Testament and it's found in Hebrews. So if we turn to Hebrews 9 in verse 2 the apostle writes, 'There was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was a lampstand, and a table, the showbread; and it's called the sanctuary'. Our minds go back to the tabernacle and we think about the parts of the tabernacle, and we're familiar with the Outer court, the Holy Place, the Most Holy Place, and one went from the outer court into the Holy Place and then into the Most Holy Place. The apostle writes speaking about the lampstand, the shewbread and so on, and then he goes on in the next verse, '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 tables of the covenant', right inside the Most Holy Place, there was the ark of the covenant, gold, and inside it that golden pot with the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the commandments.

In verse 5, 'Over it the cherubim', over the top of that ark of the covenant, the cherubim, the cherubim of glory overshadowing that mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly', Paul wrote. I wonder what the apostle would have written, if he'd had the time to do so? What would he have recorded concerning the cherubim? Well, let's think about the story of the cherubim!

In Genesis we are told a little about the cherubim; when we go to Exodus we're told some more about the cherubim; when we get to Ezekiel we are told a lot more about the cherubim; and then when we get to Revelation, even more. One place gives information not found in another place, and basically you have a progressive revelation of the work of God, of the purpose of God culminating in three verses in the book of Revelation. It is really not until we get to Revelation that we're actually told who the cherubim are!

Well what does the word '**cherubim**' mean? The Hebrew word 'keruwb' (3742) and it's very difficult to define what that word means. There's an uncertain derivation about it, and there is a suggestion of the transposing of the consonants to make the word 'keruwb' to 'rechab' and that means 'to ride' or a 'vehicle'. So one definition that is used is '**a vehicle upon which Yahweh rides**', and that's from Phanerosis page 69; a vehicle upon which Yahweh rides, the idea perhaps of a chariot, a vehicle upon which the eternal power of Yahweh is used, and if we go back in our Old Testament for example, in 1 Chronicles 28, we see in David's words there in 1 Chronicles 28 and verse 18, 'For the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and **covered the ark of the covenant**', and that's in David's day. But the language there links the cherubim with the pattern of the chariot. The RV has, 'the chariot **even** the cherubim', so the cherubim were associated with that **which would be ridden**.

If we go to Psalm 18 verse 10, 'He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind'. A Messianic psalm, David's psalm of victory, Christ held by the cords of death and appealed to God by his servant in distress, we read in verse 6, 'In my distress I called upon Yahweh, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears. The earth shook and did tremble, in verse 7, and the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth'. There was the manifestation of God's power, the strong language of a storm, and behind the storm and it may have been literal in David's day, there was the political storm; it was going to calm after the rejection of the Messiah. The political storm of AD.70, and there was God; the cloud, the darkness, the lightning, the rain, the driving force, all controlled by God, and He rode upon a cherub, and did fly, the psalmist recorded. The speedy chariots of Yahweh symbolic of Yahweh's angels at work. He maketh **clouds** His chariots, we read in Psalm 104 verse 3, His strength is in the clouds, we read in another psalm. Remember what is recorded for us in Isaiah 19 verse 1? The invasion of Egypt by Christ and the saints in the future, is described as 'Yahweh riding upon **a swift cloud** and coming into Egypt; it's all the same language! a vehicle upon which Yahweh rides.

When we go to Ezekiel's book, in chapter 28 we read in verse 14, 'Thou art the anointed cherub', now what does this mean? What's chapter 28 about? Well, if we go back to verse 12, 'Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre', it's about the king of Tyre; when we go back to verse 2, 'Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre', and here it is spoken of, the aptness of this description is seen in the commercial greatness of Tyre in ancient times. Verse 16, 'By the multitude of thy merchandise, they've filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: **therefore**, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire'. Now here the cherub is applied to a Tyrian power, God rules in the kingdoms of men, and now He used here the kings of Tyre. We know how the Medes were called 'His sanctified ones', Cyrus was called His anointed; Tyre My servant; God rules, He's in control. A whole series of public lectures over the coming days will look at God in control in the kingdoms of men, in the kingdom of Israel, in the kingdom of the future. God rode in a cherub of Tyre to bring His movements amongst the nations to a successful conclusion. So the cherub here is representing an **exalted power, God at work!** So there's one definition that we could use - **a vehicle, some means in which Yahweh is in control like we would have in a chariot!**

Well, here's an alternative definition! The suggestion is made of the two parts '-ke' from the 'cherub' which means **resemblance** and 'ruwb' which means '**majesty**', so you have resembling the majesty if you look at the two separate parts of that word 'keruwb'. Resembling the majesty, God manifestation, that which resembles the majesty. The principle of God manifestation in a people, in a people that God works with; in us, b&s, it works in young people coming to a knowledge and understanding; it works in those of us who come from outside or who are at present coming from outside and learning the things of God. God works in us! We're like a vehicle for Him! that in the end we might resemble some of His majesty in our lives. What is it that we want to be and will be in the day of the kingdom? Are we going into the kingdom so that we'll receive eternal life? is that the main thing or not? NO, it's that we may manifest glory to God, then we'll finally resemble the majesty. You'll recall that God told Joshua that as He had been with Moses, He would be with Joshua. 'I'll not fail thee nor forsake thee', God told Joshua, b&s, young people and friends, that's for us too! I won't fail thee! I won't forsake thee! do we believe that? that's faith to believe, and we know that God does work in our lives. We can look back over times past and we can see how God has worked to bring us to this present time and we're thankful for it. In not forsaking or not failing Joshua, the Hebrew really implies that God would never relax His grip on Joshua, He would never let him go! and God won't let us go, it won't be God's fault if we don't hang in there. He's not wanting to let us go! if we move outside that circle of control, it will be because we've moved out, not that God did! Principles abound, let us allow ourselves to be vehicles upon which the eternal power of God rides as in a chariot.

Well, the cherubim is first introduced as we read this afternoon in the record of Genesis. Genesis 3, after sin had been revealed, after death had been pronounced upon the Adamic race, the cherubim appear as mysterious figures really; their identity

and their function has been the subject of much conjecture. Who were the cherubim? what did they look like? were they cherubic figures like we read in Ezekiel? Were they angels? What was the role of those there in Eden at that time? Well, Genesis 3 and verse 24 is where the word is, 'So He drove out the man, He placed at the east of the garden of Eden, **cherubim**'. When we see the context of that verse and the last few verses of chapter 3, the sequence of the last verses, seems completely disjointed; there's the punishment of death on Adam-verse 19; there's the naming of Eve-verse 20; there's the divine clothing of the human pair-verse 21; there's the ejection out of Eden-verse 23; and the setting up of the cherubim-verse 24. Why should Adam interrupt that sequence to name Eve? Well, there is a natural sequence. In these incidences there is not only an account of what literally happened, but some wonderful prophetic types of what would happen in the future. All that is welded into this background, this fitting background for the introduction to the cherubim.

God had pronounced that sentence as we read in verse 19, 'Unto dust shalt thou return', the hopelessness of man, a hopeless position now; then verse 20, 'Adam called his wife's name Eve', and what is added, 'because she is the mother of the living'. Here's the verse about death, the hopelessness of man's position, 'dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return' **but** there is the hope of life! Eve, the naming of Eve, the mother of all **living**; the word 'Eve' (2332) signifies life. Adam now saw and it was pointed out to him the hope of life, why? Genesis 3 verse 15, the promise of the seed, of Christ, of the seed of the woman. Adam **believed** that promise and called his wife's name Eve, the mother of **life**. The way of life was revealed to Adam in the natural sequence of the narrative; the divine clothing, the shedding of blood, the principle of sacrifice, which would go to life. The shedding of blood pointing forward to the work of Christ, the one we'll assemble to remember tomorrow morning, it's all there in Genesis. A life of sacrifice, the Lord's blood poured out as Genesis 3 verse 15 said it would; and having demonstrated to Adam the divine provision for the covering of sins, the divine clothing, the shedding of blood, it next was revealed that apart from this there was **no hope of life**.

So there in Eden, in the sight of Adam and Eve, **stood the tree of life**, there was the fruit, and Adam could not touch it. Denied it! verse 22, '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: Therefore he was sent from the garden'. Adam and Eve were expelled out of that garden, and the cherubim were stationed there, at the garden it says, to keep the way to the tree of life'. The word '**keep**' has a double meaning: 1. they kept Adam and Eve from getting to that tree literally and 2. the way was preserved to that tree of life. The whole purpose of God now hinged upon this point, **that in spite of man's sins, there was a way to get to that tree of life!** 'To him that overcometh' in Revelation, the Lord's words in that letter, 'to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God'. There it is in Revelation, b&s, some will eat of that tree of life, and there was the dual aspect of the work of the cherubim there in Eden that day; that work has always been the same! in the end, preserving the way in God's purpose to eat of that tree of life. God's purpose

is sometimes revealed in real beings such as angels, or men, or sometimes in symbolic creatures, and the variations and the varieties of the symbols of the cherubim serve to draw attention to a particular feature or some aspect of the work in any special context. But the work is always the same, a manifestation of God's presence, God is involved. He's there in whatever's happening whether it's with us or out there with the nations.

So in verse 24, 'He drove out the man'. The RV has 'He drove out the man and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden, the cherubim and the flame of a sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life'. Brother Thomas has, 'the cherubim even a flaming sword'. The sword and the cherubim are really one, the cherubim **even** a flaming sword there in that day; the flaming sword, not a literal one, was the unveiled glory of God an integral part of the cherubim, appearing as the guardians that preserves that tree of life. Keeping Adam and Eve from reaching the tree, but preserving it for the future, preserving a way finally to it. So there the cherubim functioned as priests, they received the sacrifices of the worshippers; they were God's representatives there in Eden.

'There God communed with men', there was God's presence, those cherubim! It says in the record in verse 24, 'He **placed** them there', the Hebrew is 'shakan' (7931), it has the idea or the meaning of 'to pitch a tent for' or 'to dwell'; one of the words for the tabernacle in which God dwelt in the midst of His people, is a derivative of this word, 'shakan'. It's all tied up with where God dwells, the Shekinah glory is derived from it, so here, the angelic ministration of God there in Eden, the divine Presence in the earth. The flaming sword aspect, how do we think the flaming sword, reflects on the sacrifices of Cain and Abel? They brought their sacrifices-one was accept, one wasn't; no doubt Cain probably brought of the best of the fruit of the ground, but it wasn't accepted, what's it telling us? B&S, things need to be done according to what God requires, not what man might think should be done! What God requires is the important thing, and God required a certain method of sacrifice of offering. The principle of blood being shed was needed, Cain didn't see it that way, he wanted to do things his way.

Sometimes we're like that! we like to do things our way Let us be very careful: oft times we'll have a lecture, does it matter what we believe? is truth important? Well, here's an example of it! both men were religious, but one did it God's way, the way of truth, and the other did his way, which was not the way of truth. As a result, we know that Cain became very wrathful, became very sullen and he harboured within himself a feeling of jealousy towards his brother. He still refused, you see, to humble himself before his God! He would have known the principles of Genesis 3; he would have known about the shedding of blood, but he wanted to do it his way and he harboured that and in the end he wasn't putting his trust in God at all. That hatred lead to murder, and his punishment, chapter 4 verse 12, 'a fugitive, a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth'. Banished, exiled, and in verse 14, 'Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to pass, that everyone that findeth me shall slay me'. Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, **from Thy face**;

and the word is the common word for 'face' (6440), the primary meaning is not the physical features of the face, but the character or the personality of those faces; he'd been driven out of that area where the cherubim were! In Elpis Israel we read, 'I shall no more be permitted to come before the cherubic faces', brother Thomas writes, he could not come before the cherubim. He couldn't come into the presence of those faces that represented the majesty of God, he was exiled out of it. So the emphasis here is on God's representatives, on the face of the elohim, because they displayed God's presence and now he could no longer come. The principle's there that this is God's dwelling place.

So in verse 24 of chapter 3, 'The man was driven out and He placed **at the east** of the garden'. The cherubim were stationed on the **east** towards the sun's rising, why? Why not the west? or the north or the south? they were placed on the eastern side; the figurative purpose of God. The tabernacle, the temple, they faced **east**, down through the ages, God had caused men seeking the way to the tree of life, to look to the **east** figuratively towards the sun's rising. We look literally to the east every morning and we see the sun rise; spiritually we look to the Son of righteousness, and so the east is mentioned here. We think of the dawn, emblematic of the coming day of the kingdom when the Son of righteousness arises with healing in His beams; when His rule will replace the rule of the kingdoms of men. So the symbols are there, it's all there in Genesis 3, and it continues in the story of the cherubim on and on and on. 'So He drove out the man, verse 24, and placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and that flaming sword, (even a flaming sword) which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life'.

Then we move on and we find that like Adam, Moses later in history, was moved **with fear** at the sound of God's voice, and we come to Exodus chapter 3, and we know the story, it's the story of the burning bush, where God gave Moses the Name by which He was named, Yahweh, **He who will be**, and this is a further significant step in the development of God's purpose. The circumstances of the burning bush, verse 3 of Exodus 3, 'Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when Yahweh saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, Moses, Moses. And he said, here am I . **Draw not nigh hither**: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is **holy ground**'. God's presence was there! it was a very special occasion, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. And Moses **hid his face** because he was frightened to look that day'.

In Exodus 14 there's another account of God at work through His angels. It's also a cherubic work, we know these stories off by heart, the Red Sea crossing; in Exodus 14 when we come down to verse 19, 'The angel of God which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and Moses stretched out his hand, in verse 21, over the sea; and Yahweh caused that sea to go back by a strong **east** wind all that night, and made the

sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground!' and one cannot miss the comparison of the first definition of the cherubim, '**A vehicle which Yahweh rides like a chariot**', and when you come to the next incident in that Red Sea crossing. When the Egyptians pursued they went in after them into the midst of the Sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen'. We know what happened! Yahweh wasn't in those chariots of the Egyptians, but there's the mention of the chariots, the play on the words. So in Exodus 15 in those first verses of that song that was sung, 'Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song, 'I will sing unto Yahweh, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. Verse 4, Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea'. Some trust in chariots, some in horses, the Psalmist writes in Psalm 20, 'but we trust in the name of Yahweh'. There's our trust!

In verse 17 Moses was told in Exodus 15, 'Thou shalt bring this people and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Yahweh, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Yahweh, which thy hands have established'. So to Sinai they went, and three months later, assembled before mount Sinai, the children of Israel witnessed another dramatic manifestation of God's Presence. There were the characteristic signs of the **fire, the smoke**, and people trembled that day as they stood at the base of mount Horeb, there they saw the power of God in their midst, then Moses went up into that mount. There he was given the details of God's dwelling place, the tabernacle, where God would dwell in the midst of this people. This was a further step in the purpose of God.

So when we come to Exodus 25, nothing new in this, b&s, we know all these stories, we know the incidents, you know there's probably a time in our lives right now in these last days, when we ought to be bringing the foundations of our faith again, and going over and over these things. I mean, this is what the truth is all about, this is why we are here, these are the things that motivate us! In the picture, we see the picture of God manifestation, we see God at work, God riding! His majesty present all the time, the cherubic work! So in Exodus 25 and verse 8, 'Let them make Me a sanctuary', God said to Moses, 'that I might dwell among them'. Then in verse 10, 'They shall make **an ark of shittim wood**: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with **pure gold, within and without** shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about'. An ark of shittim wood, two cubits and a half, not very big (a cubit from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger(17-21"))-two of those and a half) it wasn't very big! It was a cubit and a half, the breadth, a cubit and a half, the depth. Shittim wood, you know, you get a piece of shittim wood, break it open, a desert acacia tree, it looks like flesh, a pinkish colour; it was a symbol of the flesh overlayed with gold, the symbol of a tried faith.

Here we have the details: chapter after chapter, details on the tabernacle. When was the last time we looked at that tabernacle? It was God's dwelling place amongst the children of Israel, and so in the record we have all the details of the tabernacle. The

focal point as far as the cherubim were concerned, was this ark. Here it was overlaid with gold with two staves; the figures with the wings and the faces, the cherubic glory was there! that's where God dwelt, there in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle. How many faces? It says that the faces looked at each other, and they **looked at the mercy seat**, they faced **down** to the mercy seat which pointed forward to Christ. So no wonder when we come forward to Ezekiel, we find that each creature had 4 faces, and then there's a problem when you try and put perhaps 4 faces on each one of these; how can 4 faces look toward each other and look toward the mercy seat at the same time? So some suggest that there are 2 faces on each which you could have such that they would face the mercy seat. We don't know and we're not told! we'll ask Moses in the future. So many questions! What was it like Moses?

What was the shape? We see so many diagrams, we're not told the actual description of the shape, these will be some of the joys in the day of the kingdom. You imagine sitting down with those in Moses' day and finally having all the little pieces put together about the things that we've read and discussed with our children and taught in our Sunday Schools, and drawn project pictures of, and so on; finally we'll know what it's really like, what all the details are really like! But we do know, there was the gold over the shittim wood. There was the figure, the symbol of human nature, still hidden from sight by the covering of the gold, that precious metal! There was the mercy seat, the lid or the covering of this simple wooden chest, just a little chest but made of pure gold; beaten into shape according to divine specifications pointing to Christ. The divine work of Christ-the mercy seat! The cherubim were the figures there made of gold.

We know that later on, the ark contained the pot of manna, it contained Aaron's rod that budded, it contained the two tables as Paul told us but didn't go on to talk about them. So we have the details of this tabernacle, these two cherubim on the ark were small figures. The gold, one with the mercy seat, the wings **enfolded over** the mercy seat; the staves were **in**, this was not a permanent resting place; it was a time when they were moving, and we think of our position today, strangers and pilgrims in the earth, this is not our resting place, b&s. We're not really Canadians or Australians or Americans or whatever, we're of the hope of Israel, **but we haven't got there yet!** We know all those things, and there was the Shekinah glory, overshadowing that mercy seat. That's where God met with His people, there was His dwelling-place. Then later on in history, of course, we come to the temple. Now there are **two large cherubim** within the Most Holy Place, wings spread out right across the Most Holy Place; large wings. Wing tip to wing tip right across the Most Holy Place; now it's **olive wood covered with gold**, now the staves **are pulled out**, now in the ark only the covenant on the two tables of stone. No pot of manna, no Aaron's rod, and the Shekinah glory is still there as in the day of Solomon's temple. Why the differences?

Solomon's temple - still the same basic plan: the outer court, the Holy Place, the Most Holy Place. The pattern is still the same, and inside the Most Holy Place there were the cherubic figures and here's the ark and here are these big cherubic figures with their wings reaching from one side to the other. Why are they now added in? Why does it

say the wings from one end to the other? Why are the staves pulled out so they are just sticking out through the curtain? so that people could see that the staves or the priests that worked in there, were no longer inside that chest, that ark, that mercy seat? and why now is that pot of manna gone? and Aaron's rod that budded gone? why? b&s. The tabernacle was in the wilderness, the symbol of the multitudinous Christ in the days of their pilgrimage, that's us today! In the temple, Solomon's now king, here's the monarch and he's representing now the King of glory of the future. Solomon's golden age is typical of **the kingdom age!** Now the wings are stretched out over the whole earth from the four corners of the earth, people are going to be drawn into the day of the kingdom, and come into covenant relationship with God. Now it's no longer a stranger and pilgrim wandering, no longer a wilderness, **we're there in the kingdom**, and the staves come out. But God's laws are still relevant, His commandments are still relevant, and the Shekinah glory will still be seen in that day, now, of course, manifested in a **huge number of people**. A multitudinous Christ like unto the angels, wonderful principles.

It's a comfort to have these things before us, and as we think about that Shekinah glory, it was still there, destroying the darkness, and it remained there over that mercy seat, in that Most Holy Place, it remained there until the days of Ezekiel. Then, we have another revelation concerning the cherubim, and that glory was **withdrawn** that day. The Shekinah glory left the Most Holy Place, came up above from the mercy seat and went out by way of the **east**, and up over the mount of Olives. God's presence left Israel in that sense, that day, and they went into captivity. That glory has not returned, we wait for the future, for God's glory to come back, and that we'll look at, God willing, over this weekend.