

## 2 Kings 6

Verses 1-7

**Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “Behold now, the place before you where we are living is too cramped for us.”<sup>2</sup> Please let us go to the Jordan, and let us each take from there a beam, and let us construct a place there for ourselves, to live there.” So he said, “Go.”<sup>3</sup> Then one *of them* said, “Please agree and go with your servants.” And he said, “I will go.”<sup>4</sup> So he went with them; and when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees.<sup>5</sup> But it happened that as one *of them* was cutting down a beam, the axe head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, “Oh, my master! It was borrowed!”<sup>6</sup> Then the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” And when he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw *it* in there, and made the iron float.<sup>7</sup> Then he said, “Pick it up for yourself.” So he reached out his hand and took it.**

**Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “Behold now, the place before you where we are living is too cramped for us.**

The nation of Israel as a whole had rejected God but the sons of the prophets were increasing in number under the leadership of Elisha. As the group increased they needed additional room and they decided to build a larger place.

**<sup>2</sup> Please let us go to the Jordan, and let us each take from there a beam, and let us construct a place there for ourselves, to live there.” So he said, “Go.”**

Having little or no money they decided to build a shelter near the Jordan River where there was plenty of timber available. However, before they proceeded they asked Elisha for his blessing in this matter.

**<sup>5</sup> But it happened that as one *of them* was cutting down a beam, the axe head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, “Oh, my master! It was borrowed!”**

This was not a trivial matter because the young man had borrowed the axe and He could have been sold into slavery for this minor debt.

See Amos 2:6

**This is what the LORD says:**

**“For three offenses of Israel, and for four,  
I will not revoke its *punishment*,  
Because they sell the righteous for money,  
And the needy for a pair of sandals.”**

**<sup>6</sup> Then the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” And when he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw *it* in there, and made the iron float. <sup>7</sup> Then he said, “Pick it up for yourself.” So he reached out his hand and took it.**

Elisha cared for his disciples and whenever they were unable to find a way out of a jam he was ready to give them a hand.

See chart 605

#### **Elisha helps the sons of the prophets**

<b>Ch.</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Year</b>
2	The water divided	m1	
2	The water made pure	m2	
2	2 bears mauled 42 boys	m3	
4	Water from Edom	m4	
4	The widows olive oil	m5	
4	Son of rich woman brought back to life	m6	
4	Bad stew made good	m7	
4	Feeding of 100 people	m8	
5	Naaman healed of Leprosy	m9	
6	An ax head floats	m10	
6	Army struck with blindness	m11	
7	Arameans hear sound of a great army	m12	
7	Famine ends	m13	
7	Unbelieving Officer gets trampled	m14	
8	Rich woman gets income back	m15	
13	body touches Elisha's bones and comes alive	m16	

These three miracles were performed for the sake of his students.

## Verses 8-13

Now the king of Aram was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "In such and such a place shall be my camp."<sup>9</sup> But the man of God sent *word* to the king of Israel, saying, "Be careful that you do not pass this place, because the Arameans are coming down there."<sup>10</sup> And the king of Israel sent *scouts* to the place about which the man of God had told him; so he warned him, so that he was on his guard there, more than once or twice.<sup>11</sup> Now the heart of the king of Aram was enraged over this matter; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not tell me which of us is for the king of Israel?"<sup>12</sup> One of his servants said, "No, my lord, the 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, so that I may send *men* and take him." And it was told to him, saying, "Behold, *he is* in Dothan."

Now the king of Aram was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "In such and such a place shall be my camp."

The war mentioned here was not a fight between two large armies but rather a kind of guerilla attack carried out by bands of soldiers striking in one place and then in another.

See 2 Kings 6:23

<sup>23</sup> So he provided a large feast for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the marauding bands of Arameans did not come again into the land of Israel.

<sup>9</sup> But the man of God sent *word* to the king of Israel, saying, "Be careful that you do not pass this place, because the Arameans are coming down there."

This seems to indicate that Israel was the weaker force. So God protected them by revealing to Elisha the plans (troop movements) of the king of Syria.

<sup>11</sup> Now the heart of the king of Aram was enraged over this matter; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not tell me which of us is for the king of Israel?"

The king of Aram believed there was a spy among his servants (advisors).

<sup>12</sup> One of his servants said, “No, my lord, the king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.”

We are not told how this servant knew that it was Elisha who was doing this; however, it was no secret that Naaman had been healed of his leprosy by Elisha and it wasn't a large leap to conclude what was going on here.

<sup>13</sup> So he said, “Go and see where he is, so that I may send *men* and take him.” And it was told to him, saying, “Behold, he is in Dothan.”

So God is revealing to Elisha the plans of the king and the king thinks he can capture Elisha? Where is the logic in that thinking? One has to assume that none of his advisors wanted to tell the king that this plan would not turn out well. Nevertheless, the king was told that Elisha was in Dothan.

See Map 610



Verses 14-19

**<sup>14</sup> So he sent horses and chariots and a substantial army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. <sup>15</sup> Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, “This is hopeless, my master! What are we to do?” <sup>16</sup> And he said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are greater than those who are with them.” <sup>17</sup> Then Elisha prayed and said, “Lord, please, open his eyes so that he may see.” And the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. <sup>18</sup> And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, “Please strike this people with blindness.” So He struck them with blindness in accordance with the word of Elisha. <sup>19</sup> Then 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.” And he brought them to Samaria.**

**So he sent horses and chariots and a substantial army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city**

This was a large detachment of the king’s army.

**<sup>15</sup> Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, “This is hopeless, my master! What are we to do?”**

Apparently this servant hadn’t been with Elisha very long and he was terrified by what he saw. For Elijah this was another opportunity to see the glory of God and experience another miracle.

**<sup>16</sup> And he said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are greater than those who are with them.”**

It seems odd sometimes that Israel as a nation had not learned this lesson yet. Over and over again God had defeated great armies in order to save Israel even at times when they had been very unfaithful.

By worldly standards the odds did not look good; an army of thousands against two men. But in fact the Syrian army never had a chance.

**<sup>17</sup> Then Elisha prayed and said, “Lord, please, open his eyes so that he may see.” And the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.**

Just from a visual point of view this is one miracle that would have been marvelous to witness. Some miracles are subtle while others are quite dramatic as it was here.

**<sup>18</sup> And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, “Please strike this people with blindness.” So He struck them with blindness in accordance with the word of Elisha.**

As it turned out there wasn’t really a need for the horses and chariots of fire except to comfort the attendant of Elisha because once the army division was blinded they were incapable of doing any harm.

**<sup>19</sup> Then 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.” And he brought them to Samaria.**

The leaders of the raiding party must have asked a man if they were at the city of Dothan and where the prophet lived. The person they asked just happened to be Elisha. What were the odds that that would happen? 😊

He then misleads them about his identity and the location of his house and brings them to Samaria.

See map 610 above.

Verses 20-23

**<sup>20</sup> When they had come into Samaria, Elisha said, “Lord, open the eyes of these *men*, so that they may see.” So the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria. <sup>21</sup> Then the king of Israel when he saw them, 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 bread and water before them, so that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.” <sup>23</sup> So he provided a large feast for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the marauding bands of Arameans did not come again into the land of Israel.**

<sup>20</sup> When they had come into Samaria, Elisha said, “Lord, open the eyes of these *men*, so that they may see.” So the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

Samaria was the capital of northern Israel and Elisha had led the Syrians into the presence of the king and his army. This had to be their worst nightmare.

<sup>21</sup> Then the king of Israel when he saw them, 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 bread and water before them, so that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.” <sup>23</sup> So he provided a large feast for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the marauding bands of Arameans did not come again into the land of Israel.

Elisha gives the king of Israel a gentle rebuke for thinking he should kill them. But then the king went beyond what the prophet had told him to do and provided a large feast for them.

The king of Syria had learned his lesson and did not send any more marauding bands into the land of Israel.

Verses 24-31

<sup>24</sup> Now it came about after this, that Ben-hadad the king of Aram gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. <sup>25</sup> So there was a severe famine in Samaria; and behold, they kept besieging it until a donkey’s head was *sold* for eighty *shekels* of silver, and a fourth of a kab of dove’s dung for five *shekels* of silver. <sup>26</sup> And as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, “Help, my lord the king!” <sup>27</sup> But he said, “If the Lord does not help you, from where am I to help you? From the threshing floor, or from the wine press?” <sup>28</sup> Then the king said to her, “What is on your mind?” And she said, “This woman said to me, ‘Give your son so that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.’” <sup>29</sup> So we cooked my son and ate him; and I said to her on the next day, ‘Give your son, so that we may eat him’; but she has hidden her son.” <sup>30</sup> When the king heard the woman’s words, he tore his clothes—and he was passing by on the wall—and the people looked, and behold, *he had* sackcloth underneath on his body. <sup>31</sup> Then he said, “May God do so to me and more so, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today.”

**<sup>24</sup> Now it came about after this, that Ben-hadad the king of Aram gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria.**

The King of Syria had suffered a humiliating defeat when his army division was blinded and led to Samaria. Therefore Ben-hadad attacked Samaria hoping to win a decisive victory and restore his reputation.

The best way to conquer a city like Samaria was by cutting off their food supply and starving the people.

**<sup>28</sup> Then the king said to her, “What is on your mind?” And she said, “This woman said to me, ‘Give your son so that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.’ <sup>29</sup> So we cooked my son and ate him; and I said to her on the next day, ‘Give your son, so that we may eat him’; but she has hidden her son.”**

This kind of tragedy had been prophesied by Moses.

See Deuteronomy 28:52 - 53

**<sup>52</sup> And it will besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it will besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the Lord your God has given you. <sup>53</sup> Then you will eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters whom the Lord your God has given you, during the siege and the hardship by which your enemy will oppress you.**

Israel had been blessed with many special privileges but with those blessings came an equal responsibility to keep the Law of God. This had been spelled out numerous times to the people of Israel and they were without excuse for rejecting God.

**<sup>30</sup> When the king heard the woman’s words, he tore his clothes—and he was passing by on the wall—and the people looked, and behold, *he had* sackcloth underneath on his body. <sup>31</sup> Then he said, “May God do so to me and more so, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today.”**

Instead of confronting his own sin and the sins of the people (the worship of false gods) the king thought it was best to put the blame on Elisha.

People today blame God for all the suffering that mankind has to endure but they seem to forget that all of the troubles of mankind come from the original sin of Adam & Eve and our own sin. But many people think it is best to put the blame on God.



Verses 32-33

<sup>32</sup> Now Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And *the king* sent a man from his presence; but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, “Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent *a man* to cut off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door and hold the door shut against him. Is the sound of his master’s feet not behind him?” <sup>33</sup> While he was still talking with them, behold, the messenger came down to him and he said, “Behold, this evil is from the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer?”

<sup>32</sup> Now Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And *the king* sent a man from his presence; but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, “Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent *a man* to cut off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door and hold the door shut against him. Is the sound of his master’s feet not behind him?”

Elisha calls Jehoram a son of a murderer because he is a son of Ahab.

When Jezebel told Elijah that she would kill him he ran from the town of Jezreel to Mount Sinai (300 miles). Here Elisha knows that King Jehoram had sent a man to kill him but he remains in his house with the elders.

<sup>33</sup> While he was still talking with them, behold, the messenger came down to him and he said, “Behold, this evil is from the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer?”

Previously, Elisha must have told the King to wait for a deliverance from God concerning the siege against Samaria. But now the King believes that the siege is a judgment from the Lord and there is no reason to wait any longer.

The king is partly right, this siege is a judgment on the Northern Kingdom but it is not the final judgment.