

BOOK OF 2 KINGS
ELISHA CALLS FOR WARFARE!
2 KINGS 13:14-19

Introduction

Have you ever heard the expression, “*You better strike it while the iron is hot*”? This expression comes from the truth that **iron can only be bent or molded when it’s been heated to extreme temperatures.**

When a blacksmith is forming a piece of iron into some sort of instrument or implement, **he must strike the iron while it is hot to get it to bend to whatever shape he is attempting to mold it to.**

It has become an expression that has come to mean **making the most of an opportunity or favorable conditions while one has the chance to do so.** This alludes to the fact that **favorable opportunities to do something may pass, so one must be ready to take swift action while the time is opportune!**

That applies to things in the spiritual world also! Some times are more opportune than others to do something for the LORD!
(*e.g. witnessing; giving tracts*)

So we as the children of God must be spiritually aware as well as spiritually prepared for those opportune times and be ready to take action as those prime opportunities present themselves!

Let’s keep this in mind as we approach our text this evening!

TONIGHT, IN OUR VERSES HERE, WE SEE ELISHA CALLED FOR WARFARE WITH THE ENEMY. (Vs 15)

When *ELISHA* told *KING JOASH* here to “*TAKE BOWS AND ARROWS*”, that signified the LORD’s call for Israel’s **WARFARE WITH THE ENEMY!**

Israel at this time was on the wrong side of what seemed like a relentless warfare with Syria. Up to this time things had NOT been going so well with Israel as they were living in a constant state of being defeated by the enemy!
We saw previously in verse 3 that this was Israel’s own fault!

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The problem was that Israel was not willing to give up her idolatry and be true to the LORD! So, she was living in constant defeat in the face of her Syrian enemies!

Could I tell you that **when a Child of God is CONSTANTLY LIVING A DEFEATED SPIRITUAL LIFE, that it is most always, if not always, because of living with willful sin in their life that they are unwilling to give up!**

I. WE MUST KNOW WHO THE ENEMY IS!

KING JOASH thought he knew who his enemy was! To him it was Syria! Because Syria constantly hammered Israel and had taken many cities captive!

Yes, **SYRIA** was **ISRAEL’S** enemy! There is no denying that! But, as I just said, **KING JOASH** and the people of *ISRAEL* had another enemy that caused them to be constantly defeated by **SYRIA—SIN!**

We, as Believers in Christ, are at war with the kingdom of darkness! That is why Paul said what he did in *Ephesians 6:10-17.*

Sometimes people lash out at others thinking that they are the enemy: Billy Graham once said, “*Much of Church warfare is fought by blind-folded soldiers, who can’t see the forces against them, who are buffeted by invisible opponents so they respond by striking at each other.*” (That’s sad, but way too often it is true!)

II. THERE ARE THREE AREAS OF OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE THAT ARE ALL INTERCONNECTED—THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL!

A. There Is The Battle Within Against Our Flesh—Which Let Me Say This, Satan Uses Against Us!

The reason why Israel had so much of a problem giving up their idolatry is because **it appealed to their FLESH!**

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The reason why WE have so much problem giving up our sin is because sin appeals to OUR FLESH! At least it appeals to us until it brings a bitter end!

James 1:14-15 – “14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

The Apostle Paul spoke of the problem of our flesh:

Romans 7:18 “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

Our FLESH is rotten to the core!

It has been that way ever since Eve first listened to SATAN in the Garden of Eden!

Genesis 3:6–“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [lust of the flesh], and that it was pleasant to the eyes [lust of the eyes], and a tree to be desired to make one wise, [pride of life] she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Now, it was a tree that was *good for food* except for one thing! It was a tree that was *pleasant to the eyes* except for one thing! It was a tree that *appeared to be desirable*, except for one thing!—That one thing in all three of these instances is that God had prohibited Adam and Eve from eating from that tree!

Eve listened to SATAN instead of GOD! Eve listened to what her FLESH observed instead of GOD! SATAN stirred within her that disobedience by getting her focus off of the WORD OF GOD and on to the TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL! We get in trouble when we get our focus off of the LORD and on to what our FLESH says! Adam got his focus off the LORD and on to Eve!

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The Apostle Paul spoke of his own FLESH problem:
Romans 7:23 “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

So, there is the **BATTLE WITHIN** that we must win!

We can't be effective as Believers if we are constantly being defeated and controlled by our FLESH instead of by the WORD OF GOD!

There Is The Battle Within Against Our Flesh...

B. There Is The Battle Without Against The World And The One Whose Exercises Dominion Over This World—The Devil or Satan!

The unregenerate world (i.e. those who are lost) are under the dominion of the **PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, SATAN** himself and so this world's agenda is CONTRARY to that of our Heavenly Father, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit!

Ephesians 2:1-3–“1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4–“3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

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In fact, **did you know that the very *spirit of antichrist* abounds in this world!** The Apostle John spoke of this JUST AFTER he spoke of how we are not to love the world! *(1 John 2:15-18) “18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”*

III. NOTICE THE PICTURE HERE OF THE ANOINTING OF THE LORD! (Vs 16)

Notice Elisha’s Hands On The King’s Hands!

This symbolized God’s miraculous assistance that was made available to **KING JOASH** here!

We can try shooting arrows all day but, without the LORD being in it, we won’t hit anything! (In fact, Israel had been shooting arrows to no avail because the **LORD** was against them, not for them!)

But listen, if the LORD guides us and empowers us to do something, then and only then can our efforts be successful!

By way of example think with me about when David met Goliath on the battlefield with nothing but a sling and 5 smooth stones! We are NOT told that it was David’s great marksmanship with a sling that got him the victory! In fact, what we are told beforehand came from David’s own mouth to Goliath!

1 Samuel 17:45-47–“45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD’S, and he will give you into our hands.”

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The **LORD** laser-guided that one stone to be the knock-out punch to win the victory for God’s people that day!

Oh how we need the LORD’s help if we are going to be successful in overcoming the enemy! *Ephesians 6:10 – Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

IV. NOTICE THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY HERE! (Vs 17)
Elisha told the King to open the window facing East. Then he told him to shoot an arrow out that open window!

THAT OPEN WINDOW represented **THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY** the **LORD** was giving **KING JOASH!**

A. **What Is “Opportunity?”**

Opportunity is a set of circumstances before us that makes it possible to do something!

God arranges **opportunities** and sets up the ‘**season**’ of access to **opportunities** for victory in our lives. It’s up to us to grasp the **opportunities** and obey God’s will before the window of **opportunity** closes.

But we must realize that Satan can open doors of **opportunity** as well, so we must discern which **opportunities** are of the **LORD** and which are not! It was easy for **KING JOASH** here. **ELISHA**, the man of God was involved here to guide him!

This is where the wonderful advantage of having the leading of the indwelling **HOLY SPIRIT** of our lives. But that entails our also being **FILLED** with the **HOLY SPIRIT** of God!

Now, the LORD is still opening doors today! We need to ask the **LORD** to open our eyes to see the **opportunities** that **HE** is setting before us!

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B. Here We See That Only One Window Would Do!

A lot of people think it doesn't matter which window they shoot out of. *"All of them are good."*

No, there was only one window here that **KING JOASH** could shoot out of and have victory! The one he was directed to shoot out of! This goes to **obedience!**

KING JOASH'S obedience to ELISHA was indicative of His **OBEDIENCE** to the Word of God!

V. NOTICE THE NEED TO GIVE MAXIMUM EFFORT FOR THE LORD! (Vs. 18-19)

KING JOASH didn't know it, *but ELIJAH* telling *him* to **STRIKE THE ARROWS** on the ground represented the number of times the **LORD** would allow **KING JOASH** to defeat the **LORD'S** enemies.

He only got half of the victories he could have had from the **LORD** had he shown a little more initiative here! He gave a poor effort!

I wonder what we miss out on when we don't go far enough for the LORD...when we give a poor effort!

Sadly, too many professing Believers are satisfied with doing little to nothing for the **LORD!** Some that used to serve the **LORD** no longer serve Him! Some don't put themselves where they need to be to be used of the **LORD!** (Some are not faithful enough to be considered! That's a real problem today in most Churches!)

1 Corinthians 4:1—"1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Oh how the **LORD'S** heart must break when those who know Him are content with giving very little effort for the One Who gave so much for them! (He went to the cross for us all, yet there are many who think they are doing Him a favor just to show up for Church once in a while!

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I've heard some folks in Church express that they've *"done their share"* or that they've *"done their time"* as if serving the LORD is a prison sentence!

When we don't stay active for the LORD, the tendency is for us to drift away from Him!

We need some Joshuas and Calebs who wholly followed the LORD! And because of that the LORD blessed them to not only see the Promised Land, but to possess it for themselves!

Those who didn't wholly follow the LORD slowly dropped in the 40 years of wilderness wanderings!

We see here that **ELISHA** got aggravated with **KING JOASH** because he struck so few times with the arrows! I wonder was he just too lazy to strike five or six times. We're not told, but **ELISHA** wasn't pleased with his effort!

He stopped short of receiving all that he could have had!

A lackadaisical spirit blocks the conduit by which the LORD's blessings will flow to us. We need to make sure that is not the case in our life!

Conclusion

What window of opportunities might you be missing out on for the LORD?

Are you stopping short of what the LORD wants to do in your life?

Let's be aware of the opportunities the LORD places before us and give an effort that is pleasing to Him!