

Chariots Of Fire  
By  
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(2 Kings 6:8-23)

Nations engage in a deadly game with perceived enemy forces in this life. We call it espionage. This game has been popularized and glamorized by the James Bond double 0 seven movies. James Bond 007 is supposed to be an agent in British Intelligence who is forever narrowly escaping from life threatening situations but he always manages to countermine the enemy forces by some brilliant maneuver. He is a hero or a traitor depending on whose side you are on.

We have had traitors in our intelligence branch of government who have sold secrets to the enemy. One of the most notorious traitors in American history was benedict Arnold. Benedict Arnold was a major general in the American army who in 1779 began treasonable correspondence with the British. In 1780 while he was in command at West Point, a key position in American defenses, he arranged to surrender West Point to the British. The plot was discovered by the capture of Major Andre. Arnold fled to the British and led raids in Virginia and Connecticut. He ended his life in disgrace and poverty in England.

God does not need spies for His Kingdom because he knows all things that men scheme and plan, and he can communicate that secret information to his prophets when it pleases him to do so. Elisha was neither a spy nor a traitor. He was a man of faith and boldness, a man who truly believed God. We get an instance of his faith in our scripture today.

Elisha knew secret information about the enemy because he was a prophet with a gift of knowledge. In a very real sense every Christian has secret information. We are given to know things that the world does not know, and we know things about the enemy that arms us against him. We also know things about human nature that helps us deal with situations and circumstances intelligently.

For instance, every believer knows that sin is a reality and that Satan is a fallen angel at war with God and God's people. We also know that we can be forgiven and cleansed from our sins and have victory over evil through the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that we can resist the Devil and that he will flee from us. This is so because Jesus Christ spoiled principalities and powers and made an open show of them when he died for our sins and rose again victorious over death.

Christ has conquered Satan and triumphed over death. He has the keys of death and of hell. Through the knowledge we have of his work of redemption and victory over all the powers of darkness we can be more than conquerors through him who loved us and gave himself for us.

Elisha had inside, secret information given to him as God's prophet that enabled him to warn the king of Israel of the plans and plots of the king of Syria. When the Syrians planned an ambush Elisha was divinely informed and was able to relay that information to the king of Israel. This advance information thwarted the king of Aram's plans. The king of Israel simply avoided the places where it was dangerous for him to go.

God warns us to avoid the haunts of sin and the territory of the enemy. We should take that advice seriously as the king of Israel did. Unfortunately, the king of Israel did not become a believer through his dealings with Elisha. Later he even tried to murder Elisha, but

God prevented it. He would have done well to heed the scripture that says, "**Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.**"  
**Psa. 105:15 (NASB)**

Elisha knew in advance the movements planned by the King of Aram. The king at first supposed that someone in his inner circle was leaking secret information to Israel. In other words, there must be a traitor, a spy, a double agent in the camp. But one of his servants told him that it was the prophet Elisha who was supplying the secret information to the king of Israel.

We might ask, how did this person know that Elisha was the informant, and if so how did Elisha get his information? If you knew that someone knew what you said in your bedroom wouldn't you at least ask how he could know such confidential information? We know, don't we? We know that God is omniscient and that he knows all that goes on. He has the divine power to read minds, not only thoughts in men's minds but every intent of the thoughts of his heart. **Gen. 6:5**

That is pretty heavy stuff. God can see and know at all times in all places what all men and angels plan and intend to do if they can. What knowledge! What power! No man or angel can outsmart God or defeat God's holy purposes because God knows his thoughts and intents and can either allow those plans to be executed or he can checkmate them. He can forewarn and forearm his people. He can frustrate all the plans of evil angels and men because he knows what they will try to do even before they do it. What amazing intelligence and power!

God tells us that no weapon formed against His church shall succeed. He says that the gates of hell will not prevail against his church. He can overthrow all the works of the enemy. As Martin Luther put it in his hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* -- One little word shall fell the grim prince of darkness.

When the king of Aram found out it was Elisha who was tipping off the king of Israel with inside information about his plans he decided he would eliminate the prophet. He sent out a posse to locate him and take him dead or alive. It was not a small posse but a very large one. He was taking no chances that Elisha might call down fire from heaven to consume them as Elijah had done when captains with fifty men were sent to take him.

Notice that he sent them by night to Dothan under the cover of darkness. The Devil more often than not does his work under the cover of darkness.

When you think about it wouldn't you suppose that the king of Aram would have considered that if Elisha could know in advance his plans against the king of Israel that he would also be able to know in advance that he was sending an armed force to come and get him, so Elisha might easily have slipped away and evaded the strategy of the enemy king: apparently that never occurred to the king of Aram.

I believe God did reveal to Elisha that the king of Aram was sending a posse to get him. But Elisha was not afraid. He did not run away. He just waited for the enemy to come.

We ought to know, if we don't already, that the enemy is armed and dangerous. He wants us dead. He wants to eat us alive. He is a roaring lion and if he possibly can he will destroy you and me. He will try and lure you and me into sinful conduct so that we are at his mercy. Once we yield to temptation we are his meat. That's why the Lord tells us to watch and pray, to stay on guard, to be vigilant against the wiles, craft and deceit of the enemy. We are told to resist the Devil and he will flee from us. We are always to remember that greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

Elisha did not have military weapons. He did not have anything but his faith in the God he served. He was an unarmed man in an unwalled village, or at least he knew that he could not depend upon the city walls to save him against such a powerful force as had been sent to get him.

His servant awoke early and saw the Syrian army with horses and chariots circling the city. The force that Satan can muster may seem overpowering. Elisha's servant was filled with dread and foreboding. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" his servant asked. {16} "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." {17} And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. There all around them was the awesome powers of heaven poised to bring deliverance to Elisha and his servant.

If you have not already had the eyes of your understanding opened, may the Lord open your eyes to see the awesome power that protects you from harm, hurt and danger. The Psalmist wrote: **The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them. Psa. 34:7 (NASB)** What comforting words!

God does not leave us to our own strength or power. When we fear him and trust him we are under divine protection.

Listen beloved, whenever you are in danger, do what Hezekiah did when the Assyrians surrounded Jerusalem and the commander declared that all the people were doomed—he prayed and God sent an angel to deliver them. Do what Elisha did -- pray. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He will hear and answer.

Elisha had prayed for his servant and then he prayed something that is really neat. He didn't pray that the Lord would destroy the Arameans (Syrians). Instead, the scripture says: Elisha prayed to the LORD, <sup>18</sup>**When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, "Strike this people with blindness, I pray." So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.**

Elisha had prayed that his servant might see but he prayed that the Syrians might not see, just the opposite. Now this was not total blindness. Rather it was a blindness of direction and orientation. They could still see physically but they could not orient themselves. They lost the ability to know east from west or north from south. They felt lost. They had eyes to see but they could not see which way to go. They lost their sense of direction. They became totally disoriented.

As Isaiah **said We grope along the wall like blind men, We grope like those who have no eyes; We stumble at midday as in the twilight, Among those who are vigorous we are like dead men. Isa. 59:10 (NASB)**

Remember the time the angels had been sent to Sodom to bring Lot out and the Sodomites tried to break down the door to get at them, and the angels struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door (Gen 19:11).

Certainly God can confuse and confound sinners. Perhaps some of you have had an inner ear infection and have experienced disorientation. Vertigo is a condition that can afflict a person so that he or his surroundings are whirling about. Pilots can get vertigo. Something like this happened to the Syrians after Elisha prayed. .

After Elisha had prayed his prayer to went to the Arameans and offered to become their guide. <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.

<sup>20</sup>When they had come into Samaria, Elisha said, "O LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, 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>He answered, "You shall not kill *them*. Would you kill those you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." <sup>23</sup>So he prepared a great 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.

The world doesn't know the God of the Bible and they don't handle things the way Elisha told the king to handle this situation. But scripture tells us to do what Elisha told the king of Israel to do. We read in (Prov 25:21-22 NIV) If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. {22} In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

So without a weapon in his hand, armed only with the Word of God and prayer Elisha defeats his enemies

and blesses them. He conquers by the spiritual weapons God had put in his hand. What is that? The weapon of prayer, the weapon of God's Word, which is the sword of the Spirit.

Are you relying today, my friend, on Jesus Christ and the Word of God? Do you rely on prayer and not your own strength and wits? God has put in your hand the same knowledge and power he gave to Elisha. We have a King over us who is on the throne of glory and all power in heaven and in earth belongs to him. We know that his power is awesome, irresistible and always victorious. He not only will protect you and be a shelter to you in a time of storm, he is also able through the faith he has given you in His Son to lead you to triumph over all your foes.

As Elisha was victorious in this episode, confounding through prayer the enemies of Israel and leading them captive to his king, so can we be victorious. We gain the victory by using those same means of grace that Elisha used.

Jesus Christ is our Commander in Chief. He is the sovereign and mighty God. He bids us come to him in prayer about every need, every problem. We know that he who had the wisdom to create the world and overcome all the forces of evil by means of his cross can also always devise ways and means to save you and me from every trial and trouble and bring us safely to our eternal home.

Let us emulate Elisha and Elijah and Hezekiah and David and all the saints who have gone before us who trusted the Lord and found him to be a wall of protection and a Victor for them over every foe and every adverse circumstance.