

Soldier Up!

Saints & Spiritual Warfare

"iBad 6.66"

Type the word "cherub" in an image search engine and you'll get a bunch of cutesy baby angels with wings sitting on clouds.

The plural for cherub is cherubim. The cherubim in the Bible are a far cry from that imagery.

They are the highest order of angelic beings, possessing incredible beauty and great power.

In fact, cherubim are never called angels, though we believe they belong to that class of beings. For example, Satan is a cherub, but then in the New Testament it is said of him that he masquerades as an angel of light. He can appear as an elect angel Even though he is fallen; so we conclude he is a cherub, and that cherubim are angels.

Scholars say they are not called angels because they are never messengers, which is the meaning of the word "angel," but, rather, proclaimers and protectors of the glory of God.

Thus you find them posted in the Garden of Eden, and in the inner room of the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple.

1. The first biblical reference are the cherubim of Genesis 3:24 who were placed at the gate of the Garden of Eden after man was expelled. They were stationed with flaming swords to protect the way to the tree of life, lest sinful man should

intrude into God's presence or presume to take of the tree of life.

2. They next appear in the form of golden images upon the mercy seat, the lid on the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament worship tent (Exodus 25:17–22) and in Solomon's temple (2Chronicles 3:10–13). The ark and mercy seat with its symbolic cherubim were kept in the innermost sanctuary of the tabernacle where God's Shekinah glory was manifest.

In our last study, in Ezekiel twenty-eight, we saw that Satan was a cherub - maybe the chief among the cherubim. This is further confirmed by the other Old Testament passage evangelicals cite as describing him - Isaiah 14:12-17.

Isa 14:12 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!

Isa 14:13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

Isa 14:15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Isa 14:16 "Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,

Isa 14:17 Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'

The verses that precede these address the king of Babylon and his golden city. But, suddenly, in verse twelve, they seem to be describing someone supernatural.

There are at least three ways to approach this text:

1. You can see it all as a description of an earthly king - the king of Babylon.
2. You can see it all as a description of Lucifer, the cherub we now know as the devil or Satan.
3. Or you can see it as a description with a dual meaning - of both an earthly king, and the person behind him.

The very fact that, when you read this text, it sometimes seems like you're reading about an earthly king, then it seems it's about someone supernatural, tells you it has a dual meaning. You don't need to be a scholar to understand God's intent.

Charles Ryrie writes that this is “evidently a reference to Satan, because of Christ’s similar description (Luke 10:18) and because of the inappropriateness of the expressions of Isaiah 14:13–14 on the lips of any but Satan.”

In Ezekiel twenty-eight we saw that Satan was lifted up with pride. This passage in Isaiah is like a commentary on the devil's pride. It dissects it, showing you its parts.

"Fallen from Heaven" means the loss of his original position leading eventually to his being confined to the Lake of Fire. I mentioned last time, Satan still has access to Heaven, but doesn't hang out there anymore. He's the prince of the power of the air, so I guess his HQ is the atmosphere above the earth (or maybe the stellar heavens).

- During the Great Tribulation, he will be cast down from there to earth.
- At the Second Coming, he'll be chained and cast into the bottomless pit.

- At the end of Jesus' Millennial Kingdom, he'll be cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity.

Here we learn the devil's name, Lucifer. The Hebrew is *heylel* and means “light bearer,” “shining one,” or “morning star.” Many modern translations translate this as star of the morning or morning star.

In this passage, *heylel* refers to the king of Babylon and Satan figuratively. Of course, Jesus lays claim to this title in Revelation 22:16. Though the passage in Revelation is in Greek while the passage in Isaiah is Hebrew, both are translated similarly.

This is the only place in all the Bible Satan is called Lucifer. Notice it is used to describe him at the time of his fall into sin. It may not be his original name; it may describe his aspirations as the devil, to climb to the zenith of the heavens before the rising sun. In other words, his desire was to be the day star, and rise ahead of the sun. To be first.

"For you have said in your heart" is Isaiah's way of saying what Ezekiel alluded to when he said, "iniquity was found in you."

Since God created Lucifer perfect, and cannot be the author or creator of evil, we understand this to be a mystery of free will.

Apparently if you want beings that have genuine freedom to choose, they may choose badly.

The Bible everywhere assumes that both angelic beings and human beings were created with genuine freedom to choose to obey or to disobey God, and that if they disobeyed God, it was not His fault, nor was He the cause of it.

When you are in the midst of a tragedy, and are asking, "Why?" of God, it seems hollow to say, "Free will!" But it's true; God created beings with free will, risking the evil that the devil's bad choosing, and Adam and Eve's free choosing, brought into His perfect creation.

He immediately went to work to redeem creation and set things right. He's been at it for over six thousand years of human history.

Assuming God is smart, and that He would choose the quickest path to redeeming His creation, we live in the best possible universe that will accomplish God's will without violating our free will.

You can think all my talk about free will is too man-centered, but the alternative is that everything - including every evil - is God's will, and that He is, in fact, the creator and author of evil.

He's not. He can't be. And by His providence, He will see to it that all things work together for the good.

While we're talking about the history of our race, I should mention something you might encounter. There is a teaching, made popular in the 1980's by Hal Lindsey, that mankind was created to teach Satan and his angelic followers a lesson.

As I originally heard it, the lesson was about His grace to forgive sin. Hal Lindsey used to say that after God condemned Satan and the angels who followed him in rebellion, that the devil accused God of being unfair. So God created man, saw him fall, then showed His grace and mercy in sending His Son to redeem them by His blood.

That may or may not be true; it is merely conjecture. I'd avoid teaching it, since we can't be certain whether Satan fell before or after God created Adam and Eve.

He certainly sinned before Genesis three; but there's nothing in the Bible to tell us with certainty exactly when before Genesis three.

There are five "I will" statements in Isaiah fourteen. These statements are probably flashbacks to his original intentions in his original situation just before his fall. This is what Satan "said in [his] heart" in rebellion against God.

"I will ascend to heaven." Since Satan had access to the very presence of God as the leading cherub, this means that he desired to occupy the place of God, probably desiring equal recognition with God.

"I will raise my throne above the stars of God." The stars are references to angels. Satan already was the greatest angelic being, and it may be that all angels took orders from him as the chief administrator under God. Angels would recognize that orders through him came directly from God. It seems he wanted to rule all the angels directly rather than subordinately.

"I will sit on the mount of assembly." According to Isaiah 2:2 and Psalm 48:2, the mount of the assembly is the center of God's kingdom rule. It later seems associated with Messiah's earthly rule of the Millennial Kingdom from Jerusalem. Satan would also, then, seek to rule over all human affairs.

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds." Stars refer to angels; mount to a place of rule; now clouds are associated with

the glory of God. Lucifer had in him a great glory that reflected his Creator. He desired a glory equal to or above God's glory.

“I will make myself like the Most High.” He would usurp God's authority rather than be submissive to it, for no one can be like God and still let God be God; for there is none like Him.

Satan's rebellion has left him a murderer, and a liar.

Joh 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

The "you" of John 8:44 were Jews who believed that their descent from Abraham was proof of their salvation. Jesus pointed out that in their rejection of Him, they were imitating the devil and, thus, were more like his descendants than the true, spiritual descendants of Abraham. They would, in fact, plot the murder of Jesus, telling lies to convict Him in their tribunal, as well as before Pilate.

Satan is behind the spiritual death of angels and of mankind in Eden.

1. Had he not been lifted up in pride, one-third of the created angels would not be headed for the Lake of Fire for eternity.
2. When Jesus said, “He was a murderer from the beginning,” He was probably referring to all that happened in Genesis 3 and 4, including the murder of Abel.

Jesus describes the devil as a liar four different ways in one verse. He invented lying and does all he can to propagate it.

If we want the song of our life to be, *I Did It My Way*, than we can expect a lot of deception and death, spiritually speaking. When we disobey the Word of God, we risk murdering something or someone. It may not be an actual murder; but it will feel like one. People murder their marriages, for example, by going outside the loving boundaries that God has set.

We may be in the process of murdering our way of life, as we redefine marriage outside of the way the Bible presents it as the monogamous heterosexual union of one man and one woman for life.

Instead, let's hum, *In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified*, as we submit ourselves to the clear teachings of the Word.