

Angels in the Bible

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A topical review of the appearance of holy angels in scripture

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Cosmic Christmas

Written by Max Lucado and Narrated by Tom Dooley

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Introduction

Angels are a common topic in this century. Many authors, including Billy Graham, have written books on the subject. *Touched by an Angel* was a popular prime-time CBS drama which treated the concept of angels in a reverent and relatively-scriptural manner.

The term *angel* appears from Genesis to Revelation. This site will list many references to angels in the Bible, but will be limited to holy angels. To learn about evil [fallen] angels, click the following link maintained by J. F. Cogan: [Demon Possession Handbook](#).

Angels fulfill different functions in the Bible. The scripture references will include the following categories: **Guardians, Messengers, Servants, and Terminators**. These designations are mine and should not be viewed as scriptural. In my opinion, the text and context describes these four roles. In some cases, an angel could fulfill two or more roles.

Guardians:

The first appearance of the word angel is in Genesis 16 regarding the flight of Hagar from the home of Abraham and Sarah and this is a guardian angel:

However, many people think of guardian angels in connection with children. This comes from a statement by Jesus in Matthew 18:10. Child abusers, molesters, and kidnappers: take note!

Many people think of angels in a positive role as guardians of their way.

Psalms 91:11:

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

A paraphrase of this promise would be, "God has assigned angels to watch over us so we don't stub our toes along the pathway of life."

Messengers:

The classic example of a messenger angel is the announcement to the Virgin Mary that she is to be the mother of the Messiah: Luke 1:35.

Servants:

My favorite chapter in the book of Revelation is Chapter 5. Here we see angels as servants and their task is that of praise and worship

Terminators:

The most fearsome role of angels is that of terminators. When the need presents itself, angels are available to be God's strike force, His SWAT team, His early response team. They are white ops specialists. Angels as terminators appear throughout the book of Revelation. However, this role is best illustrated in Chapter 20 of Revelation:

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ² He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ³ He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

When it comes time to put Satan away, God won't need to do it. He won't even send Jesus to do it. He'll just snap His finger and deputize a holy angel.

Examples of Angel References in the Bible, in Scriptural Order

The scripture references listed below are many (not all) of the instances angels are mentioned in the Bible. The four categories and the comments given with some of the verses, are my own. They should not be considered scriptural. My comments are shown in bold, blue type.

Books of the Bible That Contain References to Angels

Old Testament

Genesis

Exodus

Numbers

Judges

Samuel

1 Kings

2 Kings

1 Chronicles

Psalms

Isaiah

Daniel,

New Testament

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts

Romans

1 Corinthians

2Thessalonians

1 Timothy

Hebrews

1 Peter

Revelation

Guardian-Messenger

Genesis 16:7: And the angel of the Lord found her [Hagar] by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

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Messenger-Terminator

Genesis 19:1: And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

=====

These angels are used here as messengers and are on recon. Later, they may have been part of the strike force that burned Sodom and Gomorrah to the ground.

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Messenger-Terminator

Genesis 19:15: And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

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Guardian

Genesis 21:17: And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

=====

Messenger

Genesis 22:11: And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

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God's Plan of Salvation always involved sacrifice. First animal sacrifice, then Jesus, the Lamb of God, but never human sacrifice.

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Messenger

Genesis 24:7: The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my fathers house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

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Servant

Genesis 28:12: And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

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Messenger

Genesis 31:11: And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: and I said, Here am I.

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Messenger

Exodus 3:2: And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

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This is another classic example of an angel in the role of messenger.

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Messenger

Exodus 14:19: And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

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Guardian

Exodus 23:20: Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

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Guardian

Exodus 23:23: For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

=====

Guardian

Numbers 20:16: And when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border:

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Messenger

Numbers 22:22: And Gods anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.

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This story shows an angel and a donkey collaborating to get a message to Balaam, who is the dullest of the three.

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Messenger

Judges 2:1: And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

=====

Messenger

Judges 2:4: And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

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Messenger

Judges 6:11: And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

=====

Messenger

Judges 13:3: And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

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This is the promise of the birth of the great judge, Samuel.

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Terminator

2 Samuel 24:16: And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand.

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Messenger

1 Kings 13:18: He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.

=====

Guardian

1 Kings 19:5: And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

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Messenger

2 Kings 1:15: And the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

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Terminator

2 Kings 19:35: And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

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Messenger:

1 Chronicles 21:18: Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

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Guardian

Psalms 34:7: The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

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Terminator

Psalms 35:5: Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them.

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Guardian

Psalms 91:11: For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

God has promised to take such good care of us that His angels will keep us from stubbing our toe on the pathway of life!

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Guardian

Isaiah 63:9: In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

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Guardian

Daniel 3:28: Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the kings word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

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Guardian

Daniel 6:22: My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

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Daniel was safe in the lion's den because God found an angel who had experience as a lion tamer.

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Messenger

Matthew 1:20: But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

The angel took a load off Joseph's mind!

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Messenger

Matthew 1:24: Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

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Messenger-Guardian

Matthew 2: 13: And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

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Guardian

Matthew 4:11: Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

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Angels help Jesus recover from the 40 days of tempting by Satan.

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Terminator

Matthew 16:27: For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

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Guardian

Matthew 18:10: Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Beware child-abusers, pedophiles, and all manner of persons who are guilty of mentally, sexually, and physically hurting children. You may be able to escape the reach of the law in this life but you don't want to tangle with an angry guardian angel! And remember, there is no statute of limitation in eternity!

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Servant

Matthew 24:31: And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

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Messenger

Matthew 24:36: But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

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Terminator

Matthew 25:31: When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

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Terminator

Matthew 26:53: Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

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The Jews and Romans didn't execute Jesus. He voluntarily surrendered himself to be sacrificed as the Lamb of God. See Rev. 20:1

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Terminator-Messenger

Matthew 28:2: And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

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What a magnificent assignment!

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Messenger

Matthew 28:5-6: And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

=====

Terminator

Mark 8:38: Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

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Messenger

Mark 13:32: But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

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Messenger

Luke 1:19: And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

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The father of John the Baptist is learning he's about to become a father in his old age.

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Messenger

Luke 1:26: And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, **27** To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgins name was Mary. **28** And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. **29** And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. **30** And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

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Gabriel is a busy (and important) angel!

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Messenger

Luke 2:9: And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. **10** And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

=====

Messenger

Luke 2:13: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, **14** Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

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Messenger

Luke 2:15: And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

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Servant

Luke 15:10: Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

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Servant

Luke 16:22: And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

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Guardian; Servant

Luke 22:43: And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

=====

Jesus has just told His father that he is willing to complete the Plan of Salvation. The spiritual stress of contemplating the burden of the guilt of the whole world is enormous. and He needs spiritual and physical assistance. He gets this help from a Servant angel.

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Messenger

Luke 24:6: He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

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Servant

John 1:51: And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

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Terminator-Messenger

John 20:12: And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

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Terminator

Acts 5:19: But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

=====

The evangelism and healing of Peter and the apostles is interrupted by a jail term ordered by the church leaders, but an angel restores the work they are doing.

Messenger

Acts 8:26: And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

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Messenger

Acts 10:7: And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household

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Guardian

Acts 12:7: And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

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Terminator

Acts 12:23: And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

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King Herod accepts the praise of the people instead of giving it to God.

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Guardian

Acts 27:23: For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

=====

Servant

Romans 8:38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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The Apostle Paul's famous testimony.

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Servant

1 Corinthians 4:9: For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

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Servant

1 Corinthians 6:3: Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

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Servant

1 Corinthians 13:1: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

=====

Terminator

2 Thessalonians 1:7: And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

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Servant

1 Timothy 3:16: And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

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Guardian

Hebrews 1:14: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

=====

Servant

Hebrews 2:9: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

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Servant

Hebrews 2:16: For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

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Servant

Hebrews 13:2: Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

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Servant

1 Peter 3:22: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

=====

Messenger

Revelation 1:1: The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

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Servant

Revelation 5:2: And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

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Servant

Revelation 5:11: And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

=====

Terminator

Revelation 7:1: And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

=====

This is one of the many references to angels as Terminators in the book of Revelation.

=====

Terminator

Revelation 12:7: And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

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Some Bible scholars believe this war in Heaven caused demons to come into existence as the "fallen angels".

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Terminator

Revelation 20:1: And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more,

=====

Messenger-Terminator

Revelation 21:9: And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lambs wife.

=====

Servant

Revelation 21:12: And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

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The End

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