

Psalm 34:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Analysis

The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. David reveals mechanism of divine protection—angelic armies surround and deliver God's people. This provides both theological truth (how God protects) and pastoral comfort (we're not alone against enemies).

The angel of the LORD introduces mysterious figure appearing throughout Old Testament. Hebrew mal'ak YHWH (messenger/angel of YHWH) sometimes refers to ordinary angel, sometimes to theophany (appearance of God Himself). Reformed theology generally sees this as pre-incarnate appearances of Christ—the Son making Himself visible before Bethlehem. This angel appeared to Abraham (Genesis 22:11-18), Moses (Exodus 3:2), Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15), Gideon (Judges 6:11-24). He carries divine authority, speaks as God, receives worship.

Encampeth round about (Hebrew chanah—encamp, pitch tent, settle down) uses military terminology. As army encamps around stronghold to defend it, angel of LORD encamps around God's people. Round about (sabib) means completely surrounding, no gaps, comprehensive protection. This isn't occasional angelic visit but permanent positioning. Them that fear him identifies protected ones. Those in covenant relationship with God (characterized by fear—reverent awe) receive this protection. Not universal providence but particular care for His own.

And delivereth them (chalats—deliver, rescue, equip for war) completes promise. Encamping provides defensive protection; delivering includes offensive rescue.

Angel doesn't merely prevent harm; he actively extracts God's people from dangers. Second Kings 19:35 illustrates: angel of LORD struck 185,000 Assyrian troops besieging Jerusalem in one night. Psalm 91:11-12 promises: He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.

This provides profound comfort. Believers aren't alone against spiritual enemies. Invisible armies defend us. Elisha's servant saw horses and chariots of fire surrounding them (2 Kings 6:17). We may seem vulnerable, but angel of LORD encamps around us. All hell may assault, but we're better defended than appears.

Historical Context

Angel of LORD appears throughout Israel's history. Led them through wilderness as pillar (Exodus 14:19, 23:20-23). Delivered Hagar (Genesis 16:7-14). Stopped Abraham's knife (Genesis 22:11-12). Wrestled Jacob (Genesis 32:24-30, identified as God in 32:30). Called Moses at burning bush (Exodus 3:2). These weren't mere messengers but divine manifestations.

Christian interpretation sees these as Christophanies—pre-incarnate appearances of Christ, the eternal Son. This explains how angel speaks as God yet is distinct from Father. Identifies how people saw God yet lived (God is spirit; no one has seen Father except through Son). Links Old Testament faith to New Testament revelation—Israel trusted Christ before incarnation through angel of LORD appearances. Same Savior operated in both testaments.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does knowing that angel of LORD encamps round about you affect your response to threats and fears?
2. What does it mean that this protection surrounds them that fear him—is this universal providence or particular grace?
3. In what ways does angel of LORD as pre-incarnate Christ deepen your understanding of Jesus' deity and eternal existence?
4. How can you cultivate awareness of angelic protection without becoming superstitious or presumptuous?
5. What biblical instances of angelic deliverance most encourage your faith when facing overwhelming odds?

Interlinear Text

יְמִלְאָם: לִיכְאָה יְהִי הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּיַבְעָל אֶלְמָלָא הַמֶּלֶךְ יְמִלְאָם:
encampeth The angel of the LORD round about them that fear him and delivereth
H2583 H4397 H3068 H5439 H3373 H2502

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 91:11 (Parallel theme): For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Daniel 6:22 (Parallel theme): 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.

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

2 Kings 19:35 (References Lord): 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.

2 Kings 6:17 (References Lord): And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Matthew 18:10 (Parallel theme): 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.

Zechariah 9:8 (Parallel theme): And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

Luke 16:22 (Parallel theme): 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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