

THE ANGEL CHARIOTS

BIBLE TEXT : II Kings 6:8-23;

LESSON 315 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Kings 6:8-23

⁸ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be* my camp.

⁹ And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

¹⁰ And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

¹¹ Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?

¹² And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

¹³ And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan.

¹⁴ Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

¹⁵ And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

¹⁶ And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

The Lord's Battle

The nation of Israel was once more worshiping the true God; and the people, even the king of Israel, were listening to Elisha, the prophet of God. Elisha had proved himself a great blessing to the people, walking among them and doing good; healing the sick, helping the distressed, and even raising the dead.

There came a time when the king of Syria, Ben-hadad, tried to conquer Israel again. Sometimes God had permitted the Syrians to overrun the land of Israel when the Israelites were worshiping idols; but now that they were again listening to the prophet of God, He was ready to fight their battles for them.

The king of Syria tried to ambush the Israelites army, but none of the Israelites would come near where the Syrians were hiding. They tried one location after another, but the Israelites always avoided the spot of the ambush. Ben-hadad decided there must be a traitor in his camp who was warning the Israelites of the danger.

Someone was telling the king of Israel Ben-hadad's plans and manoeuvres, but it was not a Syrian traitor. God was showing it to Elisha, and Elisha was telling the king. One of Ben-hadad's servant told him: "Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." God can reveal the secrets that we may think no one knows. Jesus said: "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" (Matthew 10:26).

Ben-hadad was going to learn through this invasion that God was fighting for Israel, and it was useless for them to try to fight against God. If God be for us, who can be against us?

An Army After a Prophet

The Syrians' first step was to try to destroy the prophet of God who was giving away their secrets. Many people through the ages have tried to destroy the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and kill His great leaders. By severe persecution they have tried to force people to deny their faith. The Gospel, however, has gone on with increasing power. It seems that those who have been most cruelly persecuted have held most firmly to the truths of the Word of God. And many sincere believers have followed the ridiculed and despised preachers of righteousness.

Pioneer missionaries who have gone to heathen lands have sometimes lost their lives in their effort to preach Christ, but it has been truly said, "The blood of the martyr is the seed of the church." Where some have died, others have followed and established the truth of the Bible.

Ben-hadad sent a whole army to Dothan to find Elisha – a whole army against one man. It certainly looked like an uneven fight. But God had promised: "One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you" (Joshua 23:10). This was the Lord's battle, and He was going to give the victory to one man.

A Frightened Servant

One morning early, the servant of Elisha went out of their

they that *be* with them.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

¹⁹ And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, neither *is* this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

²⁰ And it came to pass, when they were come into 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, behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria.

²¹ And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite *them*? shall I smite *them*?

²² And he answered, Thou shalt not smite *them*: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

²³ And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

house and was horrified to see the whole army of Syria camped around the city. There were enemy horses and chariots everywhere. This great host had come to capture Elisha. The frightened servant cried: "Alas, my master! How shall we do?"

Was Elisha frightened? Was he afraid of the things that man could do to him? Elisha had a calm confidence in the God he served. Was not his God equal to any situation? The God he worshiped was the God of the hills and the valleys.

Elisha had learned that "the angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7). He knew that God had seen the Syrian army come to Dothan, for "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chronicles 16:9). Elisha had lived to please God, so now in his hour of need he had confidence that God would take care of him. In fact, Elisha lived so near to God that his spiritual vision could see those angel chariots that were camped around him. He prayed that God would open the eyes of his servant so he, too, could see. Imagine the surprise of the young man when God showed him that the hills were full of horses and chariots of fire, angel chariots, standing by to defend the man of God.

David had often spoken of the Lord fighting his battles for him. Why should he worry when the battle was the Lord's? One time he said: "Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: . . . Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them" (Psalm 35:4, 5).

Think how much worry and effort we could save ourselves if we would always let the Lord solve our problems. Of course, we must let God work in His way. He knows better than we do what we need and what is good for us. And how happy we are when we let Him have His way! As we yield, we conquer.

Two Kinds of Chariots

Consider those two kinds of chariots. Those of the Syrians could be seen by man. They were made of strong material like iron and wood. The horses of the Syrians were powerful and of great beauty. These were the things that made man feel strong. The horses and chariots of God could not be seen. But which of the two was the more powerful? In which would you want to put your trust, the chariots of man, which you could see, or the chariots of God, which you could not see?

Many people today are afraid to trust God because they cannot see Him. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:18). The houses we live in, the streets we walk on, the food we eat, even the bodies in which our spirit dwells, are going to pass away. These are the things we see, but they will not last.

Then think of the hope we have of eternal life. Our souls have been saved by a process that we could not see with our eyes, but we know very definitely when it happened. We became new creatures in Christ, and we know that eternal life has begun in us. Eternal life means that we will live forever, as long as God lives. It will never end. Is that not more real than the things we see which will soon vanish? "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17).

Riding on Clouds

When we become fearful and wonder if we can conquer the enemy of our souls, let us remember that "there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky" (Deuteronomy 33:26). We are the

children of His care. He wants us to ride with Him. Isaiah said: "The LORD rideth upon a swift cloud" (Isaiah 19:1). Of course, this is all picture language, but God wants to show us that the things of this life are not very important. If we are walking and talking with God, casting all our cares upon Him, we are not going to let the burdens of this life cast us down. "The eagle that soars in the air does not worry about how to cross rivers."

The life of surrender to the will of God is a happy life. David prayed, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).

Loving Your Enemies

When the Syrian army came down to meet Elisha, he was ready for them. He did not fight them with a sword; he did not call upon the chariots of God to destroy the Syrians. Elisha was not a prophet of judgment. He showed kindness, even to his enemies. He has been spoken of as a type of Christ. Jesus said when He was on earth that it was not then the time of judgment, so He merely withdrew from those who opposed Him. He taught His followers: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Elisha prayed that God would blind the Syrian army; and then he led them to the capital city, Samaria, and asked God to again open their eyes. There he stood before them, the very man they were looking for. But they were now absolutely in his power, surrounded by Israelites. The king of Israel wanted to destroy them right away, but Elisha answered quickly: "Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." What love for his enemies he showed! It has become international law in our civilization not to mistreat prisoners of war; but Elisha went even farther, and sent the Syrian army back to their homes.

The Syrians appreciated the kindness showed them, and their invasions into Israel were stopped for a time.

QUESTIONS

1. Who invaded Israel?
2. How did they plan their attacks?
3. Why did their plans fail?
4. Who was fighting for Israel?
5. Who was sent to capture Elisha?
6. Why was Elisha not afraid?
7. What defence has God promised us in time of trouble?
8. How are we to treat our enemies?