

Norwood's Notes: Brief Summaries of Bible Stories

These "notes" are intended to provide a general overview of the basic stories of the Bible in the hope of building greater biblical knowledge and encouraging Bible reading and study. For more information, visit www.UjimaChurch.org

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26 - Highlights from 2 Kings 6-7, "Chariots of Fire"

The group of prophets who had gathered around Elisha were determined to go to the Jordan River to build a dwelling that could house all of them. As they cut down trees, a borrowed axe head fell into the water. One of the prophets, distressed that he had lost a valuable borrowed tool, cried out to Elisha. Then Elisha threw a stick where the ax head had sunk, and the axe head floated to the top of the water and was recovered (2Kgs 6)!

The long conflict between Syria and Israel grew hot yet again and the king of Syria made war against Israel. The King of Syria set up encampments in order to ambush the king of Israel. However, Elisha received from the Lord the strategy of the Syrian king and would warn the king of Israel, thwarting the plots against him, again and again. When it was reported to the king of Syria that it was Elisha the prophet who warned the king of Israel of the plots against him, the king of Syria ordered that Elisha be seized. The Syrian army surrounded Dothan, the city where Elisha was staying, with horses and chariots. Elisha's young servant saw the army surrounding the city and he was terrified. The prophet told his young servant, *"Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them"* (2Kgs 6:16 ESV). Elisha prayed that the Lord would enable his servant to see the protection that the Lord was providing. And the Lord blessed the young servant with spiritual insight so that he saw that the mountains were full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha! When the Syrians came against Elisha, the Lord struck them with blindness according to the prayer of the prophet. Then Elisha led the army of blinded men away from Dothan and into Samaria, the capital city, instead. He then prayed that the Lord would open their eyes, and when they regained their sight, they were standing in the capital city as captives of the king of Israel! While the king wanted to strike them down, Elisha prevented him, saying that they should feed the Syrian captives and send them back to their king. After a great feast, the king of Israel sent the shocked, frightened and confused Syrians back to their king.

Again, the Syrians sought to conquer Israel, and besieged Samaria, causing much suffering and starvation. The king of Israel was angry with the Lord and with the Elisha the prophet for not preventing this turn of events. He ordered that Elisha be seized and beheaded.

Before he could be taken, Elisha prophesied to the captain of the king's guard that there would be food in abundance in the city by the next day. Because the captain doubted that such a thing could even be done by the Lord, Elijah told him that he would see it, but would not eat of it (2Kgs 7).

The next day, four men, who had leprosy and were quarantined outside of Samaria due to their illness, decided that they should surrender themselves to the Syrians that besieged the city so they would either be fed or given a swift death by the enemy. When the four men came to the Syrian encampment, they found that it was empty. The Lord had frightened the Syrians into a panic by making them hear the sound of what they thought was a great approaching army coming to rescue the people of Samaria. At this frightening sound, the Syrians abandoned everything in their effort to escape and flee for their lives. The four men gathered up food and treasure for themselves, but realized that such a great blessing must be shared. When the four men reported this to the gatekeepers of Samaria, they guards could hardly believe it. But the people went out and gathered what had been left behind, strewn from the encampment to the river Jordan as the Syrians fled. In their rush to the food, the people trampled the captain that had doubted the prophet's word, and he died. What Elisha had prophesied had come to pass.