

“Those with us are greater.” I had always known that something powerful had happened when my master, the prophet Elisha, had seen his teacher, the prophet Elijah, taken away into heaven. There were all sorts of rumors about what Elisha had seen and what had happened to Elijah. Many doubted that Elijah was really gone and they thought he was just hiding out on some mountain praying. But I knew **something** had happened because Elisha was never the same after that moment. Elisha had **seen** something that day that **changed** him forever—he had gained a **confidence** and **faith** unlike any other that I had ever seen. Elisha’s new boldness began with him picking up Elijah’s abandoned cloak, rolling it up, and touching the Jordan River with it. The waters of the Jordan then **split in two** for him to cross. It was like Moses splitting the Red Sea or the Ark of the Covenant splitting the Jordan River. Clearly, the Creator was powerfully at work within Elisha. Then we headed into Jericho to see some of the other prophets. The city’s water supply was bad and they begged for help. So Elisha took some salt and threw it into the spring and declared, **“The Lord has healed this water and it will never again produce death!”** And the water was purified. Then we headed northwest to Bethel. Along the road, 42 young men began attacking and ridiculing Elisha. He called for the Creator’s **protection** and out of the woods came two bears that mauled and killed the young men. Then a widow came to us and shared that she was in great **debt**. Elisha told her to gather all the empty jars she could find in her village and take the little oil she had and pour it into the empty jars. The oil never ran out until she had filled all the empty jars she had gathered. Then Elisha told her, **“Go, sell the oil, pay your debts, and take care of your sons with what is left over.”**

And that was just the beginning of the amazing things I saw. There was a rich woman we knew in Shunem and she was very hospitable to us. She had never been able to have children, so Elisha told her, **“This time next year you will be holding a son in your arms.”** And sure enough, she got pregnant and gave birth to a son. The years went by and one day when we were praying on Mount Carmel, we saw that same woman in the distance, riding toward us on a donkey. Her son had **died** and she was devastated. When we arrived at her house, Elisha laid upon the boy twice and the boy was **raised from the dead**. It was incredible. Then we went down to Gilgal and found that there was a **famine**. Elisha ordered me to gather some wild plants and make us a stew. But I accidentally put a poisonous plant into the stew. When the people tasted my stew, they said, **“There is death in the stew!”** So Elisha put some flour into the stew and said, **“Serve it to the people.”** So we did and the stew was no longer harmful. Later someone showed up with 20 pieces of bread to share with us. Elisha said, **“Give it to the people to eat.”** But I asked, **“How will this be able to feed all 100 people?!”** It was not nearly enough food for us all. But Elisha said to me, **“Give it to the people. They will eat and they will have leftovers.”** And it happened according to his word—all 100 men ate their fill with leftovers to spare.

But while all these great things were happening, Aram was **attacking** Israel. The military general of Aram was named Naaman and he had been **defeating** us at every turn—but then he got sick with leprosy. Joram was the king of Israel at this time and he received a letter from the king of Aram, asking him to cure Naaman of his leprosy. This was absurd to King Joram. Why on earth would he cure the general who was **terrorizing** his people?! When Elisha heard what was happening, he asked King Joram to send Naaman over to him. When Naaman came to us, Elisha told him to wash seven times in the Jordan River. Naaman was **angry** and did not think washing in the muddy waters of the Jordan would make any difference. But Naaman’s servants talked him into it and he went and washed. And sure enough, he was **cured** of his leprosy. Naaman wanted to give Elisha some wealth for healing him, but Elisha refused. It was crazy to me. Why on earth would Elisha heal our **enemy**, much less for **free**? And even though Elisha had done this loving thing for Naaman, the war with Aram did not stop—they kept **attacking** us. And to me that further confirmed the **absurdity** of what Elisha had done for Naaman.

But Elisha was unphased. He just kept warning Israel where Aram’s attacks were going to be so that they could avoid them. When the king of Aram learned that Elisha was the one tipping off King Joram about his attacks, he was furious. Elisha became enemy number one for the king of Aram. This again confirmed my belief that Elisha was **stupid** for helping his enemies—Elisha’s love had **not fixed** anything. The king of Aram tracked us down and found us in the town of Dothan. The whole army of Aram surrounded the city at night while we were sleeping. And when I awoke that morning, I looked out the window and saw Aram’s army camped all around the city. I woke Elisha in a panic and yelled, **“What are we going to do?!”** Elisha said to me, **“Do not be afraid. Those with us are greater than those with them.”** Then Elisha prayed, **“Lord open his eyes so he can see.”** Then my eyes were opened and I could see that all the hills around us were filled with the Creator’s **spiritual army** of fiery chariots and horses. **This** must have been what Elisha had seen when Elijah was taken away into heaven. I finally began to understand how Elisha had been living with such confidence and **faith** and why Elisha had been willing to help and **love** his enemies. Then Elisha asked the Creator to blind the army of Aram. They were **blinded** and we led them to Samaria, the capital city of Israel. When King Joram saw that we had captured and led the army of Aram to his doorstep he said, **“Let’s kill them!”** But Elisha said, **“No. Do not kill them. Feed them.”** So we hosted a great dinner party for our hated enemies, the army of Aram. All the enemy soldiers ate and drank and then they peacefully went back home. Our kindness led to them stopping their attacks on us for a period of time, but eventually they **attacked** again and besieged the city of Samaria.

“Those with us are greater.” Elisha lived in a violent, hurtful, and abusive world, filled with ongoing cycles of violence. But Elisha was able to live differently, to live a life of **love** because his eyes had been **opened**. Elisha had seen the spiritual forces of the Creator that were all around him. And Elisha wanted his servant to see the same, praying, **“Lord open his eyes so he can see.”** Elisha’s love for his enemies was not a strategy for ending the war with Aram. Elisha’s love for his enemies was him simply doing the **right thing** because it was the right thing to do. Elisha knew that the Creator’s all-powerful heavenly forces were always **with** him and always **around** him. Elisha knew that **nothing** could happen without the Creator allowing it to transpire. And that set Elisha free to **love** in all circumstances—without calculation or scheming.

“Those with us are greater.” We too live in a world where people will attack us, abuse us, take advantage of us, and hurt us. And even if we love them, they will likely **not stop**. They will keep being selfish and mean—they will keep crucifying us and others. But if we have our eyes opened in **faith**, then we can have the strength to continue, endure, and persevere on the path of love even while people are repeatedly hurtful and abusive. Jesus saw that twelve legions of angels were all around him and on his side and that allowed him to **“turn the other cheek”** and **“love his enemies”** while they crucified him. Our prayer everyday should be, **“Lord, open my eyes so I can see.”** May your eyes be **opened** to the Creator’s presence, to his spiritual forces surrounding you and watching over you. You do not need to **panic**—ever. You do not need to be **afraid**—ever. **“Those with us are greater.”** The almighty and all-powerful Creator is on your side and his guardian angels are all around you. Because of this you can live **differently**. You don’t need to fight your enemies. **“Do not kill them. Feed them.”** You can help your enemies and heal them. You can share your food and drink with them. It doesn’t matter if they never stop attacking you—you can do the right thing, the good thing, the loving thing, the thing that Christ Jesus did for you because **“those with us are greater than those with them.” Amen.**