

Choirs of Angels

Seraphim: Highest order or choir of angels; attendants or guardians before GOD's throne. They praise GOD calling, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts" (Is 6:1-7) One touched Isaiah's lips with a live coal from the altar, cleansing him from sin; have six wings, two cover their faces, two cover their feet, and two are for flying.

Cherubim: Rank after the seraphim; second highest in the nine hierarchies or choirs of angels; OT does not reveal any evidence that Jews considered them as intercessors/helpers of GOD; closely linked in GOD's glory; manlike in appearance/double-winged, guardians of GOD's glory; symbolized GOD's power and mobility. In NT, are alluded to as *celestial attendants* in the Apocalypse (Rev 4-6). Catholic tradition describes them as angels who have an intimate knowledge of GOD and continually praise Him.

Thrones: Angels of pure Humility, Peace and Submission; reside in the area of the cosmos where material form begins to take shape. The lower Choir of Angels need the Thrones to access GOD.

Dominions: Angels of Leadership; regulate the duties of the angels, making known commands of GOD.

Virtues: Spirits of Motion; control the elements; often referred to as "the shining ones"; govern all nature; have control over seasons, stars, moon, and sun; in charge of miracles, provide courage, grace, and valor.

Powers: Warrior Angels against evil defending the cosmos and humans; known as potentates; fight against evil spirits who attempt to wreak chaos through human beings; chief is said to be either Samael or Camael, both angels of darkness.

Archangels: "Chief or leading angel" (Jude 9; 1 Thes 4:16); mentioned most often throughout Bible; may be of this or other hierarchies as St. Michael Archangel, who is a princely Seraph. Archangels have a unique role as GOD's messenger to people at critical times in history and salvation (Tb 12:6, 15; Jn 5:4; Rv 12:7-9) as in The Annunciation and Apocalypse. A feast day celebrating the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael is celebrated throughout the Church Sep 29. A special part of the Byzantine Liturgy invokes the "Cherubic Hymn" which celebrates these archangels and the guardian angels particularly.

Of special significance is St. Michael as he has been invoked as patron and protector by the Church from the time of the Apostles. The Eastern Rite and many others place him over all the angels, as Prince of the Seraphim. He is described as the "chief of princes" and as the leader of the forces of heaven in their triumph over Satan and his followers. The angel Gabriel first appeared in the Old Testament in the prophesies of Daniel, he announced the prophecy of 70 weeks (Dn 9:21-27). He appeared to Zechariah to announce the birth of St. John the Baptist (Lk 1:11). It was also Gabriel which proclaimed the Annunciation of Mary to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour. (Lk 1:26) The angel Raphael first appeared in the book of Tobit (Tobias) Tb 3:25, 5:5-28, 6-12). He announces "I am the Angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the throne of GOD." (Tb 12:15)

Principalities: In the New Testament Principalities refers to one type of spiritual (metaphysical) being which are now quite hostile to GOD and human beings. (Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:10, 15) Along with the principalities are the powers (Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 1 Pt 3:22; 2 Thes 1:7); and cosmological powers (1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; Col 2:15); Dominions (Eph 1:21; Col 1:16) and thrones (Col 1:16). The clarity of the New Testament witness helps see that these beings were created through Christ and for Him (Col 1:16). Given their hostility to GOD and humans due to sin, Christ's ultimate rule over them (ibid) expresses the reign of the Lord over all in the cosmos. This is the Lordship of Christ, which reveals GOD's tremendous salvation in conquering sin and death at the cross, and now takes place in the Church. (Eph 3:10)

Angels: These angels are closest to the material world and human beings. They deliver the prayers to GOD and GOD's answers and other messages to humans. Angels have the capacity to access any and all other Angels at any time. They are the most caring and sociable to assist those who ask for help.

WORMWOOD: The English rendering "*wormwood*" refers to the dark green oil produced by the plant, which was used to kill intestinal worms. In the Book of Revelation, it refers to the water *being turned into wormwood*, i.e. made bitter. The bitter flavor of wormwood has long been symbolic of regret, judgment, and doom. In the Bible, a close relative of wormwood (*Artemisia herba-alba*) was used to symbolize the judgment of God. Heb. la'anah, the *Artemisia absinthium* of botanists. It is noted for its intense bitterness ([Deuteronomy 29:18](#) ; [Proverbs 5:4](#) ; [Jeremiah 9:15](#) ; [Amos 5:7](#)). It is a type of bitterness, affliction, remorse, punitive suffering. In [Amos 6:12](#) this Hebrew word is rendered "hemlock" (RSV, "wormwood"). In the symbolical language of the Apocalypse ([Revelation 8:10](#) [Revelation 8:11](#)) a star is represented as falling on the waters of the earth, causing the third part of the water to turn wormwood.

The name by which the Greeks designated it, *absinthion*, means "*undrinkable*." The absinthe of France is distilled from a species of this plant. The "*southernwood*" or "*old man*," cultivated in cottage gardens on account of its fragrance, is another species of it.