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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2331 ~ Elisha Captures an Army.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

When God's prophet, Elisha, was with a group of prophets in Israel, they decided to enlarge their living quarters. They travelled together to the Jordan River and began cutting down trees to make poles for their new building. As they worked, the iron axe head of one of their borrowed axes fell off its handle and disappeared into the river. The prophet who'd borrowed the axe now needed to pay for the cost of replacing such an expensive tool; a price no prophet could afford. He might have to work for the axe's owner as a slave until the lost axe head was paid for.

Elisha was there when the incident happened, as recorded in 2nd Kings, Chapter 6. At the prophet's distress, Elisha threw a stick into the water at the place where the axe head had sunk and as a result, the axe head amazingly floated back up to the top of the water again, where the prophet then retrieved it. What a blessing it was that God, through Elisha, had saved the axe head! There's no way to scientifically explain this miracle; for it was an act of God's grace and a demonstration of His concern for one of His faithful servants. God is concerned about every detail of our lives, whether it be great or small.

In today's *Bible Adventure,* King Ben-Hadad of Aram, also known as Syria, had been in a continuing on-off war with Israel. Back in 1st Kings, Chapter 20, of the Bible, Ben-Hadad is recorded to have fought King Ahab of Israel twice and both times, God had given Ahab the victory. But instead of killing Ben-Hadad as God had commanded him to, Ahab had let him live, and even made a treaty with him. Now Ahab's son, Joram, ruled Israel and the Syrians again were on the warpath.

In 2nd Kings, Chapter 6, Syria's raids into Israelite territory had proven fruitless, because God was revealing to Elisha the Syrian army's positions; then Elisha warned King Joram not to go near the place of the Syrian camp. Frustrated, King Ben-Hadad of Syria thought that he must have a spy in his court, but the Syrians knew that Elisha was the one responsible for knowing their secrets. During one night, the Syrian army surrounded the city of Dothan where Elisha and his new assistant were staying.

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When the assistant saw the city cut off on all sides by the invading army, he became panicky. But Elisha remained calm and prayed to the Lord to open the servant's eyes so that he could see the heavenly forces that were watching over them. The servant saw a multitude of fiery horses and chariots from heaven that far outnumbered the soldiers of the Syrian army. Who were those heavenly guards?

In many places in the Scriptures, it's revealed that there are good angels and bad angels. The bad angels fell from their positions in heaven to follow Satan, their new master, as demons. But good angels from God help to protect God's people (as in this case), as well as reveal information about some future event, and guide, provide and minister to believers in general.

As listed in Romans, Chapter 8, we have God's great assurance that if we are His children through faith in Christ Jesus, God works all things together for our good; and in Hebrews, Chapter 13, Jesus Christ said He will never leave us or forsake us.

Elisha knew that the heavenly forces his assistant saw had far more power than the Syrian army did. Elisha said: "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." This well-known statement has given encouragement to countless believers down through the centuries; for no matter how great our earthly adversaries might appear to be, our heavenly allies are always greater.

Elisha prayed that the Syrian soldiers might be stricken with physical blindness and the Lord answered his prayer. Elisha told the blinded soldiers that if they wanted to find the prophet they were seeking, they must follow him, for he told them that he would lead them to him. Elisha proceeded to lead the soldiers from Dothan, about 4 kilometres northwest of Samaria, to the city of Samaria itself. When their eyes were opened, the Syrians found that instead of capturing Elisha, they themselves had been captured by Elisha as they had followed him.

Did Elisha deceive the Syrian soldiers in what he had said? Deception usually but not always, involves an untruth. Therefore in most instances, deception is wrong. But clearly there are exceptions, when God intends that certain information be withheld from certain people. In this case, the Syrians believed that they knew what Elisha meant by the words he said; but in reality, they were ignorant of God's greater plans of working through Elisha to subdue their attacks against Israel, God's chosen people.

When King Joram of Israel saw the captured Syrian soldiers, he wanted to know if he should kill them. Elisha wouldn't allow this and instead, asked that a great feast be set before them. After the Syrians had eaten food and drink, they were to be sent back to their king in Syria. In doing this, Elisha was teaching a spiritual principle listed in the book of Proverbs and quoted by the Apostle Paul: "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good."

This is a Godly principle that we need to apply in our own lives every day; for when we do, we'll discover that this principle really works and God will reward us for it. A family of new converts was having great difficulty with one of their sons at school. The boy was being picked on by another child in an unpleasant way and causing tensions in the classroom. The family didn't know much of the Bible but they'd read the passage about feeding their enemies and they took it literally. So they sent their son to school each day with food for the difficult boy and in a little while, both boys became friends.

Because Israel kindly fed the captured Syrian soldiers, the Syrians in turn respected Elisha's God, and stopped raiding Israel for a while. Once again, God demonstrated to both Israelites and Syrians that He alone held the real power over both their nations, and indeed, over all nations in the world.

Once again in today's *Bible Adventure*, God had shown kindness and mercy to people who weren't worshipping Him wholeheartedly as they should. When God created the universe, He set two perfect people, Adam and Eve, in a perfect setting in the beautiful Garden of Eden. God gave them one rule to obey, to test their loyalty that they would do as He had asked them to. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and this disobedience resulted in a barrier between themselves and God, as well as physical death onto the human race. We use the word 'sin' to explain that each of us has broken God's laws of right and wrong, and that our sinful hearts inherited from our sinful parents, are never able to achieve God's holy standard, no matter what good things we might try to do to please Him and gain His approval.

Did you know that there's a time coming when God's wrath against sin will be displayed over the whole earth? People in church don't like to think about God's punishment for sin, yet if God didn't punish wrongdoing, He wouldn't be a just God. Most people want to go to heaven, but they want to go there on their own terms and merits, and not Jesus Christ's, who died in their place to free their souls from sin. Those who refuse God's condition of entrusting themselves to the Lord Jesus, have only one place left to go in the next life: that's hell. Hell is a greatly feared place of unending fire and torment. People often prefer to think of God as a God of love and forget that God is a God of *holy* love. This means that in His universe, all sin debts will be collected and every unrepentant person will be judged.

Many people say that they're a Christian but they don't live a lifestyle pleasing to God. A counsellor was talking one day to a university student. He asked the student if he was a Christian. "Oh, yes," he replied. "Have you asked the Lord Jesus to be your Saviour?" "Yes."
"Are you letting Him be the Lord of your life each day?" "No way!"

The counsellor plainly told the student that he wasn't a real Christian. "That's your opinion," the student replied. "But that's what the Bible says," answered the counsellor. If anyone asks Jesus to be their Saviour but not their Lord, they can mistakenly think that they've secured a ticket into heaven and go on living their lives on earth in whatever selfish way they wish.

But for real Christians, life is different from this. In Ephesians, Chapter 2, it says: "Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers of the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way … By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else."

"God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things that we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece! He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

Real Christians take comfort in the words of Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 1: "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death." Jesus is Lord – He is Lord over creation, over life and death, illness and forgiveness, both now and for evermore! Be loyal to Him always!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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