

Ezekiel 10:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out.

Analysis

The cherub actively participates in judgment by personally taking fire and giving it to the man clothed in linen. This anthropomorphic description ('stretched forth his hand') reveals that heavenly beings willingly participate in God's purposes, both redemptive and judicial. The Hebrew yad (יָד, 'hand') signifies power and agency.

The fire taken 'from between the cherubims' emphasizes its holy origin. In biblical theology, fire often represents God's holiness, purity, and consuming judgment (Deuteronomy 4:24, Hebrews 12:29). The altar of burnt offering had perpetual fire representing acceptable sacrifice (Leviticus 6:12-13), but here the fire brings judgment rather than atonement. This illustrates that the same divine attributes that enable salvation also necessitate judgment for those who reject God's covenant.

The phrase 'took it, and went out' demonstrates prompt obedience without hesitation. This models faithful service to God even when the task involves difficult aspects of His will. True worship involves submitting to God's entire revealed will, including doctrines of judgment.

Historical Context

Cherubim in ancient Israelite theology functioned as guardians of God's holiness. They guarded Eden's entrance after the Fall (Genesis 3:24), their images adorned the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:18-22), and they were woven into the temple veil (2 Chronicles 3:14). Archaeological discoveries from Syria and Mesopotamia show cherubim-like creatures guarding sacred spaces, but Israel's cherubim uniquely served Yahweh alone.

The active role of cherubim in executing judgment would have carried special significance for Ezekiel's audience. They had seen the temple where golden cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat. Now they learn these same cherubim participate in Jerusalem's destruction—the temple's own guardian figures implement its demise. This demonstrates that God's holiness cannot be manipulated through mere religious externals.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the active participation of heavenly beings in judgment shape your understanding of spiritual warfare?
2. What does the cherub's immediate obedience teach about our response to God's Word?
3. In what ways might we trivialize God's holiness by focusing only on His love while ignoring His justice?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁלַח	הַכֶּרֶב יָם	אֶת	יָד ו	מִיָּנִי וְ	הַכֶּרֶב יָם	אֶל
stretched forth	And one cherub	H853	his hand	H996	And one cherub	H413
H7971	H3742		H3027		H3742	
הָאֵשׁ	אֲשֶׁר	בֵּין וְ	הַכֶּרֶב יָם	וַיִּשָּׂא	וְהָיָה	אֶל
unto the fire	H834	H996	And one cherub	and took	thereof and put	H413
H784			H3742	H5375	H5414	
חֲפָנֵי י	לְבָשׁ	הַיָּדָיִם	וְ	וַיֵּצֵא:		
it into the hands	of him that was clothed	with linen	who took	it and went out		
H2651	H3847	H906	H3947	H3318		

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