

## Chariots of Fire

2 Kings 6:8-18

### I. Introduction:

1. Life can be so difficult! Job 14:1: *“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.”*
  - A. Problems caused by sin (Gen. 3:17-19).
  - B. Problems common to the “human condition”: \$\$, relationships, health, old age, Eccl. 12:1 (*Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, “I have no pleasure in them”*); vanity of life, Eccl. 2:17 (*Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind.*).
  - C. Problems peculiar to Christians:
    - Women whose husbands are not Christians:** 1 Pet. 3:1-2: *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*
    - Christians who’ve are divorced:** Matt. 19:9
    - Criticism the world gives Christians:** 1 Pet. 4:3-4: *For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.*
    - Persecution:** 2 Tim. 3:12: *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*
    - Time and chance:** Eccl. 9:11: *The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. 12 For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, Like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men are snared in an evil time, When it falls suddenly upon them.*
2. Problems can cause despair! Job 10:18-22
3. Despair = danger:
  - A. Carnal solutions:
    - (1) Finances: second job, overtime, overseas work (Heb. 10:25).
    - (2) Relationships: ungodly relationships (Matt. 19:9).
    - (3) Ultimate “solution”: suicide.
  - B. Weaken our faith/abandon our faith:
    - (1) Doubt God’s care
    - (2) Total apostasy
4. Need a godly strategy to prepare ourselves for really difficult times! Turn to God’s word! 1 Pet. 5:7 (*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*); Ps. 34:15 (*The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry.*)
5. Good examples in helping us develop this strategy are found in the Old Testament; especially an incident recorded in the life of the prophet Elisha (2 Kgs. 6:8-18). Historical background:

- A. Elisha was Elijah's successor (2 Kgs. 2).
  - B. The incident takes place about 850-840 B.C. during the time of the Divided Kingdom.
  - C. Elisha is prophesying to the Northern Kingdom (Israel) ruled by Ahab's son Joram.
  - D. The primary foe of Israel is Syria ruled by Ben-hadad.
  - E. Syria is carrying out "guerilla" warfare against Israel to terrorize and undermine their govt.
  - F. However, God, through His prophet Elisha, is frustrating Ben-hadad's plans.
  - G. God uses Elisha to reveal Ben-hadad's raiding plans.
  - H. Ben-hadad becomes totally frustrated and seeks to take Elisha prisoner (and probably kill him).
6. Read text: 2 Kgs. 6:8-18 Let's briefly consider three main points:

## II. Discussion:

### I. We're Surrounded By The Enemy:

- A. Elisha and his servant were surrounded by their enemies. So are we as in this sin-sick world filled with evil, problems, difficulties, and death:
 

**1 Pet. 5:8:** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

**Job 2:2:** *And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."*

**1 Jn. 4:1:** *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

**Eph. 4:11-14:** *that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.*
- B. Elisha's servant asked the question we all ask when troubles press hard: "Alas...what shall we do?" (vs. 15) Remember, in such times we're in danger of...
  - (1) Turning to carnal means to "solve" our problems.
  - (2) Or, even abandoning our faith.
- C. So it is absolutely critical that we recognize we live in a dangerous world spiritually speaking; recognize that we must constantly be making preparations for "difficult times." *If we fail to prepare we are preparing to fail!*
- D. Only one answer...Christ!
  - (1) Salvation is only in Him! Acts 4:12; Phil. 4:13
  - (2) Only source of true peace and safety! Matt. 11:28-30
  - (3) Thus, we must do all that is required to "put on Christ":
    - (a) Initial obedience in becoming a child of God (Gal. 3:26-27).
    - (b) Put on whole armor of God to defeat Satan (Eph. 6:10-18).
    - (c) Obedient to Christ (Heb. 5:9; Matt. 7:24-27).

(d) Love Him (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 2:3-5).

(e) Run the race of faith with patience (Heb. 12:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; **Psa. 27:14**: *Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!*)

**Isa. 40:31**: *But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

(f) Fervent personal Bible study and prayer (Matt. 4:1-11, 1 Thess. 5:17; Lk. 18:1-8).

## 2. God Is Greater Than The Enemy:

A. Elisha's servant was dismayed at the odds, because he didn't include God!

B. Even though the odds seem insurmountable, we can overcome if we're in Christ! 1 Jn. 4:4: *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

C. As Elisha knew, we too must realize, there is more to the material universe than what we can see, touch, smell, hear, or taste (2 Cor. 4:16-5:1).

D. Just as Elisha's servant could not initially see the "Chariots of Fire" we also can't always see God's providential care with our physical senses, but we have His assurance it's there if we:

(1) Put our complete faith and trust in Him (Isa. 45:22 (*"Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."*); Jn. 6:68; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:31-39).

(2) "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Jas. 1:2; Matt. 6:25-33; 2 Kgs. 19:14).

E. God helps us handle every difficult situation if we walk by faith (Phil. 4:13; 2 Cor. 11:23-28).

(1) Doesn't mean the absence of pain, suffering, or even death:

**Psa. 23:4**: *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

**2 Cor. 12:9-10**: *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

(2) We have such grand assurances if we keep the faith:

**2 Cor. 5:1**: *For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

**2 Tim. 4:6-8**: *...the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

## 3. God Will Deliver Us:

(1) **Trust**: "So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.'" (2 Kings 6:16)

(a) We have great reasons to trust in God for His comfort, guidance, and strength:

☛ God desires to comfort us (Isa. 40:1-2a),

- ☛ He will make every problem manageable (Isa. 40:3-4),
- ☛ His promise is sure (Isa. 40:6-8),
- ☛ He will care for us tenderly (Isa. 40:10-11),
- ☛ His ability to perform far surpasses our comprehension (Isa. 40:12-17; 21-26),
- ☛ We have no basis for doubting His care and ability (Isa. 40:27-28),
- ☛ He is “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20; Isa. 40:29-31).

(b) Hence, let us commit Psalm 121 to memory and make it our motto.

(2) **Pray:** “And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’” (2 Kings 6:17)

(a) Our prayers are effective if we do His will:

**1 Pet. 3:12:** *For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.”*

**Jas. 5:16:** *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

(b) Furthermore, we must “not lose heart” in our praying (Lk. 18:1-8 (*He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.*); 1 Thess. 5:22).

(c) We must trust in the power of God as we pray (Eph. 3:20; Lk. 18:7-8a: *And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.*).

(3) **Faith:** “Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” Mk. 11:22-23

(a) We can only see our way ‘through’ problems with the eyes of faith; therefore, we must prepare ourselves for difficult times by increasing our faith (Lk. 18:8: *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*”).

(b) There is no “secret” process for building one’s faith (Rom. 10:17; 2 Pet. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15).

(c) By faith, like Elisha’s servant, our spiritual eyes can be opened and we can behold God’s spiritual host awaiting to minister to our needs (“Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” 2 Kings 6:17; e.g., 1 Cor. 10:13).

(4) **Obedience:**

(a) It is only by faithful obedience (Jas. 2:18-26) that we build our spiritual house on the rock (Matt. 7:24-27).

(b) Many people, even many Christians, have a very unhealthy concept of God. This is demonstrated by the fact that the majority of the time they are, at worst downright disobedient towards God, or at best pay him only passing attention (keep Him at the periphery of their lives! Keep Him at “arms length.”). Then when times of trouble come they expect to Him to come rushing to their aid at the snap of their fingers (i.e., “eager bellhop,” “Break glass in case of fire!”).

(c) Like the man who built his house on the rock, we too must prepare ourselves to weather the storms of difficult times by preparing during the easier times!

- ☛ Again, if we fail to prepare, we prepare to fail.
- ☛ Upon what foundation is your spiritual house built? Faithful obedience? Or, obedience only when it is convenient and suits your liking?

### III. Conclusion:

1. How did Elisha's "difficult time" turn out?
2. Like Elisha we can weather "difficult times" successfully if we "wait on the Lord": trust, pray, grow in faith, and remain humbly obedient.

**Psa. 27:14:** *Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!*

3. Are you prepared for "difficult times"?
  - A. Is your **trust** in God where it ought to be?
  - B. Do you **pray** on a regular basis? Do you pray "without ceasing" trusting that God hears, cares, and is able to answer?
  - C. Is your **faith** growing? Are you giving "all diligence" to make it grow?
  - D. Are you an **obedient** servant of the Master? Are you building your house on the sand or on the rock?
4. Sooner or later a "difficult time" will come to each and every one of us whether we're ready for it or not.
5. Are you ready? Do you believe in the "Chariots of Fire"?
6. If you're not ready, if you don't believe in the "Chariots of Fire" in your life; then why not come and seek the peace, safety, and comfort of the Savior?

**Matt. 11:28-30:** *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

**Isa. 40:31:** *But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

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