## Angel Info

* The ancient Greek word “angelos” means messenger.
* A 5th Century work attributed to a disciple of St. Paul attempts to provide a classification of heavenly creatures. Three hierarchies are described: Seraphim, Cherubim and Ophanim, who give endless adoration to God; Dominions, Virtues and Powers, who govern heavenly bodies and the elements; and Princedoms, Archangels and Angels who guide the souls of humankind, the latter two being the types most commonly depicted by artists.
* The Bible names three individual angels: Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.
* In the Bible, angels are often mistaken for ordinary mortals or kind strangers.
* Theologians originally taught that angels had no gender and Renaissance art usually shows them as androgynous males. By the end of last century, angels were usually depicted as female. Thomas Aquinas decreed that angels were pure intellect and did not have physical form.
* Angels appear frequently in Islamic literature. Shiite artists, who did not prohibit the depiction of human form, portrayed Angels in their art. It is taught that the Angel Jabra`il (Gabriel) inspired Muhammad (pbuh) to write the Qur`an, and escorted him on his night journey to Heaven.
* Perhaps the most recent and notorious piece of angel art is the 1998 sculpture “The Angel of the North” by Anthony Gormley which stands at a busy junction of the A1 at Gateshead. It weighs 200 tons and is the size of a Jumbo Jet, which makes it the largest piece of public art in Britain (see newspaper clipping in angel pictures pack).