

1. Introduction: The Hierarchy of Angels in Scripture

The Bible presents various types of angelic beings, each serving a unique role in the spiritual realm. Among them are:

- Seraphim – Worshipers surrounding God’s throne
- Cherubim – Guardians of God’s glory (e.g., Genesis 3:24; Ezekiel 10)
- Archangels – Warrior angels like Michael (Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7)
- Living Creatures – Heavenly beings full of eyes and wings (Revelation 4:6-8)
- The Twenty-Four Elders – Symbolic leaders in heavenly worship (Revelation 4:4)

These beings are described in apocalyptic visions and prophetic literature and serve specific functions: worship, warfare, message delivery, and guardianship.

2. Who Are the Seraphim?

The Seraphim (Hebrew: *śārāph*, meaning “burning ones”) appear explicitly in Isaiah 6:1–7, in the prophet’s vision of the Lord in the temple. This is the only place in the Bible where they are named:

Isaiah 6:1-3 (NIV)

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’”

Symbolism of Their Wings:

- Two wings covering the face: Reverence and humility before God’s holiness (Exodus 33:20 – no one can see God and live).
- Two wings covering the feet: A symbol of modesty and unworthiness (similar to Moses removing his sandals in Exodus 3:5).
- Two wings for flying: Represents readiness to serve and act at God’s command (Psalm 103:20–21).

Their cry of “Holy, holy, holy” is significant—this threefold repetition emphasizes God’s perfect and complete holiness, unlike any created being.

3. Theological Meaning of the Seraphim’s Worship

The worship of the Seraphim reveals key theological truths:

- God is utterly holy, distinct, and exalted above all creation.
- Heavenly worship is centered around God's glory, not human preferences.
- Reverence in worship is modeled by sinless beings, teaching us that holiness matters even more for fallen humanity.

Revelation 4:8 (NIV) parallels Isaiah's vision:

"Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come."

4. Application: Worship and Reverence in Practice

The behavior of the Seraphim offers practical lessons for Christian worship today. If angels, who are sinless, cover themselves before God, how much more should we approach Him with reverence?

Paul addresses this principle in 1 Corinthians 11, instructing the church on modesty and order during worship:

1 Corinthians 11:5 (NIV)

“But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved.”

1 Corinthians 11:10 (NIV)

“It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels.”

This reference to “the angels” connects earthly worship with the order and reverence of the heavenly realm. Modesty, head coverings, and respectful behavior are not cultural relics but reflections of spiritual truths.

Challenge to Modern Worship:

Many today come to worship dressed casually or immodestly, forgetting the sacredness of the moment. The Seraphim remind us that worship is not about comfort or appearance—it is about honoring a holy God.

Hebrews 12:28-29 (NIV)

“...let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’”

5. Final Warning: Angels Are Not to Be Worshipped

While angels serve God and minister to believers (Hebrews 1:14), they are not objects of worship. Throughout Scripture, worship belongs to God alone.

Revelation 22:8-9 (NIV)

“I, John... fell down to worship at the feet of the angel... But he said to me, ‘Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you... Worship God!’”

Creating images of angels or praying to them goes against this biblical instruction. The purpose of angelic beings is to glorify God, not to receive glory from men.

6. Conclusion: What the Seraphim Teach Us

The Seraphim are not just awe-inspiring creatures—they are living symbols of how we should worship God:

- With reverence, knowing we approach a holy God.
- With modesty, covering ourselves as a sign of respect.
- With focus, centering our hearts and voices on God's holiness.

Let us learn from their example and approach God in worship with fear, awe, and deep respect.

May the Lord bless

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