

**2Kings 6:1** ¶ And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.

**2Kings 6:2** Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.

**2Kings 6:3** And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

**2Kings 6:4** So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.

**2Kings 6:5** But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

**2Kings 6:6** And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither; and the iron did swim.

**2Kings 6:7** Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

At some point the sons of the prophets came to Elisha declaring that their housing was not sufficient to accommodate them all. They asked permission to go to the Jordan River and gather timber to build a new place to live. Elisha granted that permission. One of the prophets asked him to go with them, and he did.

As they were cutting down wood at the Jordan, the head of one of the men's axes fell into the water. He cried out to Elisha in despair because the tool was borrowed. Elisha asked where it had fallen. When they showed him where, he cut down a stick and threw it in at the designated place. The iron axe head floated and was retrieved.

This miracle is another testimony to the fact of God's authority over the laws of nature. Wood naturally floats. Iron in its natural state cannot float.

**2Kings 6:8** ¶ 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.

**2Kings 6:9** 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.

**2Kings 6:10** 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.

We encounter yet another time when the king of Syria goes to war against Israel. When he had established his plan of attack, Elisha sent word to the king of Israel warning him to avoid the designated place because the Syrians were waiting to attack there. The king of Israel heeded the word of Elisha and avoided danger several times.

**2Kings 6:11** 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?

**2Kings 6:12** 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.**

**2Kings 6:13 ¶ 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.**

**2Kings 6:14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.**

The king of Syria was frustrated that his plans fell through time and again. He was convinced that there was a traitor among his troops. One of his servants told the king that there was no traitor; it was the prophet Elisha that told the king of Israel his secret plans. The king sent the servant to find out where Elisha was so that he could capture him. When he was informed that the prophet was at Dothan, he sent a large number of horses and chariots to surround the city by night.

There is a verse in the Psalms that applies here: *Psalms 34:7 "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."*

**2Kings 6:15 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?**

**2Kings 6:16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.**

**2Kings 6:17 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.**

When Elisha's servant got up early the next morning, he immediately saw their situation. He ran to Elisha to find out what they should do. Elisha told the young man that they had nothing to fear because the host that protected them was greater than the host positioned against them.

Elisha proceeded to pray and asked the LORD to open the eyes of his servant so that he could see. So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man so that he could see that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha.

I liked Guzik's comment: "When a person is blind to spiritual reality, only God can open their eyes. God may do it through the words someone speaks, but the work of spiritually opening eyes is spiritual work and belongs to God alone."

This is a comforting and often forgotten truth by the followers of the LORD today. We are so focused on the physical world around us that we often lose sight of the truth that there is a spiritual world surrounding us that is full of activity both for and against us. What we see with our eyes is limited to physical vision. The invisible world that is part of our reality can only be seen as revealed by the LORD through spiritual eyes. That spiritual world is full of forces both good and evil. BUT, Praise God, the angels that work on behalf of Almighty God will always overcome the forces of evil in accordance with God's will.

*Ephesians 6:12 "For we wrestle **not against flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, **against spiritual wickedness in high places.**"*

*Hebrews 1:13–14 "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? **Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?**"*

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

*Psalms 91:1–2 & 11 "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust....For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."*

*"keep" = protect*

**2Kings 6:18** 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.

**2Kings 6:19** 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.

**2Kings 6:20** 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.

As the Syrian troops began to approach Elisha, he prayed and asked the LORD to strike them with blindness—and He did! Elisha then talked to them and informed them that they were not in the right place. He offered to take them to the man they were seeking, and he led them to Samaria.

This seems to indicate that their blindness was not of physical vision but of their understanding. Elisha was able to convince them that they were not where they were supposed to be.

Once they got to Samaria, Elisha asked the LORD to open the eyes of the Syrian troops once again. When the LORD opened their eyes, they realized that they were in Samaria, the stronghold of the king of Israel.

**2Kings 6:21** And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite *them*? shall I smite *them*?

**2Kings 6:22** 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.

**2Kings 6:23** 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.**

Amazingly, the king of Israel asked Elisha if they should kill the enemy troops. Elisha told him no; they didn't usually kill prisoners of war. He told the king to feed them and send them back to their master, and he heeded Elisha's advice.

After that, there were no more raiding parties from Syria into Israel.

This reminded me of a verse in scripture.

*Proverbs 25:21–22 “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.”*

The IVP Commentary had an interesting note re verse 21: “The title ‘father’ is used to designate the leader of a group in both Hebrew and Akkadian. Likewise a ‘son’ is therefore a member of that group. The king’s use of the title indicates his recognition of Elisha’s status and reflects his respect for the man of God.”

**2Kings 6:24 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.**

**2Kings 6:25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass’s head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver.**

Sometime later (after several months? Years?), however, Benhadad king of Syria gathered his troops together to lay siege to Samaria. It ended up causing a great famine in the city. Things got so bad that a donkey’s head sold for 80 pieces of silver and a cup of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver.

Note from IVP Commentary regarding a siege: “The whole idea of siege is to drive the population to the extremities of hunger and thirst so that they capitulate without a fight. Famine in this case is not an environmental condition, but the results of the siege when food supplies have been exhausted.”

A note from the IVP Commentary regarding dove’s dung: “...may really be pigeon manure, which has been known to be used for food in dire times, or it could refer to pods from a thorny variety of acacia, as it does occasionally in Akkadian. Whether it was being used for food or fuel, even a few ounces of it cost many months pay.”

**2Kings 6:26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.**

**2Kings 6:27 And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?**

**2Kings 6:28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow.**

**2Kings 6:29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.**

**2Kings 6:30 And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh.**

One day as the king of Israel was walking on the wall of the city, a woman called out for him to help her. The king basically said, "If the LORD doesn't help you, what do you think I can do? I have nothing to give you." Then the king asked her what her problem was.

The woman answered that she and another woman in the city had made an agreement to eat their sons. She agreed with the woman to boil her son first for them to eat. The next day, the woman refused to cook her son as they had agreed.

Adam Clarke reasons that the children must have already died for the mothers to even consider such action.

The LORD had actually declared through Moses that this type of thing would happen as a consequence of the people of Israel rejecting the LORD.

*Deuteronomy 28:52-53 "And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:"*

After hearing the woman's complaint, the king tore his clothes in distress. The people who saw what he did noticed that he was wearing sackcloth under his clothes.

**2Kings 6:31 Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.**

**2Kings 6:32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and *the king* sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: *is not* the sound of his master's feet behind him?**

**2Kings 6:33 And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?**

As people today so often do, the king blamed the LORD for what was happening. He decided to take out his anger at the LORD on Elisha, and called for God to kill him if he did not see to it that Elisha was killed that very day.

Elisha was sitting in his house with the elders of the city. The LORD had revealed to him what the king had determined. Before the king's servant could arrive to kill him, he told the elders what the king had decided to do. He then told them to make sure the door stayed shut so that the servant could not get into the house. He knew that the king would show up shortly thereafter.

As he was talking to the elders, the servant arrived with his message from the king. It basically said, "All this evil we are experiencing is the LORD's fault. I am not going to wait for him to help us any longer."

Things haven't changed. It's always interesting to me how quickly people are to blame the LORD for the bad things that happen to them, while refusing to credit or thank Him for the good things. They are also seemingly blind to their own responsibility or that such things could be a result of man's sin—of their own or of others. God granted man the ability to make his own choices. Man chose to rebel against God and cede his authority to Satan. All the evil that occurs in this world is a consequence of that choice. The comfort to the one who has placed his/her faith in the LORD is that the LORD has promised that everything He allows to happen to those that love Him, He will use for good—even though we may not be able to understand at the time how that is possible.

*Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

This is a terrible chapter break, because the narrative continues in the next chapter.