

He Who Dwells Between the Cherubim

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As we read through the Old Testament there are a number of titles, you could say, that God goes by throughout the Old Testament. Two of the more common ones are the LORD of Hosts and the God of Israel. With these two particular titles there's a descriptive phrase that's used in the Bible seven different times. As we're going to see today, it's a very specific reference and if we study into the meaning of it, it gives us a very clear picture of who is being identified as the LORD of Hosts and the God of Israel. The phrase I'm referring to is the phrase "dwells between the cherubim". We're going to focus on this particular phrase and its particular meaning and what it teaches us. If you would like a title for the sermon it's ...

He Who Dwells Between the Cherubim

As we're going to see, this is a very specific reference, which, as we study into the meaning of it, gives us a very clear picture. Let's start off by looking at some examples of this phrase in scripture. If you do a study on a Bible program like PC Study Bible (what I have on my laptop but there are similar types of programs), and you look up the phrase, "dwells between the cherubim" you're going to find that phrase mentioned in seven different verses in the Old Testament. It's always a descriptive phrase to identify God. Just look at a few of these references; if you'll turn to 1 Samuel 4:4,

1 Samuel 4:4 *So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. (NKJV)*

Notice here we have the LORD of Hosts, and we have the comment, *who dwells between the cherubim*. Obviously that's being used as a descriptive phrase to tell us about the LORD of Hosts. But also notice there, this is very much in the context of the Ark of the Covenant. We're going to see in a minute, if we look into the details of the Ark of the Covenant, we get a very clear picture of exactly what it's saying when it says "dwells between the cherubim". There are several references like this and we're going to notice that the LORD of Hosts and the God of Israel—both of those titles—are associated with this descriptive phrase. Turn over to 2 Samuel 6:2.

2 Samuel 6:2 *And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. (NKJV)*

Once again, this phrase, *who dwells between the cherubim*, is a descriptive phrase to tell us about the LORD of Hosts, specifically in the context of the Ark of the Covenant. If we look into the details of the Ark of the Covenant we get a very clear picture of exactly what's being meant by the phrase, *dwells between the cherubim*. Let's also notice that this phrase is not just associated with the LORD of Hosts, it's also associated with the title *God of Israel*. We'll notice this over in Isaiah 37:15. We're going to pick it up here to set the scene of the context.

You're probably familiar with this story overall—it's a very popular, very well-known biblical story. It's where Sennacherib comes to Judah and basically sends a letter to Hezekiah, saying, you might as well give up and surrender to me, I'm taking over your nation, no other nation's gods have been able to protect them from me and my armies, and you won't either, so just spare your life and surrender now, and let me take over, is basically what he's demanding. Hezekiah's response to this is, he takes the letter, goes into the Temple of God, he lays it out before God and prays to God, asking for God's help to deal with this. That's where we're going to pick up in verse 15.

Isaiah 37:15 *Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying:*

16) *“O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. (NKJV)*

I mentioned that there are seven different times this phrase is used; one of the other ones (we won't take the time to turn there) is in 2 Kings and it's a parallel account of this exact same story, and it's telling of Hezekiah going into the Temple and praying (and it's basically the same story being told there). We have the LORD of Hosts and the God of Israel being described with the one who dwells between the cherubim. To understand this reference and what it's telling us, all we have to do is look again specifically at the details of the Ark of the Covenant. We noticed in the previous two references we read, and even some of the references we haven't taken the time to turn to, this phrase is very often stated specifically in the context of the Ark of the Covenant. If we look at the details of the Ark of the Covenant, we'll understand exactly what that means and why that reference is made.

Turn over to Exodus 25 and we're going to break into the middle of the context, but just to look at the greater context, verses 10-22 are God's specific instructions to Moses about making the Ark of the Covenant and all the details of exactly how He wanted this Ark to be made. We're going to jump in the middle of the context and start in verse 17 because what I want you to see, if we focus on the details, is exactly what is meant by *dwells between the cherubim*.

Exodus 25:17 *“You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width.*

18) *And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. (NKJV)*

Notice it's describing the mercy seat and there will be cherubim on both sides of it.

19) Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat.
(NKJV)

What we're going to see is the description of the mercy seat and cherubim on both sides. We read that the wings are surrounding this mercy seat—it's all made of one piece and the other thing to notice is there is one seat that's in between these cherubim. It's not the mercy seat and multiple other seats, it's one seat—just the mercy seat—all that's in between these two cherubim. Let's keep reading in verse 20.

20) And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat.

21) You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you.

22) And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.
(NKJV)

This is a picture of these cherubim surrounding this mercy seat—it's all made in one piece and God is directly telling them, here's where I'm going to speak to you from, from above this mercy seat, between these two cherubim. We have a very clear picture of why it says, "who dwells between the cherubim", because God literally (the presence of God) dwelt in the Tabernacle and later the Temple with Israel. As it says, this is where He would dwell with Israel and it's specifically between the cherubim so you can see what that specifically means.

To add a little more meaning to this we also need to take into consideration where the Ark of the Covenant was placed. It wasn't just placed in the Tabernacle, it was placed in a special area of the Tabernacle. The way the Tabernacle was laid out there was a special area called the Most Holy Place that had very limited access and this is where the presence of God dwelt among Israel, in the Most Holy Place. If we turn over to Exodus 26, we're going to pick up here on the description of the Tabernacle and specifically the Most Holy Place and what was placed in there. We're going to get a clear picture of the whole context. Exodus 26:31.

Exodus 26:31 *"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.*

32) You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver.

33) *And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy.*

34) *You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy.*

35) *You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side.* (NKJV)

What it's telling us is the Most Holy Place had a veil in front of it that separated it from the rest of the Tabernacle—this was a very special area with very limited access. The Ark of the Covenant was placed inside the Most Holy Place. Where this area was—where God dwelt between the cherubim—was behind this veil, and you can see this was a special area that could only be accessed one time a year, throughout the entire year for Israel. The rest of the Tabernacle, there was a lot of access to there, but in the Most Holy Place, only the high priest could go there once a year and only on the Day of Atonement. That was the only time that any access was allowed to this.

This was a part of a ceremony that's described in Leviticus 16. I won't take the time to turn to that particular chapter; I've given previous sermons about that earlier this year in more detail. To summarize what was taking place in that ceremony—this was a ceremony that involved two goats and one of them is specifically referred to as the Lord's goat, as we're going to see; it was a picture of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The high priest would sacrifice this goat and go in once a year on the Day of Atonement into the Most Holy Place—the only time he could ever access this and he would go in with the blood of the Lord's goat as an atoning sacrifice before the throne of God, before the Ark of the Covenant, because he couldn't do it any other time of year.

It's important to understand the whole context if we understand the meaning of this ceremony, and what it pictures. It sheds a lot of light on the meaning of He who dwells between the cherubim—of whose throne is being pictured as between these cherubim. We don't have to guess at all about what this ceremony pictured because the book of Hebrews very clearly and very directly explains it to us; all we have to do is read the words on the page—we don't have to guess or speculate at all. Let's turn over to Hebrews 9:1.

Hebrews 9:1 *Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.*

2) *For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary;*

3) *and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All ...* (NKJV)

This is the same area that we read in the Old Testament referred to as the Most Holy Place—different names for the same thing.

- 4) *which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;*
5) *and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.*
6) *Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. (NKJV)*

As I mentioned before, the other parts of the Tabernacle they regularly went into, and had access to, but the Most Holy Place could only be accessed once a year—it was a very special area. We'll see this in verse 7 going forward.

- 7) *But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;*
8) *the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.*
9) *It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—*
10) *concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.*
11) *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*
12) *Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (NKJV)*

We see the meaning of what's being played out in that ceremony in Leviticus 16, because the high priest, starting with Aaron and those who succeeded him, would then go into the Most Holy Place, with the blood of the Lord's goat that they would take in there as an atoning sacrifice. What it's telling us—what this pictured—was Jesus Christ going before the Father, as we're about to read, but with His own blood. He didn't have the blood of an animal; He was coming because He had been sacrificed as a human being for the sins of mankind. He's coming in with His own blood. Let's notice as we keep reading, whose throne—who's on the mercy seat that He is going before. Notice in verse 13:

- 13) *For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,*
14) *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God ...*

Notice that He's presenting Himself before God the Father.

14 continued) ... *cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

15) *And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.* (NKJV)

What was pictured by this ceremony in Leviticus 16, when Aaron and other high priests would do this? It pictured Jesus Christ coming before the throne of God the Father. He was going in before God's throne, with His own blood, to be accepted as an atoning sacrifice for all mankind. This is what makes Him the Mediator of the New Covenant.

The mediator of a covenant is not one of the parties making the covenant, he's what you would call a middleman—the facilitator between the other parties who are making the covenant. When we enter into the New Covenant, we're making covenant with the Father but Christ is the one who makes it possible. His sacrifice is what has enabled us to have the ability to atone for our sins and have access to the Father so that we can make a covenant with Him. That's why Christ is called the Mediator in this process. There was a veil that separated off the Most Holy Place. We won't take the time to turn to 2 Corinthians 3, but it tells us that this veil is removed in Christ.

If you read the story of Christ's crucifixion, literally at the moment He dies, where He's up on the stake being crucified, the actual veil in the Temple that existed at that time was literally ripped in two, telling us exactly what all this pictured—that His death enabled removing that veil and giving access to the Father. The Leviticus 16 ceremony—what this pictured again was the high priest coming in the role of Christ, but who was he going before?—who would be on the mercy seat between the cherubim?—it's God the Father, that's who would be there, that's the point of the entire ceremony.

Just to illustrate this, to make this point very clear, let's imagine what would be pictured in this ceremony if *Christ* is on the mercy seat in between the cherubim. Because what you then have is a picture of Christ coming in with His own blood, before Himself, to present Himself to Himself, so He could accept Himself as the sacrifice for mankind, and then ask Himself to sit at His own right hand. It's absurd when you think about it. When you walk that through, it undermines the entire meaning of everything that's playing out. The whole point of the Most Holy Place in this entire ceremony is access to God the Father.

If we consider the meaning of this and this specific reference of He who dwells between the cherubim being about the Ark of the Covenant, and God being there in the Most Holy Place, between the cherubim, dwelling with Israel, obviously it's God the Father who is there between the cherubim, otherwise it undermines the entire meaning of everything that's pictured. It derails everything and undermines the entire meaning. There's another question we have to answer then because sometimes people look at the fact that it says Christ sits at the Father's right hand, so couldn't this mercy seat be a two-seater, as some people put it. In other words, they sit side by side with one another

on this same seat—could that be a possibility? What we need to think about is the fact that the book of Revelation makes a very, very big point of showing us that the throne of God the Father is unique to Himself.

What we are about to see is there are at least nine different references to the exact phrase, or to a very similar phrase, to the effect of “He who sits on the throne”. What we are about to see is not only is it stated like that sometimes, it’s “Him who sat on the throne” or “the God who sits on the throne”—there is slightly different wording but at least nine different times it’s very specific in telling us there is one individual and one individual *alone* who sits on this throne, and, in fact, in a number of these references it’s going to contrast He who sits on the throne with Jesus Christ, making it very, very clear that He who sits on the throne is the Father and not Jesus Christ.

Let’s turn to the book of Revelation and walk through these examples and see that the book makes a very, very big point of making this very specific. Turn over to Revelation—we won’t take the time to go through the entire chapter but if you go through Revelation 4, it’s a graphic description of the throne of God the Father being pictured here. What I want you to see throughout this book are the repeated references that this throne is unique to the Father Himself, and there’s only one individual who sits on this throne. It makes a very big deal out of this. Start off in Revelation 4:2.

Revelation 4:2 *Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.*

3) *And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.*
(NKJV)

We’ve emphasized there is one individual on this throne—a big trend of this all throughout this book. Now turn down to verse 9 of chapter 4.

9) *Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,*

10) *the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:*

11) *“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”* (NKJV)

Let’s continue reading in chapter 5.

Revelation 5:1 *And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.*

2) *Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”*

3) *And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.*

4) *So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.*

5) *But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."*

6) *And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain ... (NKJV)*

The Lamb that's been slain is an obvious reference to Jesus Christ; let's notice what He does here, let's continue reading.

6 continued) *... having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

7) *Then He [obviously referring to Christ, the Lamb who was slain] came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. (NKJV)*

What we've described here is Jesus Christ, the Lamb who was slain, coming and taking the scroll out of the hand of Him who sat on the throne. Obviously He's taking the scroll out of the hand of God the Father. We're going to notice several references similar to this where it's contrasting He who sits on the throne with Christ, making it very, very clear they're separate individuals. Let's turn over to verse 11 of chapter 5.

Revelation 5:11 *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,*

12) *saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain [we're talking about Jesus Christ, the Lamb] To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*

13) *And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (NKJV)*

Notice again, we have Him who sits on the throne being contrasted with Christ. Him who sits on the throne is the Father, and the Lamb is Christ. Now let's turn over to chapter 6, verse 15.

Revelation 6:15 *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,*

16) *and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! (NKJV)*

Once again, two separate individuals: Him who sits on the throne and the Lamb. You have the Father and you have Christ, but the Father is the one who is sitting on this throne—it's unique to Him. Now let's turn over to chapter 7, verse 9.

Revelation 7:9 *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,
10) and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (NKJV)*

Once again, two individuals: Him who sits on the throne is the Father, and the Lamb is Christ. Now let's turn to chapter 7, verse 15.

*15) Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.
16) They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;
17) for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (NKJV)*

Again, we have He who sits on the throne and the Lamb being contrasted—very, very clear that He who sits on the throne is the Father. It just keeps emphasizing this same point. Now let's turn to Revelation 19; we'll see one more reference like this in verse 1.

Revelation 19:1 *After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!
2) For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."
3) Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"
4) And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" (NKJV)*

Again, we've read about nine different and specific references of "He who sits on the throne" or "Him who sat on the throne", repeatedly telling us it's one individual, and as we saw in a number of these references, it's contrasting He who sits on the throne with Christ, making it very clear that He who sits on the throne is the Father, and Christ is there with Him but there's only one individual who sits on this throne. We even saw that Christ is the Lamb who takes the scroll out of the hand of He who sits on the throne; it's very clear who "He" is—the "He" who sits there is God the Father.

Let's address another question because oftentimes people look at this and say, doesn't the Bible say that Christ sits at the right hand of the Father? Couldn't this be a two-seater throne of the mercy seat and both of them are there? We've just seen nine different references making it very clear that the Father's throne is unique to Himself. When we consider the concept of Christ sitting at the Father's right hand, we have to be very careful in noticing the wording because, yes, it does say that Christ sits at the right hand of the Father but let's notice the distinction it makes in the scriptures that talk about this. Let's turn over to Hebrews 8 and read verse 1.

Hebrews 8:1 *Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
2) a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. (NKJV)*

Notice what it says here, Christ is sitting to the right of the throne. In other words, you have God's throne and to the right of the throne is where Christ is. It's not a situation where it's a two-seater throne and they're sitting side by side as co-equal rulers of the universe. You have the Father's unique throne and to the right of it, is where Christ is—that's what it's telling us. Notice another reference to this in Hebrews 12; it's going to be worded exactly the same way. Hebrews 12:1.

Hebrews 12:1 *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
2) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (NKJV)*

Once again we have a picture of God on His throne and here's the throne, and to the right of the throne is Christ. It's not giving us a picture of a two-seater throne and they are sharing it together—no, it's He who sat on the throne, the Father's unique throne, and to His right is Christ. To put it in human terms, oftentimes we may refer to an executive or a leader as having a right-hand man, his number-one assistant; it's a similar concept. Christ is like His right-hand man, He's right there with the Father but it's not a situation where they're co-equals and exactly equal with each other.

We're going to see in a minute here, yes, they are equal in nature, in character and in their mind—in perfect harmony with each other—but when it comes to authority and position, the Father is in a superior position to Christ and the Bible is very clear about that. To follow up the idea of sitting at the right hand of a leader, let's also notice a physical example of this that gives us a very similar picture. Let's turn over to 1 Kings 2; we're going to see an example of Solomon and his mother, Bathsheba. It's going to paint a very consistent picture of what we've just seen. We're going to break into a context, and we're just going to read verse 19 because it speaks to our specific point.

1 Kings 2:19 *Bathsheba therefore went to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king's mother; so she sat at his right hand. (NKJV)*

I noticed it says here that he was sitting on the king's throne, and he had a separate throne set up for his mother and had her sitting at his right hand. So basically the concept is very similar to what we just read in Hebrews. When it's talking about God the Father and Christ, it says Christ is sitting at the right hand of the throne. In other words it was the Father's throne and Christ has His throne on the right but it's a separate throne. That's exactly what we're seeing here with Solomon and Bathsheba. He gives her a special throne, she's on the right hand of the king but they're not co-equal kings of Israel. She's not sharing his title as King of Israel, she's in a position of honor and respect, right there with him, but he is still King of Israel. His title and throne are unique to him; it's not a two-seater throne that they're sharing with each other.

It's important for us to understand this subject—the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ, because yes, they are both eternal God Beings, let's be very very clear about that. When I point out the superiority of the Father that in no way takes away from Christ's role or the fact that He is an eternal God Being, He absolutely is. They are the same in nature and in character because Christ said numerous times when you've seen Me, you've seen the Father, and My Father and I are one—He's referring to their mind, their character, their approach, the fact that they are in perfect harmony with one another—He's not saying My Father and I are co-equal rulers of the universe.

This idea that they are co-equal is a trinitarian concept. If you've studied the trinity at all or looked at any website of any church or group that is espousing the trinity, a common phrase you're going to see is the phrase "co-equal, co-eternal". What they mean by that is they see God as three in one, and their idea is that the Father, Son, and even the Holy Spirit (because they think the Holy Spirit is an individual and not the power of God—in the Church of God we teach that the Holy Spirit is the power of God but they teach that the Holy Spirit is an individual) are three individuals, but somehow they are still one collective, kind of like the Borg on Star Trek, you might say, kind of all together, but they will use the phrase to express this: co-equal, co-eternal. They see them as all equal and essentially kind of interchangeable in their position and authority and such.

In the Church of God we're very clear that the Holy Spirit is the power of God (it's not an individual), and that there are two God Beings: there's God the Father and there's Jesus Christ, and yes, they are the same in mind and in character and in perfect harmony but in position they are not the same. Christ was very clear in saying My Father is greater than I. Oftentimes, particularly with those who will argue the trinity, they will try to explain away Christ's statement "My Father is greater than I" by saying, well, that's just because He was a human being when He said those words. What we're specifically going to look at here are verses that are always in the context of Christ

going back to being a God Being, and we're going to see that Jesus Christ and God the Father have a God-Servant relationship with one another. Jesus Christ refers several times to God the Father as His God, but you never see God the Father speaking of Christ as His God; He speaks of Him as His Servant because they have a God-Servant relationship. Let's see this clearly in the Bible. Turn over to John 20:17—I also want to make the point here that even though we're in the gospels, at this point in the book of John, Christ has already been resurrected. He's already been crucified, He's already been dead for three days and three nights, and He has now been resurrected; He is back to being a God Being, so understand when we read this statement He's about to make, having been previously human has nothing to do with what about He's about to say here, because He's a God Being when He says these words. This is verse 17.

John 20:17 *Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'* (NKJV)

He's specifically talking about His ascent up to the Father's throne to fulfill the wave sheaf offering, what's pictured in Leviticus 16, of Him going before the Father with His own blood to be accepted as a sacrifice—He's about to go fulfill that, is what He's saying. But notice He also refers to the Father as My God. It's a superior-subordinate relationship between the two. Notice a couple other verses where the same terminology is used and it makes it very clear that there is also a God-Servant relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ. Turn over to Revelation 1 and we'll see this terminology used again. Revelation 1:4.

Revelation 1:4 *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,*
5) *and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,*
6) *and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* (NKJV)

Once again we have pointed out to us the relationship between Jesus Christ and God the Father—God the Father is a God to Jesus Christ. It doesn't take away the fact that Jesus Christ is a God Being, He definitely is, but we're going to see that He still refers to the Father as His God. Turn over to Revelation 3 and we'll see Christ Himself states this numerous times. Revelation 3:12.

Revelation 3:12 *He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.* (NKJV)

Notice multiple times that Jesus Christ Himself has referred to the Father as *My God*. He's obviously looking to Him as a superior to Himself, not as someone with whom He is co-equal. When we understand this relationship, now we can fully understand a comment that Jesus Christ makes at the end of His physical life when He is praying to the Father. Let's turn over to John 17 and we'll pick it up in verse 3.

John 17:3 *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (NKJV)*

Notice He refers to God the Father as the only true God. Let me be very clear in saying this, He is not in any way saying that He is not a God Being. Of course He was human when He was stating these words, but again, Jesus Christ is an eternal God Being and making that statement in no way takes away from that fact. He is expressing the relationship that He has with God the Father and the superiority of God the Father in saying He is the only true God; in other words, He is the superior. If they were co-equals, exactly equal in authority, He wouldn't use this same terminology to describe Him. As we're going to notice, as we've seen from numerous examples, Jesus Christ refers to God the Father as His God. That reference is made numerous times in the Bible. In the reverse, we never see God the Father being spoken of in such a way that Christ is His God. We always see that Christ is His servant because they have a superior-subordinate relationship. Notice this in Acts 3:13.

Acts 3:13 *The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. (NKJV)*

What that makes very clear to us is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has to be God the Father that we're referring to. Not only does it reveal that point to us, it also shows us the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ. As we saw numerous times, Christ refers to the Father as My God, but the Father doesn't refer to Christ as His God, He refers to Him as His Servant. Notice this again, if you just go across the page to verse 25 of Acts 3.

Acts 3:25 *You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'* (NKJV)

If we notice in the next verse, it's going to tell us who the God who made this covenant with Abraham is.

26) *To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."* (NKJV)

It's talking about the God who raised up Jesus and sent Jesus. Christ mentioned numerous times in His physical lifetime He was sent by the Father and it was the Father

who sent Me to do this. It's also the Father who raised Him up in every way that that phrase can be interpreted. Obviously when Christ was dead, He didn't resurrect Himself—He was dead. The Father had to resurrect Him and bring Him back to life.

Even if you interpret that phrase in terms of empowering Him to do the works that He did as a physical human being, He said, I can do nothing of Myself—without the Father I am nothing. Obviously in any way you can interpret that phrase, it's God the Father. It tells us that the God of Abraham, the God who made the covenant with Abraham, is God the Father, that's what this chapter directly just told us. Not only that, it tells us the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ. Once again, we have it described as Christ is the Servant of the Father, He's not the God of the Father. Whereas we saw numerous times the Father is the God of Christ because He is the superior. There are numerous verses (we won't take the time to go through all of them) but in the roles that Christ fulfills, like after His resurrection, it makes a point of saying the Father appointed Him to this and the Father gave Him this authority and He has placed Him in these roles because the Father is in the superior position and He's appointing Christ to these particular roles, because, again, He is the superior individual.

The throne of God the Father is described throughout Revelation, as we saw numerous times, and a very big point is made of telling us this is unique to Him. I was addressing the concept, could the mercy seat pictured between the cherubim be a two-seater—in other words, are there two seats side by side and they're sharing it together? We've seen numerous times throughout the Bible that God the Father's throne is clearly unique to Himself. We've also seen He is in a superior position in authority. He appoints the Son to all of His roles, Christ refers to God the Father as His God, it's a God-Servant relationship, and we see it makes a very clear, consistent picture of the Father in a superior role; His throne would be unique to Himself.

There's one particular scripture we need to address in this regard that on the surface appears to contradict everything we've just mentioned. It is in Revelation 3:21, so let's take a look at this particular scripture and understand it. It appears, if you just read it and don't consider its meaning, to contradict everything we've just covered.

Revelation 3:21 *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (NKJV)*

If you think about this, if we interpret this to be the literal seat, the literal throne we've described in this sermon, think about the picture that we have here. If Christ sits down, sharing a two-seater throne, then says, I'll grant all the resurrected saints to sit with Me as well, and He's sitting with the Father, think about the picture we have now of the Father's throne. It's not a seat, it's a bench. It's a long bench and there are many, many individuals all sitting side by side sharing it together. If that's the case, what meaning does *He who sits on the throne* have in that context? Does that not undermine, because we read almost a dozen scriptures making it very, very clear that the Father's throne is unique to Himself, even contrasting it with Christ. If we create this

picture of this massive, long bench and they're all sharing it together, doesn't this contradict everything we just read? Also keep in mind that this is written by the Apostle John in the book of Revelation, and all the scriptures that we saw telling us how unique the Father's throne was were written by John in the book of Revelation. So how are we to understand this scripture and have it agree with all the others?

The key is understanding how the Greek word for throne can be used. The Greek word is transliterated in the English as *thronos* when you put it into English letters. It's [Strong's #2362](#). The word can have multiple applications and meanings. The definition I'm going to give you is out of [The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament](#) by Spiros Zodhiates. Zodhiates has a longer write up than what I'm going to read but the point he makes is this word can be used in a lot of different contexts. It certainly can mean a literal throne, a literal seat that a king sits on. However, it can also be used metaphorically, and that's important to understand. Addressing this meaning, Zodhiates says, "Metaphorically used for dominion." In other words, this throne can be a metaphor for dominion and not necessarily a literal seat.

Without looking at it in this context, we have this picture of a bench, and they're all sharing it, which undermines close to a dozen scriptures that John himself wrote, all saying *the one who sits on the throne*. If you look at it in terms of dominion, now it totally makes sense because there are numerous scriptures that tell us when Christ was resurrected the Father appointed Him to these roles, He appointed Him as our High Priest, He's the Mediator of the New Covenant—He has all of these roles that the Father placed Him in and the Father has shared His dominion by placing Christ in roles in His Kingdom. What Christ is saying, of the resurrected saints, is that we will share this dominion and be given roles as kings and priests, ruling with Him—that's what is meant here. Otherwise we would have to face this one scripture contradicting close to a dozen scriptures, written by the same author in the same book. So obviously this is meant metaphorically.

Let's tie this all together. We began this sermon by showing how the LORD of Hosts and the God of Israel are described by the descriptive phrase *He who dwells between the cherubim*. If you do a word search in a Bible search program for "dwells between the cherubim" you're going to see seven scriptures in the Old Testament come up.

In every single case, it's a descriptive phrase describing God, and we saw that that is a very specific reference to the Ark of the Covenant because that is where the cherubim were, and that's literally where the presence of God dwelt, in the Tabernacle with Israel, in the Most Holy Place. He even said I'll speak to you from between the cherubim so that's who dwelt between the cherubim. We've seen the entire picture of everything about the Most Holy Place and the veil there and the ceremony that played out—everything points to God the Father.

If you place Christ on the mercy seat, what do you have as a picture in Leviticus 16? You have Jesus Christ, the High Priest, coming in with the blood of the Lord's goat,

picturing Christ coming with His own blood, before Himself?—to accept Himself as a sacrifice for all mankind and then asking Himself to sit at His own right hand? It undermines the meaning of everything. Obviously He who dwells between the cherubim is God the Father.

As we've seen, that throne, all that was between the cherubim, was the mercy seat—one seat. It wasn't the mercy seat and multiple other seats, it was just one seat. It was even built as one piece. You had the mercy seat with the cherubim around both sides, it was all built together because it was one seat where these cherubim covered around—it wasn't multiple. We've also seen that that throne—because this was a picture of the throne of God the Father—is unique to Him. It's not something He shares because even though Christ is at His right hand, it's the right hand of the throne. In other words, the mercy seat that He sits on is here, and to the right of it is Christ. What that tells us is this is identifying the LORD of Hosts and the God of Israel as God the Father.

This is a deep subject that can raise a lot of questions. If you look on the Pacific Church of God website, we have a lot of materials about this particular subject. There's a group of study papers there and there's been a number of sermons covering different aspects of this subject, so if you have questions about that certainly those are good resources to look to, or you can ask any of the ministry to answer any questions in this regard. My point here today was to specifically point out that this descriptive phrase, *He who dwells between the cherubim*, tells us who the LORD of Hosts and who the God of Israel is. It tells us through the symbolism that the LORD of Hosts and the God of Israel is God the Father.