

Traditional Tiers of Angels (Greek *aggelos* = messenger, one who announces; *Euaggelos*=messenger with good news, evangelist)

First Sphere

seraphim: burning ones, caretakers of God's throne, those who continuously shout praises, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts"; fiery, six-winged beings with two wings to cover faces, two to cover feet, two to fly with

cherubim: guardians of the way to the Tree of Life, each with four conjoined wings covered with eyes, a lion's body, feet of oxen; each with four faces—man, ox, lion, eagle (later adopted as symbols for four evangelists)

thrones: the elders, symbols of God's justice and authority; wheels and many-eyed ones who listen to the will of God and present the prayers of men

Second Sphere

dominions: those regulating the duties of lower angels; rarely making themselves physically known to human beings; each with pairs of feathered wings and wielding light orbs fastened to heads of their scepters or pommels of their swords

virtues, or strongholds: those through which signs and miracles are made in the world; brilliant or shining ones; angels of miracles with unshakable virility)

powers, or authorities: those supervising movements of heavenly bodies and keeping cosmos in order; warrior angels who oppose evil spirits; each wearing armor and helmets and using weapons such as shields and spears

Third Sphere

principalities, or princes: those guiding and protecting nations, groups of peoples, and institutions such as the church; those presiding over bands of angels and charging them with fulfilling divine ministry; each wearing a crown and carrying a scepter

archangels: chief angels; guardians of countries and nations, concerned with politics, military matters, commerce, trade; seven representing days of week—Michael for Sun, Gabriel for Mon, Raphael for Tues, Uriel for Wed, Selaphiel for Thurs, Raguel for Fri, Barachiel for Sat

guardian angels: messengers, envoys, those most frequently recognized and most concerned with affairs of men