



Sermon Series: Elisha: Seeing the Hand of God at Work

To be used with Session 5: God's Hand in Facing Opposition

Sermon Title Possibilities: God is on Your Side

Scripture: 2 Kings 6:8-12, 15-24

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Elisha: Seeing the Hand of God at Work,” this sermon emphasizes God’s role in helping believers cope with the attacks that come our way by the enemy. God’s actions are always appropriate for the situations we find ourselves in.

Introduction: In Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down before the golden image of King Nebuchadnezzar. When word of their defiance reached the king, he offered them another chance, warning them not to disobey him because they would be put in the fire. They refused and their response made the king angrier. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual. The Hebrew men were thrown in the furnace bound but when the king looked, he saw four men walking freely. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego demonstrated their unwavering faith in God. The LORD promises to watch out for His people.

1. God warns His people (2 Kings 6:8–12).

Ben-hadad, king of Syria plotted against the nation of Israel. He shared his plans with trusted servants without understanding that “the eyes of the Lord are everywhere, observing the wicked and the good” (Prov. 15:3). The king did not realize that the God of Israel works on behalf of His people. The LORD not only knew the plans of the king but revealed the plans to the prophet Elisha. The prophet then instructed the king of Israel on how to avoid the trap of their enemy.

As Christians, God warns His people against the wicked. In Psalm 1, we are instructed not to take counsel from the ungodly, hang with sinners, not abide with the scornful. Solomon warned God’s people not to company with gangs who sought to rob and murder people (Prov. 1:10-19). In the New Testament, God provided us with the tactics of the enemy showing that he seeks to appeal to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). God even uses His people to notify us of danger like Elisha warned Israel (2 Kings 6:9) and Jonathan warned David (1 Sam. 19:4).

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2. God surrounds His people (2 Kings 6:14–17).

After finding out that Elisha was responsible for spoiling his plans, the king of Syria sent a great army by night to surround the city where Elisha resided (v. 14). When the prophet and his servant discovered the invasion on the next morning, the servant asked for a plan. Elisha responded with words of comfort and encouragement. He told him that those who were with them were more than the army they saw. Then the prophet prayed asking the LORD to open the young servant's spiritual eyes so that he could see who was with them. God answered and the servant saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (17).

This passage highlights the presence of God being with His people. The Apostle John stated that "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). David expressed that even in the valley of the shadow of death God was with His people. It is assured that trouble will come to us. Yet, we can rest in the fact that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are more than all the world against us. He has us covered.

3. God shields His people (2 Kings 6:18–20).

The power of God was on display and His ways were past finding out. Although the Syrian army surrounded them, Elisha prayed that God would strike them with blindness, and He answered the prophet's prayer. This confirms what the psalmist proclaimed. "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and rescues them from all their troubles" (Ps. 34:17). God protected the prophet, the servant, and the nation from the attack of their enemy. He blinded and confused the army.

There are times when the enemy plots and even executes his evil plans in our lives, but we can stand on the promise given from the God's Word that He will never leave us nor forsake us. We can rest in the fact that God will show Himself strong (2 Chron. 16:9). The LORD can and will cover us and shield us from the advancement of the enemy (Ps. 91:4; Rom. 8:31, 37).

Conclusion: Faith is not credulity. It is not believing in something you know is not true. Neither is faith a substitute for knowledge. Christian faith operates in the realm of meaning, not in the realm of fact. Faith recognizes fact but it is not out to obtain, contradict, or prove facts. Saint Augustine knew this when he said, "I believe in order that I may understand."¹

Author Bio

¹ Jones, G. Curtis. *1000 Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1986, pp. 126–27.

Dr. Brian M. Carmichael Sr. is married to Stacey of twenty-seven years. They have four grown children (three boys and one girl) and two grandchildren. He is the pastor of Holy Temple Baptist in Memphis, TN. He is also on faculty with MCUTS of Union University. He received his BSCL from Union University (Jackson, TN) and his MDIV and Ph.D. from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. As a Christian leader, he has a passion for preaching, teaching, disciple-making, and all things church related.

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