

HORSES AND CHARIOTS OF FIRE

Adapted from two family talks by Rev. Karl R. Alden

Reading: II Kings 6:8-23

“God is my salvation; I will not fear what man can do to me.” This is the meaning of the name of the great prophet, Elisha. When people are shut up and besieged in a city, and some great soldier rescues them, he is called their savior. The Lord is called our Savior because He is always defending us against our spiritual enemies. At every moment of our lives He is helping us to be strong and good. One of the ways He does this is by means of guardian angels who are present with us.

In the Word, we can read about how time after time, the Lord protected the Children of Israel from their enemies. One of these enemies was Syria. Through His prophet, Elisha, the Lord saved Jehoram, the king of Israel, many times from surprise attacks by Syria.

Benhadad, the king of Syria, was always laying traps for the king of Israel, trying to take him unawares and conquer him many times. Elisha told the king of Israel where he must *not* go to avoid these traps. Because the Israelites escaped him so many times, king Benhadad became suspicious that a traitor was in his midst. Having called his servants together, he said to them, “Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?” (verse 11). 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” (verse 12). So the king of Syria resolved to capture Elisha. Having learned that he was in Dothan, he sent horses and chariots to surround the city by night.

The prophet was not alone in Dothan. His servant was with him. That servant represents us, for as he ministered to Elisha, sought to learn from him, strove to do his will and obey him, so we learn from what the prophet represented, the Word of God. Now the servant of Elisha arose early one morning, and when he looked down from the mountain he saw that it was surrounded by a great army. He beheld soldiers with spears, soldiers with swords, soldiers with bows and arrows, and his heart was filled with fear. Trembling he came to Elisha and said, “Alas, my master!” he cried. “What shall we do?” (verse 15).

Although it was plain that the hill on which the city was built was completely surrounded by horsemen and chariots, Elisha was calm and undisturbed. He said to his servant, “Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (II Kings 6:16). But the servant was filled with terror.

Then Elisha prayed to the Lord to open the servant's spiritual eyes, and the young man looked, "and, beheld, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (verse 17).

The great lesson in this story is that we are always surrounded by the spiritual world. When Jesus was asked where the spiritual world was, He answered, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). When we are faithful to the commandments, and try to do what God wants us to, then we may know that *if* our spiritual eyes were opened we would see that we too are surrounded by angels, sent by the Lord to protect us in temptation.

Although we cannot see them, the protective armies in the spiritual world are always present to aid a person who is struggling to overcome his evils. When you are trying to do what is right it is always true, as Elisha said to his servant, that "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (verse 16).

Amen.