

Elisha's Double Portion (For us too!)

Lesson #5 The Focus of our Prayer Life

II Kings 6:8-23

Vs. 8-12: The Setting

Ben Hadad, the King of Aram (Syria) was at war with the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Samaria). He frequently sent out guerrillas to raid the villages in the north. But God was giving Elisha advanced knowledge of these attacks, and he passed that information onto the Israel's king.

Ben Hadad assumed that one of his people was leaking the battle plans to Israel and so he confronted his officers. They convinced him that the culprit was the prophet, Elisha and they reported that Elisha was in Dothan.

Vs. 13-14: Ben-Hadad Finds Elisha

Dothan: A city in the northern hills of Samaria. It is mentioned twice in the Bible, here and in Gen. 37:17 (the location of Joseph's kidnapping).

"Strong force:" A huge army with horses and chariots was sent to pursue the prophet. The army quietly surrounded the town at night. (Surrounding and cutting off a city was standard operating procedure. They protected their own army as they starved out the enemy).

Vs. 15-16: The Response of Elisha's Servant

This special and more personal servant can't be Gehazi (we encountered him in chapters 4-5). This servant is there to "minister" to Elisha, not just serve him.

They are in a home that has a commanding view of the valley. Early in the morning the servant arises and probably goes outside to fetch water and start a fire. He sees a massive army surrounding them.

He asks: "Oh my lord, what shall we do?"

Vs. 16-17: Elisha's Answer and God's Response

His response has three parts to it:

1. He expresses real concern and care for his companion: "Don't be afraid."
2. He gives some Biblical instruction, some facts from the scriptures: "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."
3. And he prays: "O Lord, open his eyes, so he may see."

Notice that Elisha's words echo the heart of Hezekiah's words of encouragement found in II Chron. 32:7-8.

Then the Lord opened his servant's eyes and he saw the host of heavenly angels all around Elisha and his home.

Heavenly Hosts: this is a huge angelic army. Horses and chariots were symbols of divine power (see II Kings 2:12). A word about ANGELS:

- *They are created beings (created before man)-see Gen. 2:1 and Job 38:4-7
- *Some worship and serve Yahweh-see Rev. 5:11
- *Some rebelled with Lucifer (Satan) and serve him-see Jude 6
- *There are different kinds/classes of angels- Seraphim (Isa. 6:6), Cherubim (Gen. 3:24), and archangels (Michael-see Jude 9, Daniel 10:13, 12:1 and Gabriel-see Luke 1:11-38, Daniel 8:15-26, 9:21-27).
- *They do not marry-see Matt. 22:30
- *They are assigned to believers-see Heb. 1:14 and Matt. 18:10
- *They guard believers-see Ps. 91:11

Vs. 18-23 The Enemy Advances but God Strikes them with Blindness

The Aramean army is blinded by God. And, they don't recognize the voice of Elisha who offers to lead them back to Ben-hadad. Instead, he takes them back to Samaria where the King of Israel met them. Elisha now asks the Lord to open their eyes. The king asks if he should kill them all. But Elisha suggests a different response.

He treats them with kindness. (What a different kind of response than that of Rehoboam, Solomon's son. See I Kings 12: 1-14.)

The result: When the army returned to Ben-hadad, there was a change of heart. "So, the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory."

So What?

There are 3 practical insights to glean from this incredible story:

1. **Remember, we are NEVER alone.** Not only has the Lord committed Himself to always be with us (see Matt.18:20 and 28:20), but a whole host of angels have charge over us.

Ps. 27:3 Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear, though war break out against me even then I will be confident."

2. **We need to learn how to respond in kindness.** Too often when a friend or loved one expresses their deepest fears or concerns, we respond with a quick reference to a Bible

passage as if it were a magic band aid that could be slapped on a wound and all would be better.

But consider how Elisha responded to his servant's fear: Concern, care, encouragement came first. Then the prophet shared some biblical facts or instruction that could help counter the fear and finally, he simply prayed.

So, instead of sharing platitudes or well-worn Biblical expressions, "let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Heb. 10:24-25)
Perhaps we can memorize Deut. 31:8 and share it liberally!

3. **There is a lot of blindness in this story.** Both the believer (the servant) and the unbelievers (the Aramean army) were blind to truth. In both cases, God responded to Elisha's prayer and cleared the debris from their eyes.

Perhaps we should make a special effort to pray for those who stumble around in spiritual darkness. A great way to do that is to pray the actual words of scripture back to God.

Paul recorded many of his prayers for us. See Eph. 1:15-23, Phil. 1:9-11 and Col. 1:9-12. Consider the words of Eph. 3:14-20. Ask God to help those who are blind to understand the characteristics of His great love.

Let's pray specifically that those around us have their blinders removed and they embrace the incredible love of our Heavenly Father.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you struggle with feeling lost and alone? What if the Lord removed your "blinders" and you could see the angels encamped all around? Consider Heb. 12:22. Can you join the joyful assembly?
2. When someone is in need, how do you usually respond? Is there great care and concern or just a ready verse to share? Talk about how Elisha addressed his servant.
3. Are you in the habit of praying scripture back to God? Why or why not? Perhaps you could practice a bit with Phil. 1:9-11

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