

Lesson V.

ELISHA AT DOTHAN

October 30, 1904

2 Kings 6 : 8-23. Commit to memory vs. 15-17. Read 2 Kings, ch. 6, to 9; 13 : 14-21.

GOLDEN TEXT—The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.—
Psalm 34 : 7.

8 ¹ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be* my camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians ² are come down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 ³ Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us ⁴ is for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 And he said, Go and ⁵ spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

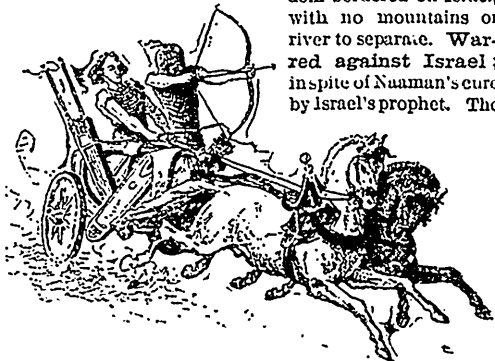
Revised Version—¹ Now; ² are coming; ³ And; ⁴ Nay; ⁵ see; ⁶ with horses and chariots was round the city; ⁷ And.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—In the latter part of the reign of Jehoram, king of Israel, 897-883: B.C.; Dothan, about ten miles north of Samaria.

Connection—Again plundering bands of Syrians invaded Israel. But their plans were foiled by Elisha's watchfulness.

I. THE PATRIOT PROPHET.—8-10. The king of Syria; Naaman's master, Benhadad II. His kingdom bordered on Israel, with no mountains or river to separate. Warred against Israel; in spite of Naaman's cure by Israel's prophet. The



A Syrian War Chariot

king had a short memory for kindness. Took counsel with his servants; his chief officers. In such . . . a place . . . my camp; selecting a place to lie in wait for the Israelites. The man of God; Elisha, the prophet. Sent unto the king of Israel. Elisha was much opposed to this ungodly king (ch. 3 : 13; 6 : 32), but for his country's sake he put aside his own

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain ⁶ was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

19 And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. ⁷ But he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?

22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. ⁸ So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

feelings, beware . . . pass not such a place; for danger lurks there. Thither the Syrians; ready to spring upon and capture any coming their way. The king . . . sent to the place; to see if the warning were true. Saved himself there; finding in every case that the prophet was correct. Not once nor twice; but several times.

11, 12. The king of Syria was sore troubled; angry at his failure and perplexed about its cause. Which of us is for the king of Israel? He naturally thought that some one in his own camp had betrayed him. Elisha . . . telleth . . . the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. This shrewd servant doubtless thought that one who could cure a leper could also read the most secret thoughts of the king.

II. THE DISMAYED SERVANT.—13-15. Go and spy where he is. Strange that the king did not think that the prophet might discover this plan also! He is in Dothan; where Joseph was sold by his brethren, Gen. 37 : 17. Sent . . . horses, and chariots, and a great host (foot-soldiers); a strong force, because the capture of Elisha was so important, and because it was a dangerous task, Dothan being so near Samaria, the capital of Israel. Came by night; to take the prophet by surprise. Compassed (surrounded) the city; to make escape impossible. His servant (not Gehazi, who was now a leper, ch. 5 : 27, therefore had to live apart from others) said . . . Alas . . . how shall we do? He saw nothing but death or capture to be sold as a slave.

III. THE DIVINE DEFENCE.—16-18. Fear not: for they . . . with us, etc. Elisha was as sure