

# help... We're Surrounded

by Denis Lyle

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*We must discern the force that is arrayed against us, dispel our fear with God's Word and the knowledge of our guardian angels, and display favour to our enemies by showing kindness and love.*

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 6:16, Psalm 34:7, Romans 12:20, Ephesians 6:11, Hebrews 1:14, Hebrews 13:5

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Angelic Protection"

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## Description

Denis Lyle preaches on the story of Elisha and his servant being surrounded by the Syrian army, highlighting the unseen angelic forces that protect God's people. He emphasizes the need for believers to discern the hostility, strategy, and tendency of the enemy, recognizing the spiritual battle we are in. Lyle encourages dispelling fear by trusting in God's Word and the presence of guardian angels, showcasing Elisha's calmness and faith in the face of danger. The sermon concludes with a call to display God's favor by showing kindness and grace even to enemies, reflecting the ethic of love and overcoming evil with good.

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## Transcript

2 Kings 6: 8 - 23

HELP... WE'RE SURROUNDED.

In June 1920, the people of Shansi, China were warned that bandits were coming. Villagers quickly made what preparation they could. One lady missionary within the village was responsible for a mission school for about forty girls. How was she going to protect them from these lawless men She called all the girls together into the classroom, explained their danger, and calmly asked them all to kneel as she committed them into the care of the Lord. Well, the bandits did come that night and it seemed as if all hell had broke loose in that village. There was death, theft, girls carried away in the darkness by the bandits but not one had attempted to enter the mission compound. The next morning, that missionary went out into the village to give what whatever help she could. She said, "The Lord in His mercy spared us and our school of girls". "No wonder", the villagers replied, "you see on the corners of your compound walls, standing on guard, we saw four angels with drawn swords in their hands."

The Bible assures us repeatedly of the unseen forces, angelic hosts and invisible powers, which surround and protect the people of God. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them". (Ps 34:7) The psalmist again says:" For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to

keep thee in all thy ways". (Ps 91:11) My, when the vehicle of the church appears to skid, and the human agents responsible for its safety seem to lose control, it is good to know that God still has His hands very much upon the wheel, that God is still in control.

We believers should be like those old whistling kettles still singing when we are up to our necks in hot water! Now Elisha and his servant seemed to be hot water here. Can you picture this scene Dothan was a small village, unwallled and unguarded about twenty miles from Samaria. And in the dead of night, while the folk were sleeping, the Syrian bands came with horses and chariots, and surrounded the city on every side. Elisha's servant who apparently had replaced Gehazi saw the army about their village and thought the end had come.

He rushed into his masters presence and cried, "Alas my master, how shall we do" (6:15) Moffat translates it so graphically, "Whatever shall we do" In effect he was saying, "Help... we're surrounded". Now as we consider this thrilling story I want you to notice: (1) A FORCE THAT IS TO BE DISCERNED The word "then", in (6:8) is significant. It links this incident with the previous one and there we saw how lost power and effectiveness for God can be restored. But My, when the Christian has lost power and peace restored, do you know what is sure to follow "Then the King of Syria warred against Israel". (6:8) There is nothing maddens Satan so much as the sight of a peaceful yet powerful believer, and what happens to us experimentally, happened to Israel literally!

The Syrian King Ben-hadad (Naaman's monarch) (6:24) had proved to be a constant irritant to Israel. Frequent border raids were mounted on Jordan's territory in Northern Israel. Now from (5:18) we know that Ben-hadad regularly worshipped at the temple of Rimmon, the Syrian god of war. You see we come to resemble what we most worship: it wasn't possible for this ruler to glorify the god of war without becoming aggressive and war-like himself! My, behind these border raids there was the invisible intervention of Satanic power throwing down a gauntlet to the God of Israel Himself!

The motive behind these acts of piracy and aggression was a diabolical lust for power over the people of God themselves, and therefore over the God of Israel! We can hear it in the Syrian Kings words: "In such and such a place shall be my camp". (6:8) You see surprise attacks were being planned, upon King Jehoram, but Israel had an early warning system in the person of Elisha who frustrated the plans of the enemy. (6:10) Now this My, (1) Like Elisha we must discern: (a) THE HOSTILITY OF THE ENEMY: Look at (6:8) "Then the King of Syria...

Israel". Now can we really believe this Can we really take this in Was it not to this very king that Israel had rendered a remarkable favour in the salvation and healing of Naaman Yet here is this man rendering evil for good and resuming an attitude of hostility to Israel which incidentally continues to this day! I wonder at times has the church lost sight of the fact that we are involved in a conflict My, God has not called us onto a playground but unto a bloody battlefield.

To sing, " Sound the battle cry", is not enough. There must be a continual and conscious realisation of the fact that we are at war and that the enemy is hostile and wicked! This is why Paul exhorted young Timothy to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". (2 Tim 2:3) This is why he encouraged the Ephesian believers to put on the whole armour of God! (Eph 6:11) Paul recognised that our conflict is not with the human and visible but with the superhuman and invisible!

Are you recognising that My, do you see that you're battling with the very forces of darkness (a) (b) THE STRATEGY OF THE ENEMY: You see Ben-hadad avoided open attack. His plan was to set ambushes in

unexpected places, and so cut off his enemy by stratagems and wiles! (6:8) But Israel had a special intelligent unit in the person of Elisha, the result was that the armies of the Syrian King were continually being thwarted! Ills: can you imagine how the IRA would feel if British Intelligence had a person who could tell where they were planning to attack in the province!

Well, Israel had such a person for Elisha was given supernatural "intelligence", concerning enemy positions and enemy manoeuvres! He was able to discern (b) Are we Paul says: "we are not ignorant of his devices". (2 Cor 2:11) Ills: Victor Hugo said: "A good General must penetrate the brain of his enemy." Ills: There's an old Chinese proverb which says: "if you know yourself and your adversary clearly, then in a hundred battles you will win a hundred times." My, are you aware of the strategy, the wiles, the devices of your enemy Has he been making inroads into your life Through evil speaking: (James 4:11) through doubt: (Gen 3:1) through false teaching: (2 Tim 4:3) through an unequal yoke: (2 Cor 6:14) through impurity: (1 Cor 6:13) through agitation: (Isa 26:3) through discouragement (Num 21:4) My, we need not be caught unaware or unprepared or unarmed for the NT unveils the chief methods of attack employed by our enemy!

So we must discern (a) (b) (c) THE TENDENCY OF THE ENEMY: Have you come to recognise that its Satan's aim and objective to attack the " key men" Men who are getting in Satan's way: men who are winning souls: men who are Spirit-filled, leaders who have influence! (Acts 12:1) Initially, Ben-hadad naturally assumed he had a fifth column or spy working in the Syrian camp, a double agent who was acting as an informer for the enemy. But as soon as he discovered that it was Elisha who was revealing his secrets, (6:12) the prophet became the focus of his animosity and attack!

He saw that the only way to catch the king was to catch the prophet, the only way to subdue the nation, was to silence the prophet! My, its one thing to have a reputation among men for being spiritually effective: its quite another thing to have that reputation in Hell! Do you know something Paul was known in Hell! For in (Acts 19:15) there is recorded for us the testimony of a demon "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye" Here was a servant of God, who was so sold out to the Saviour that he was classified by the enemy as one with Christ!

I wonder are we known in hell this... Does some of Satan's hit squads have us on their secret agenda Has Satan put out a contract on our lives My, Elisha was getting in the enemy's way and he wanted to get rid of him! (1) Are you discerning the force that is arrayed against you But notice: (2) A FEAR THAT IS TO BE DISPELLED When we face a crisis, we have two choices. We can react like Elisha did in perfect calm, or we can choose the response of his servant and panic. The word " alas", indicates a heart seized with terror and panic.

Facing the ranks of the enemy this young man panicked. "Alas my master whatever shall we do" (6:15) My, the longer you gaze on a difficulty the bigger it appears to be, unless God enables you to see through it! Many of us believers are so filled with different fears that we become spiritually paralysed! The devil exploits all of these fears and more, fueling them with obsessive thoughts, like "You will die young like your grandmother". "You are doomed to failure,... your father was".

"Go on that mission trip to Romania and you'll never come back". "That lump on your body is almost certainly malignant". Has the devil ever whispered in your ear things like that My, fear is meditating on the lies of the devil, faith is meditating on the promises of the Lord! So often the greatness of our fears shows us the weakness of our faith! Look at the context here and notice: (a) THE CAUSE OF THIS FEAR:

Facing the ranks of the enemy this young man was at a complete loss as to the way out!

His imagination conjured up the worst and he cried out, "Alas my master... "(6:15) My, is this not so like us in the hour of trial Faced with the forces of atheism: Catholicism: communism: we are tempted to cry out, " Alas... master! how shall we do" Faced with the strongholds of vice and ungodliness we are overwhelmed with our sense of insufficiency and are ready to cry out in despair, "Alas... master!" Perhaps My, it is the experience of personal trial which is the cause of our distraction.

Our trials often come to us in " battalions." They surround us on every side and we see no door of hope. So like Peter, who took his eye off the Lord Jesus and was conscious only of the wrath of the sea, we too begin to sink and cry out, "Alas master! Whatever shall we do" I wonder is this you this... Burdened believer are you overcome with fear and perplexity Can you see only the enemy: the problem: the distressing circumstances Is your cry, "Alas master!" (b) THE CURE FOR THIS FEAR: Being around Elsiha must have been something like a regular visit to a spiritual beauty parlour... you always came with a faith lift!

For Elisha who was totally undisturbed about the enemy calmly replied, "Fear not: for they... them". (6:16) You see this cure involved two things: Elisha's servant had: (1) GOD'S WORD: " Fear not... "(6:16) And how often in Scripture that command comes! Someone has calculated that there are no fewer than 366 direct instructions in the Bible not to fear... thats one for every day of the year including a leap year! Why are you fearful this... Is it because of the trials you're experiencing The problems you're encountering My, "FEAR NOT".

For "the Lord is with thee". (Num 14:9) "The eternal God... arms." (Deut 33:27) The psalmist says: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me". (Ps 138:8) Why are you fearful this... Is it because of the strength of the enemy My, "FEAR NOT". For your cause is God's cause: your sword is Gods sword, and "if God be for you who can be against you" (Rom 8:31) Ills: While on his way to Worms, Martin Luther met a messenger sent by his friend Spalatin, who urged him not to think of entering the city.

Luther looked at the messenger and replied, "Go tell your master, that even though there were as many devils at Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses, I would enter it, for He who is with me is greater than He who is with the world". My, in that crisis you have (1) But also ... (2) GUARDIAN ANGELS: " For they... them". (6:16) "The chariots of God, "affirms the psalmist " are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels". (Ps 68:17) My, the Bible assures that these angels not only encamp around us as the people of God, but the writer to the Hebrews says: " Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation". (Heb 1:14) My, would this vision of the angels not have calmed the tempest in this young mans heart Gods Word to him: Gods Watch over him was not enough to being peace in the midst of the storm! (Ps 104:4) Have you fears that need to be dispelled Will you listen to Gods Word to you Will you consider Gods Watch over you (1) (2) How did it all end (3) A FAVOUR THAT IS TO BE DISPLAYED The first time Elisha prayed, the eyes of his servant were opened, the second time Elisha prayed the eyes of his enemies were blinded! (6:18) And the man they had come to capture led them right into Jehoram's barracks and the clutches of the Israelite army! (6:20) Unstandably, King Jehoram wanted to butcher the elite of Syria's military forces, but instead of force there was favour and the Syrians returned home an impressed people!

You see: (a) THE ETHIC'S THAT ELISHA POSSESSED: Were in complete contrast to that of the King! Instead of blood being shed, a banquet was being shared! (Prov 25:21 Exod 23:4-5) My, Elisha's action

clearly foreshadowed the ethic's for the believer! Do you recall the words of Christ "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you... " (Matt 5:44) Elisha had never read (Rom 12:20) "If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink". He had never read it but he practised it!

What about you Are Elisha's ethics yours How do you pay back an injury How do you finish a quarrel Do you overcome evil with good (Rom 12:20) Did you notice (b) THE EFFECT THAT ELISHA PRODUCED: " So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel". (6:23) Why Without stretching the point we may surely suggest that the Syrians were greatly impressed by the favour and kindness shown to them by Elisha! He killed Israel's enemies with kindness and for the time being at least all Syria's raids stopped!

So we have considered (1) (2) (3) Can I ask you are you recognising God enemies Are you revealing God's peace Are you reflecting God's grace Elisha's said in effect "Help... we're Surrounded". Do you feel like that Are there pressures upon you Are there people against you Are there problems before you My, God is watching over you and God is saying to you, "FEAR NOT". " For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear." (Heb 13:5-6)

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