



CHAPTER 6

When

- According to the timeline we are using for this study, the kingdom of Israel and Judah divided in 975 B.C. The period that followed, sometimes called the period of the “Divided Kingdom,” lasted the next few centuries. Israel remained a cohesive nation until 721 B.C. (Assyrian captivity), while Judah lasted until 607 B.C. (Babylonian exile).

- The events of 2 Kings 6 probably took place between 895-885 B.C.

Key Characters

- **Elisha** – The student of Elijah who replaced his master as the prophet of God.

- **The Sons of the Prophets** – These were men who were students of the prophets. They probably received religious education. Not much is known about them.

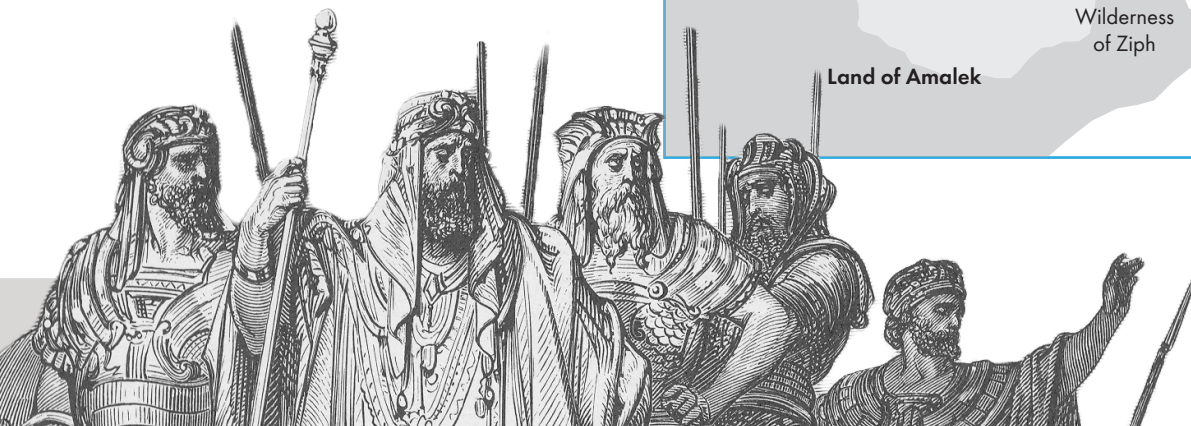
- **Ben-hadad** – King of Syria.

- **King of Israel** – The king is not named in the chapter, but this was almost certainly Jehoram, son of Ahab.

Where

- Elijah led the army of Syria from Dothan to Samaria.

- Ben-hadad besieged the city of Samaria.



Outline

- ELISHA AND THE FLOATING AXE HEAD (6:1-7):

- + The sons of the prophets had a problem. Their living quarters were too small. They went to Elisha and asked if they could go down to the Jordan River and cut timber to make new accommodations.
- + After getting Elisha's approval, they proceeded cutting down trees. While they were chopping, one man's axe head came off its handle and flew into the water.
- + The man was very troubled, because he had borrowed the axe from someone else.
- + Elisha worked a miracle, caused the iron axe head to float on the water, and the man retrieved it.

- THE SYRIAN ARMY BLINDED BY GOD (6:8-23):

- + The king of Syria made war with Israel, but Elisha kept revealing the enemy plans to the king of Israel and thwarting their tactics.
- + The king of Syria was so frustrated that he sent an army to Dothan to capture Elisha.
- + When Elisha's servant saw the army around the city, he was worried and asked Elisha what they would do.
- + God opened the eyes of Elisha's servant and he saw that the mountains around Dothan were filled with chariots of fire.
- + God struck the entire Syrian army with blindness, and Elisha tricked them by leading them away from Dothan and into the city of Samaria, the capital of Israel.
- + When they were inside Samaria, God opened their eyes, and they realized they were in trouble.
- + Instead of killing them all, Elisha told the king of Israel to make a feast for them and send them on their way.

- STARVATION IN SAMARIA DURING THE SYRIAN SEIGE (6:24-33):

- + Sometime later, Ben-hadad of Syria besieged Samaria.
- + The siege led to a famine. The famine was so bad a donkey's head sold for 80 shekels of silver and 1/4 of a kab (about 1 liter) of dove's dung sold for 5 shekels of silver.
- + But the horror got worse than people eating dove poop, people started eating people (cannibalism).
- + A woman (woman 1) came to the king with a complaint. Woman 1 and woman 2 had agreed they would eat woman 1's son one day, and then the next day they would eat woman 2's son. But when it came time to eat woman 2's son, she hid him and did not let him be eaten. Woman 1 wanted the king to do something about the broken promise.
- + When the king heard the complaint, he tore his clothes. In anger, he ordered Elisha to be killed.
- + Elisha was in his house speaking with the elders. The king sent a servant to Elisha's house, but Elisha was not killed. Elisha will prophesy an end to the starvation in the opening verses of 2 Kings 7.

Application

- This chapter is a horrible fulfillment of a warning God gave centuries earlier to the Israelite people.
- God warned His people about breaking His law, prophesying that their enemies would make their lives a horror if they were unfaithful.
- Deuteronomy 28:54-57 mentions the cannibalism of this chapter.
- Many people scoff at the idea that God's word, written almost 2,000 years ago, is still relevant today.
- They mock the idea that God's promises and threats are still valid.
- Texts like this show us that God's warnings are to be taken seriously no matter what century we're living in.
- The world will never exist long enough for God's promises and warnings to expire.

