

The Revelation

2 Kings 6:1-23

Elisha's ministry is being blessed by God's Spirit. Elisha is passionate about the glory of the LORD in Israel. He also possesses zeal for raising up the next generation of young men who will grow to serve the LORD in the future. More and more young men flock to Elisha to learn how to boldly proclaim His truth to their culture. **They love seeing the Spirit of God at work in Elisha** and the Bible school grows to the point that it needs more rooms to accommodate all the students.

Elisha gives his approval to build a new dorm rooms near the Jordan River. It is a perfect place to learn and grow in the Gospel. The trees near provide wood for the buildings, the river offers abundance of water in the desert climate and the river is full of fish that students can catch **during their sabbaticals**.

One of the students said, *"Elisha, we are poor but that will not hinder us. We will work to build the rooms with our own hands. But we **need** you to come with us. Please come!"*

In affection and tenderness Elisha replies, *"Yes. I will come with you. I believe in what God is doing in your lives."*

Upon arriving at the Jordan River, the students waste no time in getting to work chopping down trees to build their school. One student borrows an ax from a family friend. The owner of the ax said, *"Yes, you can use it, but this is my most valuable possession. **I can't just run down to Ace Hardware** to get another one. So take care of it!!"*

The student assured the family friend that he would care for it as his own. Yet as this student swings the ax to fall a great tree, the iron head flies off the handle and plops, irretrievable into the deep river. He cannot not believe what happened.

In a panic he calls out to Elisha, *"Oh no. My master! Help me please. This ax was borrowed from a trusted family friend!"*

Elisha smiles peacefully and asks, *"Well, I heard the splash, but where exactly did the ax head fall?"* He leads Elisha twenty feet down the river and points at a spot about thirty feet from the shore. Elisha casually cuts off a small branch from a nearby sapling. He throws it right at the spot where the ax head landed. And then he quietly waits. It is not more than three seconds before the **iron ax head explodes to the surface of the river like a giant beach ball emerging from a pool**. Everyone stops working. They just stare. The iron floats like it is a

feather riding the surface tension of the water. After a moment, the ax head starts to float away down the river and Elisha says to the young man, "Well, are you going to let it get away? Go in and retrieve it!" **Elisha knows that the God who created nature is not bound by nature's laws.**

So the young man splashes down into the cold water and grabs hold of it. He feels its dense weight as he clutches on to it. As he reattaches it to the handle, he marvels at the miracle that he witnesses.

He prays, *"Lord, you are real! You are the God who is alive and who does marvelous things for Your people. You cared enough about me and my loss. Praise you, O LORD of Israel!!"*

During this time, the Syrians were sometimes at peace with Israel and sometimes at war. The fight for to hold the land that God gave Abraham requires constant vigilance. **The Syrian king, Ben-hadad decides to go to war** and he meets with his war team, *"Guys, let us camp at this spot near the border of Israel to launch a surprise attack. Israel's defenses are weak right here!"*

God then speaks to Elisha and tells him of Ben-Hadad's plan. Elisha sends word to **Jorem the king of Israel** saying, *"Prepare for the Syrians to make a surprise attack right there!"* So Ben-Hadad's plan is spoiled.

This exact same thing happens again and again and again!! Ben-Haddad makes a surprise attack plan and Elisha warns the king of Israel. The king of Israel heeds the prophet's warnings and the Syrian's plans always fail.

The warnings of God are His kind means to save us from the attacks of our enemy. How necessary to heed the warnings the LORD sends us through His Word!

Ben-Hadad KNOWS that their MUST BE A TRAITOR in his court. How else would his secret plans be known to God's people. He calls his whole court together and announces, *"I know that one of you is secretly for Israel and has been telling our secrets to Israel's king. And today, I am finding out who the traitor is!!"*

All the servants tremble because if anyone is accused they will be executed on the spot without a trial. **No proof is needed when fear makes accusations.**

One Syrian servant speaks up, *"O King. We all are loyal to you! I know that there is a prophet of Yahweh who is in Israel. He is one who hears from the LORD. He even knows what you say in the privacy of your bedroom!! Elisha is the one who constantly unveils your secret plans."*

In a rage, Ben-Hadad shouts, *"Go get this Elisha and bring him here to me! I will make sure that he never speaks another word!"*

Another Syrian servant meekly says, *"Elisha is in Dothan."*

So the king of Syria sends a massive army equipped with horses and chariots and the most advanced weapons. **Their mission: Get Elisha . . . dead or alive.**

This army surrounds the city of Dothan with an overwhelming force. Early in the morning a servant of Elisha he looks over the city wall and sees the army arrayed against them. **He trembles as he believes that the men, women and children of Dothan are doomed to the wicked brutalities of these violent, blood-lust men.**

This servant cries out to Elisha, *"What will we do? There is no hope for us!"*

Elisha calmly smiles and says, *"Do not be afraid."*

"What?!? Don't be afraid? How can we NOT be afraid. Look over the walls at this army. We have never seen the likes of it!"

Elisha replies, *"Those who are with us are for more numerous and powerful than those who are with them."* The servant looks back at Elisha in disbelief at his words.

Elisha then gets on his knees before the LORD and prays, *"O LORD, please open this young man's eyes so that they may see."*

As the LORD opens this young man's eyes, he gasps in amazement. **Behold, the mountains surrounding the city are filled . . . filled with horses and chariots of fire!** They are all around Elisha and Dothan. The young man falls upon his face in worship, *"O Lord of hosts . . . you command the army of angels. YOU ARE OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH."*

The Syrian army commander blows the trumpet and the massive Syrian army marches forward against the city. Elisha again gets down on his knees and calls out to Yahweh, *"O Lord, please strike every Syrian soldier with blindness."* And at that moment, the marching halts and the soldiers all reach out their arms . . . feeling for something stable to hold on to. Many trip and fall over each other.

Elisha goes out to meet the blinded, disoriented army. He does not mock them, but he treats them with respect in their need. He says, *"Guys, follow me. I will bring you to the man whom you seek."* And Elisha leads them **ten miles** from Dothan into the city of Samaria, the capital of Israel. This is the place where Israel's army resided. Once inside the city, Elisha again prays, *"O Lord, open their eyes that they might see."* **Immediately the Syrians can see again and they look around them to discover that they are in big trouble!** They are defenseless before the Israelite army that surrounds them.

The king of Israel now asks Elisha, *“My father, shall I strike them down!”* He is excited that he can rid himself of this awful enemy in one single easy blow. He eagerly asks again, *“Shall I strike them down?”*

“No! What a dishonorable thing to ask! Would you strike down an army who surrendered to you and is bound in chains? No. Instead feed your enemy. Set bread and water before them that they may be nourished. Then release them and let them go back home to their families.”

The LORD rescued the Israelites and now **He chooses to show grace to Israel’s enemies**. The LORD is not frightened that they will return to harm His people. Elisha knows that **THE LORD is sovereign and mighty to save! The battle belongs to the LORD and victory comes from trusting in Him.**

King Joram obeys Elisha and sets a feast before the captured Syrians. The Syrians at first think that it must be some kind of trap. They expected to be butchered, but now they sit down at a table filled with lavish food . . . **lamb, beef, goat, onions, bread, vegetables, wine and some coconut cream pie!** It is a lavish feast! When they fill their bellies and can eat no more, Ben-hadad announces *“You are free to go back home. We have treated you like friends. Go and tell your king what we have done for you.”*

Main Idea: The Gospel opens the door for us to encounter God and His loving provision. No problem withstands the Gospel’s ability to supply our need. If we believe, the Gospel will work miracles for us and in us.

Fascinating how God ordains each miracle that Elisha performs to illustrate the power of the Gospel to provide for everyone who believes it. Each miracle highlights the Gospel’s impact in a unique way. Let us take a quick review of the miracles that Elisha performs up to this point in the story and **take note of the encouraging provision of the Gospel that they illustrate.**

You remember in 2 Kings 3 that Elisha pours a bowl of salt into a putrid spring and the LORD makes the corrupted spring pure. ***Do you need the Gospel? Only if you have an impure heart. The Gospel gives us a new and clean heart.***

In 2 Kings 4, Elisha instructs the poor widow who had nothing but a little jar of oil to borrow empty jars from her neighbors. The LORD uses the little jar to fill all the big jars to the brim. ***Do you need the Gospel? Only if you are poor and cannot***

provide for yourself what you need for heaven. The Gospel gives us what we need for time and eternity.

(2 Kings 4). The mature Shunnamite is barren and Elisha tells her that she will conceive and bear a son. Within the year, the LORD opened her womb and she bore a son. ***Do you need the Gospel? Only if you are desperate and in need of a miracle. The Gospel answers our desperation.***

(2 Kings 4). The Shunnamite's son grows to work with his dad in the field. One day while working he falls ill and dies. Elisha prays and lays his body on the child and the LORD raises the dead child to life! ***Do you need the Gospel? Only if you are dead in your sins and need life in your soul. The Gospel secures our resurrection.***

(2 Kings 4:38). The sons of the prophet eat stew that is poisonous. Elisha puts flour into the poison and the stew becomes nourishing food. ***Do you need the Gospel? Only if you are hungry for true food that nourishes your soul. The Gospel rescues us from the poison of sin.***

(2 Kings 5). Namaan is stricken with the deadly disease of leprosy. Elisha tells him to wash 7X in the Jordan River. Namaan's flesh is restored so that his flesh is like the flesh of a child. ***Do you need the Gospel? Only if you are not spiritually sick. The Gospel heals us of our fatal disease.***

As we open our Bibles to the next set of miracles recorded in 2 Kings 6, we are not surprised to discover that once again the LORD is putting His Gospel's power in living color.

Central Idea: The Gospel opens the door for us to encounter God and His loving provision. No problem withstands the Gospel's ability to supply our need. If we believe, the Gospel will work miracles for us and in us.

Four Gains of the Gospel

1. The Gospel brings God's power to us.

The young man who lost the borrowed axhead had no natural means to recover it. The river was too deep to wade into it and it was too muddy to see it. Yet the LORD brought the lost treasure back to him through a miracle.

Friend, have you ever lost something of great value?

Perhaps you have lost **your purity** and cannot shake the sense that you are unclean before the LORD.

Perhaps you have lost **a clear conscience** and are plagued by the guilt of secret sin.

Perhaps you have lost **your joy** in the LORD and feel engulfed by sadness.

Perhaps you have lost **your peace** and are filled with bitterness and resentment over wrongs suffered.

Perhaps you have lost **your hope** and feel that your future shut away from all light.

Question: What do you do when you lose something of eternal value? You do what this young man did. You talk go to God's prophet with it. Elisha was a great man, but a better prophet is ours! We have Jesus! Then we tell Him where we lost it and confess our need to Him.

"Then the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there and made the iron float." (2 Kings 6:6 [ESV](#))

Truth: The LORD works miracles to bring back what we think has been irretrievably lost. The Gospel restores us that which sin has taken from us.

Do not believe the devil's lie that what you have lost cannot be found again.

Do you need the Gospel? Only if you have lost a treasure that you cannot retrieve on your own. The Gospel causes the lost to be found.

Ultimately, the lost ax head illustrates the desperate condition into which we are born. Our souls are valuable, but are irretrievably lost. We have no access to bring our soul from death to life, from the dark into the light, from separation to reconciliation. Such a retrieval requires a miracle! Yet a miracle is what is promised to every person who petitions Jesus in faith.

Possible to hear of the grace of God and be convinced of it without a miracle taking place.

Illustration: Met a woman in Alabama and found out that she was from a suburb of Chicago. Discovered she was a churchgoer. Even a BSF leader! “Tell us your testimony.” “I do not have a testimony.” She did not want to talk about any miracle change that the LORD made in her life. **The Gospel ALWAYS produces a miracle within us that cannot be explained.**

Illustration: Steve in Alabama.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”” (Romans 1:16-17 [ESV](#))

1. The Gospel brings God’s power to us.

2. The Gospel brings God’s warnings to us.

The king of Israel had a powerful enemy who actively made shrewd plans to kill him and his people. God unveiled all those malicious plans to Elisha so that Israel would not be caught off guard and destroyed.

Our enemy is much much smarter than we are. But the LORD is **infinitely** more knowledgeable than he is. **Nothing done, said, or thought is secret to the LORD.** His knowledge reaches every place, at all times, in all persons. Nothing is hidden from him. **What a comfort to those who are His! What a distress for those who stand against Him!**

Ben-Hadad was deeply disturbed by the knowledge of the LORD. He was frustrated over and over in his plans to harm God’s people.

“And one of his servants said, “None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.”” (2 Kings 6:12 [ESV](#))

When we are the LORD’s we are not left helpless to Satan’s schemes. What an advantage to be warned of all the devil’s devices as he lays out his traps for us!

Truth: The LORD’s warnings are our friends. They reveal the specific plans created by the devil for our destruction. Warnings are sent to us by the Lord to keep us from trouble and to help us avoid Satan’s snares.

Now what would have happened if the king of Israel was set on vacationing in the area where Ben-hadad laid and trap and instead of heeding the LORD’s

warning, he ignored them? He would not have survived. So it is with us. Many of God's warnings push us away from what our flesh desires. YET God's warnings are our friends.

And . . . Moses . . . said to them, "Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land" (Deuteronomy 32:45-47 [ESV](#))

"See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven." (Hebrews 12:25 [ESV](#))

***Do you need the Gospel?* Only if you have an enemy who schemes to ensnare you into sins that will ruin your life. The Gospel prepares us for spiritual battles by warning us of the devil's specific plans to destroy our soul.**

3. The Gospel brings God's protection to us.

Elisha's servant looked out to see a powerful army intent on getting Elisha. This servant shook in terror, yet Elisha was not afraid. Why was Elisha so calm as the city is surrounded? Because he saw the LORD's strength.

"He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."" (2 Kings 6:16 [ESV](#))

If you believe the Gospel, then this is always the case. I do not know what the enemy is threatening to take from you. But I know that he is threatening your joy in some way.

Perhaps the demons are threatening your physical life.

Perhaps they are threatening your children.

Perhaps they are threatening your ability to provide for your family.

Perhaps they are threatening to destroy a fellowship.

Perhaps they are threatening to rob you of your life's purpose.

Friend, do not be afraid. If you are in Jesus, those who are with you are more than those who are with them.

David knew it.

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? . . . Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident." (Psalm 27:1-3 [ESV](#))

Paul knew it.

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31 [ESV](#))

John knew it.

"Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4 [ESV](#))

Do you know it? Illustration: Pauline Teubel.

Question: If this is true, why am I so often afraid? Answer: Because my faith is weak. Ask the LORD to open the eyes of your faith to see Him . . . to see His love for you, to see His presence with you, to see His power working for you. Pray that God would strengthen your faith! Feed your faith with the Word. Ask Him to reveal high and lofty thoughts of His divine Person.

"Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So" (2 Kings 6:17 [ESV](#))

The problem was not the power of the Syrians. The problem was a lack of vision to see the LORD. If our eyes were to be opened, we would see God stands between us and our fears. He will not abandon us nor let us come to ruin.

Do you need the Gospel? Only if you have a powerful enemy that prowls around with the intend to destroy you. The Gospel makes us more than conquerors through Him who loves us!

4. The Gospel brings God's peace to us.

The blinded enemy is marched right into Israel's stronghold. Surely, it is the will of the LORD to slay them all. No. The LORD has a better plan.

"Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master."" (2 Kings 6:22 [ESV](#))

Truth: We were once the LORD's enemies deserving of death. But instead of destroying us, the LORD reconciled us to Himself through the kindness of the cross. While we were enemies, Christ died for us to provide a feast for our souls.

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1 [ESV](#))

Our reconciliation with God changes our hearts so that we can enjoy God now and forever. **AND this reconciliation with God changes our attitude toward people who hate us or hurt us.** Through the Gospel, we can treat our enemies with mercy, forgiveness and kindness. Hatred and bitterness does not have to reign any more in our hearts!

"But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." (Luke 6:27-28 [ESV](#))

Truth: The Gospel changes our hearts so that we can treat our enemies as friends.

King Joram wanted to kill them all. Elisha knew the way of the LORD. Who are you? "I am King Joram." OR "I am Elisha."

Do you need the Gospel? Only if you are tired of hostility and strife and conflict ruling over your life. The Gospel places love in our hearts even for those who hurt us.

The way of the world is vengeance, fighting, hostility, condemnation, accusation, and strife. So much hatred in this world. Yet I sadly observe that there is so much hatred in the church. Resentments. Wild accusations. Break of fellowship. Hostilities and slander.

"To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:20-21 [ESV](#))

Only the Gospel can bring peace to keep our hearts from hating our enemies.

--We know that we are under the influence of Satan when we treat friends as though they are enemies.

--We know that we are under the influence of the natural world when we treat our friends as friends and our enemies as enemies.

--We know that we are under the influence of God's Spirit when we treat our enemies as friends.

Satan so often uses fear and then fury to lead us away from worshipping the One True and Living God who holds the world in His hand.

Conclusion: Do you need the Gospel? Yes. If you have never given your life to Jesus, you need the Gospel. If you have given your life to Jesus hundreds of times, you need the Gospel. The Gospel is for the unsaved. The Gospel is for the saved. It is the power of God that brings salvation to our daily lives!

Ax head floating. The Gospel brings the power of God to experience miracles
Warning about Syrians. The Gospel makes us safe in the face of our enemies
secret plans to destroy us.

Chariots of fire. The Gospel secures us in the present and the future.

Not striking. The Gospel frees us to love God and to love our enemies.

What is the Gospel? The Gospel is the good news that God offers to adopt us into His family and treat us as His children. He sent His Son to die on the cross in our place and by the cross remove the cause of our offense against the LORD. Jesus then rose the third day so that we can walk in newness of life. That is GOOD NEWS!

How do I benefit from the Gospel? Cry out to the LORD in faith. Reach out and embrace Jesus as your Lord and God. Turn from sin and turn to open your heart to the Savior.

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