

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday September 7, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



## SURROUNDED BY THE ENEMY *2 Kings 6:8-23*

*“This is how I fight my battles. Just when you think you're lost, it may look like I'm surrounded, but I'm surrounded by You! It may look like I'm surrounded, but I'm surrounded by You.” -Michael W. Smith, “Surrounded”*

We have been in our study on the life of Elisha for a while now, and we have been reminding ourselves each week of some of the foundational information about Elisha and his call to the ministry that may help us frame his life and how/why God used him. There are characteristics of Elisha's life that have already begun to emerge in our study that we've been seeing each week. See if you can fill in the blanks below to be reminded of some of the important background facts concerning Elisha's life, and then under each you will find a multiple-choice question followed by possible responses. Check the response that you think best answer the questions based on our understanding of Elisha from our study.

**5 Important Background Facts About Elisha to Remember:** *See if you can fill in the blanks of the following background fact in Elisha's life.*

1. Elisha's name means “God is Salvation”

*The name Elisha means “God is Salvation.” This may give us an idea of the purpose of His ministry (v.19)*

*What is the important significance of the meaning of Elisha's name? (check one)*

- [ ] It was the name given to Elisha by Elijah, when Elisha was called to the ministry*
- [ ] It communicates the purpose, focus and main message of Elisha's ministry*
- [ ] It reveals a truth previously unknown to God's People, Israel*
- [ ] It really has no meaning, it was just Elisha's name, given by his parents*
- [ ] It signified that Elisha was saved at birth*

2. Before becoming a prophet, Elisha's occupation was farming

*Elisha's father's name was Shaphat, and was farmer in the area of Abel-Meholah. Remember that Elisha, himself, was a farmer himself following in his father's footsteps when God called Him - "...And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place."*

**Why was Elisha's background and previous occupation significant? (check one)**

- ☐ It gave him a reliable occupation to fall back on and support his ministry
- ☐ It was a reminder of his humble beginnings and where he came from
- ☐ His occupation was who he was and that would never leave him
- ☐ It was a similar reminder of his ministry, sowing the seeds of salvation
- ☐ It made Elisha choose between his parents (Shaphat) and God

**3. Elisha followed in the footsteps of the prophet** Elijah

*Elisha became an obedient disciple and understudy for the Prophet Elijah and his powerful prophetic ministry. He faithfully and obediently served Elijah until Elijah's ascension to heaven in a whirlwind. And when the mantle of Elijah fell to Elisha, he picked it up and followed God in obedience for the rest of his life. And remember Elisha's call to ministry was from God not man, and was issued through the Prophet Elijah (v.19). An important note here is that Elijah didn't call Elisha, God did. Elijah, throughout his ministry was simply called to be the messenger of God, and he did so obediently. and no less here was Elijah the messenger to Elisha of God's call on his life.*

**In what way was Elisha following in his predecessor's footsteps symbolized? (check one)**

- ☐ It was symbolized by Elisha helping Elijah into the chariot of fire that carried him to heaven
- ☐ It was symbolized by fire falling from heaven to consume the sacrifice
- ☐ It was symbolized by Elisha's baptism in the Jordan River by his predecessor
- ☐ It was symbolized by God's audible voice to the sons of the prophets
- ☐ It was symbolized by the prophet's cloak (mantle) falling from his predecessor to Elisha

**4. Elisha's ministry was to the northern kingdom of** Israel

*Like the prophet Elijah, Elisha's ministry was to the northern divided kingdom of Israel and his ministry lasted there for about 60 years. He ministered in many of the same towns and area that his predecessor, Elijah, had.*

**What was the main reason God called Elisha to minister to this area? (check one)**

- ☐ Because His people had turned their back on God to worship a false god
- ☐ Because His people in this area were so poor and helpless they needed God
- ☐ Because famine had so affected this area
- ☐ Because God felt that Elisha's ministry would find great success and wealth
- ☐ Because the schools for the prophets were there and He need Elisha to teach them

**5. Elisha is primarily known as the prophet of** miracles

*One more important fact about Elisha's life that might be of interest to you and that set's him apart from other prophets in the Old Testament... Elisha was incredibly blessed by God. He did more miracles in the Old Testament than anyone except Moses.*

***How did this particular area of Elisha's ministry support the purpose of his prophetic ministry? (check one)***

- [ ] It created a great spectacle that drew many people so he could preach to them***
- [ ] It made Elisha famous to the people of Israel so that they respected him more***
- [ ] It authenticated that he was God's prophet and his message of salvation***
- [ ] It made Israel a magical place***
- [ ] It proved that God was God and that Baal was not god***

*<sup>8</sup> Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, 'My camp will be in such and such a place.' <sup>9</sup> And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, 'Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.' <sup>10</sup> Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. <sup>11</sup> Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, 'Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?' <sup>12</sup> And one of his servants said, 'None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.' <sup>13</sup> So he said, 'Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him.' And it was told him, saying, 'Surely he is in Dothan.' <sup>14</sup> Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. <sup>15</sup> And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?' <sup>16</sup> So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, and said, 'LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. <sup>18</sup> So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, 'Strike this people, I pray, with blindness.' And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. <sup>19</sup> Now Elisha said to them, 'This is not the way, nor is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek.' But he led them to Samaria. <sup>20</sup> So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, 'LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.' And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria! <sup>21</sup> Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, 'My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?' <sup>22</sup> But he answered, 'You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.' <sup>23</sup> Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.' -2 Kings 6:8-23 (NKJV)*



<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; <sup>18</sup> praying always

*with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saint.” -Ephesians 6:10-18 (NKJV)*

When we first become a Christian, we probably don't hear much of anything about spiritual warfare. We just want Jesus. We didn't ask for any war. And we're honest, the thought of spiritual warfare, the devil, demons and such likely scared us. Talk of an enemy that wanted to kill, steal, and destroy us wasn't something we wanted to think about at all.

Interestingly enough, the enemy doesn't want us thinking about it either. That way we would be an easy target for his schemes and tricks and unprepared for the plans he had to harm us, and debilitate us as a Christian. As we grow in Christ and study His Word, we discover that spiritual warfare is a very real and pressing danger. It's real!

Spiritual warfare involves at least three things we need to be aware of..

### **3 Things Spiritual Warfare Involves:**

- (1) Spiritual warfare involves the attempts of Satan to steal from believers what is theirs in Christ** – Their joy, their peace, their hope, their faith... to fill their lives with doubt, and despair.
- (2) Spiritual warfare involves Satan's attempt to kill a believer's relationship with God** – To get our eyes off of God and the promises of God, His Word and the things of God and onto other things... the things of the world, the flesh and the devil. The enemy desire nothing more than to drive a wedge between us and God any way he can.
- (3) Spiritual warfare involves the enemies attempt to destroy the abundant life given to believers by Christ** – To keep us in a state of defeat, to keep us fighting back on our heels, defeated, filled with fear, and doubt. Anything to steal our joy and keep us from experience the full and meaningful life in Christ that Jesus desire us to experience and life in.

Sounds like a lot, I know, but as a believer, you have everything you need to be victorious over this already defeated enemy.

If you're not familiar with spiritual warfare and need to learn more about it [and you do lest you be defeated in a fight you aren't even fighting], here are ten things to know about spiritual battle and how the enemy attacks.

### **Ten things You Need to Know About Spiritual Warfare:**

- (1) It's going to happen** - You can choose to ignore it. You can act like it's not real. You can think it won't happen to you. But none of that will change the fact that spiritual warfare happens to all believers. If you are a Christian, you are a target. **1 Peter 5:8** tells us, *“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”* (1 Peter 5:8 ESV) The enemy would love for you to ignore his plans to destroy you. Then you'd forget knowing and using the powerful



gifts that are yours in Christ to fight back. So the first thing all believers need to know about spiritual warfare is that it's real. But there is no need to fear because . . .

- (2) **You have power** - God has not left us unarmed. He has instead equipped us with every weapon necessary for victorious living in Christ. **Ephesians 6** tells us to, *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."* (Ephesians 6:11 ESV) Whatever the enemy throws at you, you are protected with the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet fitted with the readiness of the Gospel, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:10-20). God has graciously given us everything we need to withstand attacks from the enemy. But we're not only empowered to protect ourselves. God has also empowered us to fight back with the sword of the Spirit.
- (3) **God's Word is your greatest weapon** – The sword of the Spirit, meaning the word of God, is our greatest weapon against the enemy. Each time the enemy tried to tempt Jesus in **Matthew 4:1-11** Jesus fought back with the word of God. And the same victory that is Jesus' is also ours because we have access to that same Word. The enemy's greatest attacks always involve getting us to believe a lie. But if we already know the truth, we can't be deceived. God's word is the truth. Knowing the Bible is not only for pastors and theologians. It's for you and me. It's for everyday believers fighting for the abundant life that is rightfully ours in Christ. That Bible on your nightstand or Bible app on your phone has way more power than we give it credit. If we want to live victorious in the face of spiritual warfare, we better open our bibles.
- (4) **The enemy's primary goal is to distance you from God** - Many think the enemy's goal is to hurt us by making life uncomfortable or painful. **The truth is he doesn't care how uncomfortable we are. His primary goal is to distance us from God.** If that looks like tempting us with good things to keep our focus off Christ, then that's precisely what he'll do. The enemy doesn't always attract us with bad things. Sometimes, many times, he uses the good and comfortable in this world to distance us from God. Because the farther away we are from God, the less power we have over spiritual warfare.
- (5) **You are already victorious in Christ** – I believe this is true... we fight from a place of victory. Christ's victory on the cross was also our victory. Jesus defeated the enemy on Calvary. He was defeated then, and he is still defeated now. There is no need to fear an already defeated enemy. He may try to puff himself up to scare you, but always remember these powerful words of **John 4:4**, *"Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."* (1 John 4:4 ESV) I've just listed five things you need to know about spiritual warfare. Now, I want to share five ways the enemy attacks...
- (6) **You are more prone to attack when you are tried or worn down** - If there's one thing I know about the enemy, it's that he does not fight fair. If you're down, he will kick you. Whether you had to work long hours, were up late with the baby, or just got over a cold you're more vulnerable for attack when you are physically worn and tired. Most times you may not be able to do anything about this, but simply being aware of your vulnerability helps tremendously. Then the attacks won't seem to come out of nowhere.

You know exactly where they are coming from and can send up a quick prayer for strength and protection. In our weakness, we can rely on God's strength. The enemy has no chance of winning when up against the power of God.

- (7) **You are more prone to attack when you're distracted** – If the enemy can distract you with drama, social media, or busyness then he will. Distraction doesn't have to be sinful. They just have to be enough to get your focus off God, which we've already addressed as the enemy's primary goal. This is his goal because he knows if he can disconnect you from God, he's disconnecting you from your power to defeat him.
- (8) **You're more prone to attack when you're in sin** – God gives us guidance for living in the His Word. These rules are not set in place just for the sake of it, or so God can show off His rule over us. God has set these principles for living in place to protect us. They keep us in alignment with his plan and will for our lives. Following God does not mean we will never get hurt but when we are out of His will, we willingly open ourselves up for attack.
- (9) **You're prone to attack when you are alone or isolated** – The enemy wants to isolate you because that's when you are incredibly vulnerable. He will plant lies in your head to convince you that you don't need anyone or that no one can be trusted. Don't fall for this trick. We were made for community (church), and there is power in numbers. We are called to carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), and the Bible tells us that it's the Church that will be victorious in the end (Matthew 16:18).
- (10) **You are more prone to attack when you're discouraged** - Throughout scripture, God tells His people to be courageous. He does so because living for God takes courage. Knowing this, the enemy will do everything in his power to discourage us. He'll plant seeds of doubt, insecurity, and guilt to paralyze us with fear. But God has not given us a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7). Jesus tells us we can be encouraged because He has already overcome the world. *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33 NIV)

## INTRODUCTION

This section calls our attention to the hostilities that Israel was experiencing with the king of Aram (Syria). The principle source of these hostilities continued in the form of invading bands or plundering parties who would make border raids against the Jews (cf. 6:23) rather than an invasion of an organized Syrian army as mentioned in 2 Kings 6:24, which we will look at next week.

## ELISHA DEFEATS THE PLANS OF THE SYRIANS (2 Kings 6:8-14)

*"<sup>8</sup> Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, 'My camp will be in such and such a place.' <sup>9</sup> And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, 'Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.' <sup>10</sup> Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. <sup>11</sup> Therefore the*

*heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, 'Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?' <sup>12</sup> And one of his servants said, 'None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.' <sup>13</sup> So he said, 'Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him.' And it was told him, saying, 'Surely he is in Dothan.' <sup>14</sup> Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city."*

Each time the Syrians would make a raid into Israel their plans were spoiled through the revelation given by God to Elisha. Elisha would inform the king of Israel who would then take precautions against their invasions. This naturally enraged the heart of the king of Aram (Syria) who first thought that he had an informer among his troops (vs. 11). He was then told of Elisha's ability as a prophet of Israel to know of the king's plans, even while he spoke of them in secret (vs. 12).

Obviously, the king of Aram knew that if his plans were to be successful, he would have to do away with Elisha. This meant the prophet became the object of his attack. The king inquired of Elisha's location, who was at that time staying in Dothan. Upon learning of this, he immediately sent an entire army to surround the city and take the prophet with the obvious intention of putting him to death. What can we learn from this by way of application?

### **3 Key Pictures from the King of Aram and His Behavior Toward Elisha:**

**(1) The picture of Satan's attacks** - In this scenario we have an illustration of how Satan, through his various avenues and strategies, is ever seeking ways to attack the people of God as a whole, but especially His teachers of the Word by which they are able to warn and see people (both believers and unbelievers) delivered from Satan's attacks and plans (Eph. 2:1f; 6:10f; 2 Cor. 2:11; 2 Tim. 2:23-26; 1 Pet. 5:8).

**(2) The picture of God's omniscience** - God is "all knowing"... He knows everything. Nothing escapes His eye. *How does this make you feel as a believer, especially in regard to the reality of spiritual warfare and its effects on us?* This story also gives us a good illustration of the omniscience of God Who knows the plans of the enemy and Who has provided special revelation for us that we might be informed to protect ourselves from Satan's attacks through the full armor that comes to us in Christ (Eph. 6:10-18).

**(3) The picture of our responsibility** - If, when we are warned, we do not appropriate God's provision and armor against Satan's devices, we have no one to blame but ourselves. Unfortunately, though the king of Israel was quick to listen to the warnings regarding the physical attacks of the Syrians, he was slow to heed the warnings of Elisha regarding his sin and refusal to truly follow the Lord. But is this not typical? People are often ready to heed the counsel of medical doctors in reference to problems of health, but slow to listen the counsel of the Word of God.



## ELISHA MINISTERS TO HIS ATTENDANT (2 Kings 6:15-17)

*“<sup>15</sup> And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’ <sup>16</sup> So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”*

Of course, God’s people need two things if they are going to appropriate God’s resources against the enemy and experience God’s deliverance.

### **2 Things We Must Have to Appropriate God’s Help for our Deliverance:**

- (1) **Eyes to see** - We need insight or illumination, eyes to see the mighty power and provision of God.
- (2) **A heart to believe** - We must also believe God and put on their God-given armor that they might take a stand against Satan and his forces.

In **verses 15-23** we have an illustration of both.

### **THE BELIEVER...**

In verse 15, Elisha’s attendant went out seemingly oblivious to both the fact of the enemy and of God’s provision. ***Are we ever like this... we go about our business oblivious to the fact of the enemy and God’s provision? Why is this dangerous? What happens when we do this?*** Like for a lot of Christians, the new day simply meant business as usual. He was going to take care of his chores and had no mind or concern for the spiritual battle around him, which meant he was also completely unprepared for what he faced.

As Christians (believers), we can be the same way...

- Too often we don’t take our spiritual warfare seriously.
- We act as though Satan and his kingdom were asleep or posed no problem to us.
- We go out unprepared spiritually.
- Consequently, when faced with some form of spiritual warfare, like Elisha’s attendant was, our response is consternation, *“Alas, my master! What shall we do?”*
- At least the attendant had the good sense to seek the counsel of the prophet, which is more than we can say for a lot of believers who often turn to the world for their advice (Psalm 1:1, *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.”*)
- How quick we are to listen to the advice of the world rather than to meditate on the Word.

## THE MAN OF GOD (ELISHA)...

By contrast, we see Elisha who surely already knew of the surrounding armies. This was no surprise to him, but more importantly, he was focused on God's surrounding armies who were greater in strength and numbers. By Elisha's time, the Psalms of David had been written, and whether he had them available or not, certainly he was thinking of the truth of Psalm 27:1-3 and 3:6.

- **Psalm 27:1-3** - *"<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? <sup>2</sup> When the wicked came against me To eat<sup>d</sup> up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell. <sup>3</sup> Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, In this I will be confident."*
- **Psalm 3:6** – *"I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me round about."*

*What do you see in these verses that ought to change our perspective in the midst of the battles we face, the struggles, the spiritual warfare we face?*

Notice, in all of this, Elisha was calm, relaxed, and confident, not in himself, of course, but in His God. He not only saw the problem, but he saw the solution and knew the God of the solution.

Like Hezekiah who would later face the armies of Assyria, Elisha sought to convey the same truth that Hezekiah communicated to his people in 2 Chronicles 32:7-8. Listen to these words from 2 Chronicles 32:7-8... this is so good, *"<sup>7</sup>Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude which is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. <sup>8</sup>With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah."*

*What is he telling us? What is our hope and helps according to 2 Chronicles 32:7-8? How does this help us today? What does this say to us about conquering fear?*

Notice our passage in 2 Kings 6:16-17... *"<sup>16</sup>So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' <sup>17</sup>And Elisha prayed, and said, 'LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."* Notice his words, "Do not fear..." He not only tells us here not to fear, but he really give us help... tells us how to not be held captive to fear.

In **verses 16-17** of our passage we learn about the three ways Elisha dealt with his servant's fear

### **3 Ways Elisha Dealt with His Servant's Fear:**

- (1) By a demonstration of **personal concern** through a word of encouragement - *"Do not fear"*
- (2) By **biblical instruction** designed to give a reason why he should not fear - *"for those who are with us are more than those who are with them"*
- (3) By **prayer** for the servant's illumination - *"Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.'"*

Wow! The lessons here are so practical and powerful. How can we minister to the fears of people? Just like this!

### **How we can minister to the fears of others?:**

- (1) Show personal concern and involvement –
- (2) Provide biblical help and instruction –
- (3) Pray and go to the Lord in personal dependence on Him to illuminate them – Pray specifically for God to illuminate them to His resources and sufficiency, for unless the Lord prospers our ministry, our work is futile (cf. 1 Cor. 3:7).

**Observation:** *Our tendency, however, is to neglect one or the other of these important ingredients. Either we are impersonal and cold in our teaching and relationships with people, or we are warm and personable, but we fail to communicate God's truth, or because we are trusting in our personality or skill as a teacher, we fail to pray. We so need to grasp the balance here.*

God uses people, God uses His Word, but even though God often uses His Word because it is alive and powerful in spite of us, it is prayer that gives power to our personal love and teaching. This is dramatically seen in the life of Paul. Just compare the prayers of Paul in...

- **Ephesians 1:15-23**, *"<sup>5</sup> Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup> the eyes of your <sup>[a]</sup> understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*
- **Ephesians 3:16-21**, *"<sup>16</sup> (I pray...) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup> that*

Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— <sup>19</sup> to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, <sup>21</sup> to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

- **Philippians 1:9-11**, “<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”
- **Colossians 1:9-12**, “<sup>9</sup> For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.”

### **ELISHA IS DELIVERED FROM THE SYRIANS (2 Kings 6:18-23)**

“<sup>18</sup> So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, ‘Strike this people, I pray, with blindness.’ And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. <sup>19</sup> Now Elisha said to them, ‘This is not the way, nor is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek.’ But he led them to Samaria. <sup>20</sup> So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, ‘LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.’ And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria! <sup>21</sup> Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, ‘My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?’ <sup>22</sup> But he answered, ‘You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.’ <sup>23</sup> Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.” -2 Kings 6:18-23

Though the king of Syria had sent a huge force of horses, chariots, and a large army of men to apprehend one prophet, thinking there was no way Elisha could escape, Elisha knew that all the forces of this king were merely the arm of the flesh and no match for the power of God. *Do we know this? Do we live and conduct our lives as if we know this? Give examples?*

So Elisha prayed and asked the Lord to strike his opponents with blindness so that they might not see (or perhaps recognize) the prophet. This prayer was miraculously answered

and Elisha led them into the city of Samaria and into the hands of the king of Israel where they were at his mercy.

Elisha, whose ministry so often portrays and parallels that of the Lord, brought Syria into this predicament not to kill them, but to communicate by bold demonstration the power, wisdom, and mercy of the God of Israel. What Elisha did demonstrated what he could have done... caused their destruction. But by his acts of a mercy and abundant provision he sought to convince, convict, and even shame them, but not kill them in verses 22-23, *“<sup>22</sup> But he answered, ‘You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.’ <sup>23</sup> Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.”*

The king of Israel seemed frustrated and uncertain of what to do and thought only of their destruction as a means of removing them as a menace (cf. vs. 21), but the prophet commanded the opposite--provision and release. The effect of this was an end to the marauding bands of the Arameans, though later Ben-hadad king of Aram (Syria) would lay siege to Samaria (vss. 24ff). Evidently, in view of the siege that later followed, this had little effect on Ben-hadad, but the immediate cessation of the marauding bands suggest this had some impact on some of the people of Syria. It may well illustrate the truth of 2 Corinthians 2:14-17, *“<sup>14</sup> Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. <sup>15</sup> For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? <sup>17</sup> For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.”*

Elisha's triumph here was designed to manifest the sweet aroma of God's love as a fragrance. For some it undoubtedly led to life through the witness of the power and truth that the God of Israel was the true God. But in others, it was a fragrance that led only to their eventual death as they left in the same unbelief in which they arrived. Certainly, in Elisha's actions, we see one who honestly communicated God's grace. He sought neither vengeance nor praise nor reward.

## CONCLUSION

This story reminds us that when believers are serving the Lord, especially when training others in the Word and how to teach the Word, Satan will do his best to thwart their efforts.

Elisha was the head of a growing and successful school of theology. Further, he was serving his country and God's people by the exercise of his gifts in demonstrating the power and reality of the God of Israel. This was having a powerful effect against the plans of Satan



who was seeking to promote Baal worship and a turning away from the true God... something the enemy is always eager and in pursuit of doing.

In this story we again see how Satan uses human instruments and all kinds of methods to do whatever it takes to nullify the ministry and lives of believers. **But the power of God is always greater.** In fact, he often uses these very situations to manifest that power in order to draw men to himself.

*We understand the following story was reported by a medical missionary at his home church in Michigan. We aren't sure from whom this story originated so we are unable to give credit, but it beautifully illustrates our point: While serving at a small field hospital in Africa, I traveled every two weeks by bicycle through the jungle to a nearby city for supplies. This required camping overnight half way. On one of these trips, I saw two men fighting in the city. One was seriously injured, so I treated him and witnessed to him of the Lord Jesus Christ. I then returned home without incident. Upon arriving in the city several weeks later, I was approached by the man I had treated earlier. He told me he had known that I carried money and medicine. He said, "Some friends and I followed you into the jungle knowing you would camp overnight. We waited for you to go to sleep and planned to kill you and take your money and drugs. Just as we were about to move into your campsite, we saw that you were surrounded by 26 armed guards." I laughed at this and said I was certainly all alone out in that jungle campsite. The young man pressed the point, "No, sir, I was not the only one to see the guards. My Jave friends also saw them and we all counted them. It was because of those guards that we were afraid and left you alone." At this point in the church presentation in Michigan, one of the men in the church jumped up and interrupted the missionary, and asked, "Can you tell me the exact date when this happened?" The missionary thought for a while and recalled the date. The man in the congregation told this side of the story: "On that night in Africa it was morning here. I was preparing to play golf. As I put my bag in the car, I felt the Lord leading me to pray for you. In fact, the urging was so strong that I called the men of this church together to pray for you. Will all of those men who met with me that day please stand?" The men who had met that day to pray together stood--there were 26 of them!*

### **3 Take-Aways from 2 Kings 6:8-23:**

- (1) **Take away 1: Fear can paralyze us** - The response of the servant to the hosts of Syria shows us how fear can paralyze us. Fear can keep us from serving the Lord. Fear can keep us from enjoying God's blessing and power. Fear can keep us from moving ahead with a project by giving up or running away.
- (2) **Take away 2: Seeing God's presence frees us from fear that paralyzes us** - It is also important that we see the cause of the servant's fear - Was it because he saw too much? No! **It was because he saw too little.** He only had eyes to see the problem or the danger.

Seeing the problems or the dangers is not wrong. It is wise for it shows us our need and inadequacy. The real problem was what he did not see--the hosts of God and God's divine presence which always surrounds us like a wall or a shelter in every time of storm.

- (3) **Take away 3: Patience and prayer will help others to conquer their fears** - Finally, this story teaches us the need of patience and prayer. When the servant came back to Elisha, fearful over the enemy that had surrounded them, Elisha was patient and loving. He did not respond with, "You dummy, don't you see the hosts of God? Man, get your eyes on the Lord! Trust God!" Instead, he encouraged and instructed him. He knew the servant needed spiritual illumination and understanding before he could stand fearlessly in faith.

In closing, let's look at some principles related to God's providence and protection, promises, and the principles of Scripture that we can believe and claim.

### **5 Principles of Providence and Protection We Can Count On:**

- (1) **We need to remember the truth and principle of God's presence, providence, and provision of angels who act as ministers to believers** - See Psalm 91:1-11; Hebrews 1:14 & 13:1-2. Hebrews 1:14 speaks of angels, *"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"* Who is that? Believers! And Hebrews 13:1-2 says, *"<sup>1</sup>Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup>Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."*
- (2) **No problem or danger can touch us without the divine approval and sanction of God** - For His own purposes He does allow suffering and difficulties beyond our understanding, but this is always in accord with His eternal and wise purposes and will. As an illustration, we might remember Joseph who was sold into slavery by his own brothers. The only other mention of **Dothan** is in **Genesis 37:17**. In search of his brothers Joseph followed them to Dothan where they plotted against him, captured him, and sold him into slavery. We might ask, "Where were the chariots of fire then or the hosts of the Lord?" They were there, but God's purposes for Joseph were different. There is as much if not more evidence for the hand of God on the life of Joseph through all that followed than for Elisha, yet God never appeared to Joseph and never performed special miracles through him. Rather, He allowed him to be sold into slavery, a condition in that day that could be worse than death. But Joseph had eyes of faith and, regardless of his conditions, he knew he was in the hand of God. Note Joseph's response in **Genesis 50:19-21** when finally, years later, his brothers stood fearfully before him. *"<sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?' <sup>20</sup>And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. <sup>21</sup>So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."*
- (3) **It is really not a matter of the degree of the danger one faces** - Why? Because without the protection of God, Satan would move immediately to snuff out your life and mine no matter how apparently safe we may think we are--whether driving a car or riding a

motorcycle or flying a plane or walking with both feet firmly planted on mother earth. Just a small earthquake can demonstrate that fact. **Psalm 68:19-20** are two precious verses to me. In fact, we would be wise to remember and claim these words every day for we may be as blind as the servant of Elisha to what is really going on around us... **Psalm 68:19-20** says, *"<sup>19</sup>Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God who is our salvation.[Selah.] <sup>20</sup>God is to us a God of deliverances; And to God the Lord belong escapes from death."*

- (4) **We are never free to tempt the Lord by presuming on His grace by acting carelessly or foolishly** - We must act with caution and care in whatever we do. Therefore, I won't step in front of a eighteen wheeler nor throw myself down from a tall building and expect God to deliver me. When I ride in a car, I will buckle up, not only because it's the law, but because it is wise. When riding a motorcycle (don't do that, but if you do), wear a helmet, watch the other guy, and seek to drive safely. Our Lord was faced with this very temptation by the Devil in **Matthew 4:5-7**, *"<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup>and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"<sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* Faith believes God's promises, but it does not presume upon the Lord by not claiming His promises nor test the Lord by not taking normal precautions.
- (5) **God has promised to be with us, to give His angels charge over us** - Yet, by God's sovereign will and plan and for purposes of His own, He may allow disaster and suffering as He did with Joseph and Job and Peter and Paul. But such is never the result of the degree of danger, unless we test God by presuming upon Him by acting carelessly. Even then, God may choose to overrule. What we need are eyes of faith to see and believe God for the fact of the dangers Satan and his hosts may bring against our lives. But we also need eyes of faith to believe God for the fact of His divine presence, sovereign and all-wise plan, and His omnipotent provision.