

Claiming Total Victory



Gary Wilkerson January 20, 2020

When the prophet Elisha was on his deathbed, Joash, the king of Israel, wept aloud that Israel's great prophetic light was about to go out. He recalled Elisha's great works of faith and wept, "My father! My father! ... The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" (2 Kings 13:14, NIV). Elisha rallied briefly, bringing hope to Joash's heart. Then the prophet gave the king some instructions: "Go get a bow and some arrows" (13:15).

Elisha told the king to shoot arrows into the air, which Joash did, and then Elisha told him to take the arrows and strike the ground with them. Joash complied by striking the ground three times. Then, to the king's utter surprise, Elisha became angry and burst out, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated [Syria] and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times" (13:19).

This may seem like a rather strange scene from Elisha's life, but he was about building up the faith of others until the very end. He was telling King Joash, "How dare you expect so little from God! You would have defeated Syria five or six times but you'll settle for only three."

Elisha's words apply to every Christian today. Our Lord wants us to go beyond limited victories. Through the God-stories in the Word, we are to build faith upon faith — victory upon victory — and be continually hungry for him to act. We must not be content to settle. Elisha essentially tells us, "God will give you as many victories as you're willing to lay hold of. Keep striking the ground of faith!"

This may seem like a heartless demand but actually it is deeply compassionate. There is a God-story for every struggling marriage, every financial crisis, every stressful job situation, every alienated parent and child. Remember, God doesn't give partial victories but total triumph!

God has surrounded you, and all the forces of heaven are at his disposal to protect and provide for you. May God stir your faith so that you will keep striking the ground with conviction and trust. And, remember, every trial you endure is an opportunity for the world to be transformed by *your* God-story.

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