

Life Lesson 87
Elisha and the Army of Fire
Text: II Kings 6:8-23

Introduction

“Which one of you is a spy?” the king of Syria demanded. “One of you must be a traitor. Every time we plan a surprise attack on the Israelites we find they know all about it and are ready for us when we arrive. Who is sneaking our secrets to the king of Israel?”

“None of us are spies,” his servants insisted. “It’s the prophet Elisha. He tells the king the things you talk about in your secret meetings.”

The Story

It was true. God told Elisha the things the Syrians were planning. Elisha sent a message to King Jehoram. The king was able to save himself and his people from many ambushes and surprise attacks because of Elisha’s information.

“Go find this prophet and bring him here to me,” the king ordered.

The soldiers with their chariots and horses came by night and surrounded the city of Dothan where Elisha was staying. When Elisha’s servant went out early the next morning, he was horrified to see a whole army encamped around the city.

“Alas, master, what shall we do?” he cried as he told Elisha the terrible news.

But Elisha didn’t seem to be concerned at all.

“Don’t worry,” Elisha said. “There are more on our side than there are on theirs.”

Elisha prayed and asked the Lord to open the servant’s eyes so that he could see what Elisha saw.

The Lord did as Elisha had asked. The young man looked out and suddenly saw another, larger host of soldiers around the city. They had horses and chariots of fire. They were the angels God sent to protect His people. No wonder Elisha wasn’t worried! Elisha had another request.

“Lord, please smite these people with blindness,” he prayed.

God answered Elisha's prayer and caused blindness to fall upon the Syrian soldiers.

"You are in the wrong place," Elisha told the soldiers. "Follow me. I'll show you the man you seek."

That was a joke on the Syrians. Elisha was the man they were seeking! Elisha led them right in to the capital city where the king and the Israelite army were stationed.

King Jehoram could hardly believe his eyes. All those enemy soldiers delivered right to his doorstep.

"What shall we do with them?" he asked Elisha. "Shall we kill them?"

Elisha knew that killing this group of soldiers would only make the Syrians angry. They would send others and perhaps start a full-scale war.

"Don't kill them," Elisha replied. "Give them food and drink and send them back to their land."

The king must have been perplexed by these strange instructions, but he did it. He gave them a great feast and sent them on their way back to Syria. To share a meal together was a symbol of peace and friendship. After eating the feast prepared by the Israelites, they couldn't keep on attacking them. The raids into Israelite villages stopped.

The Life Lesson

The Syrian forces looked frightening, but God had them in His hand. He protected His people and delivered them.

Sometimes we are like Elisha's helper. We get worried or scared looking at problems. We should remember that God is far greater and more powerful than any problem or scary situation. Even though we can't see them, God's angels are there to watch over us.

I hope you remember that if you are on the Lord's side, you need not fear any amount of trouble. There are more with you than there are against you.

Review Questions

Why did the Syrian king think that there was spy among his men?

Because the Israelites always knew in advance what they were going to do and were ready for them.

Who really told the king what was going to happen?

God told Elisha and Elisha sent a message to King Jehoram.

What did the Syrian king decide to do?

He sent troops of soldiers to capture Elisha.

Why was Elisha not worried about the soldiers?

He said, "There are more with us than with him."

What did Elisha's servant see when the prophet asked God to open the servant's eyes?

An army of fiery chariots around the city.

What did Elisha ask God to do?

To make the soldiers blind -- not able to recognize him.

What did Elisha tell the soldiers?

You are in the wrong place. Follow me and I'll show you where Elisha is.

Where did Elisha lead the soldiers?

Straight into the city where King Jehoram and his men were.

What did Elisha tell Jehoram to do with the Syrian soldiers?

Feed them. That meant they were friends and couldn't attack the Israelites any more.

What should we remember from this story?

When we are obeying God, we don't need to be afraid. There are more with us than with our enemies!