

OTHER RESTITUTION TYPES

– *OCTOBER 24.* – 2 KINGS 6:8-23. –

ELISHA AWAKENS THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON – PUNISHES HIS SERVANT GEHAZI – ENTRAPS THE SYRIAN ARMY AND RENDERS THEM GOOD FOR EVIL – IMPORTANT LESSONS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." – Psalm 34:7.

IN TODAY'S Study we note Elisha's awakening of the Shunammite's son, his punishment of his servant Gehazi with leprosy, and his entrapping of the Syrian army. (2 Kings 4:8-37; 5:20-27.) While these things may not find exact counterpart in the events of the coming Kingdom, they nevertheless represent principles which will be in operation then – the principles of reward for right doing, of punishment for intentional wrong-doing, and of sympathetic restraint and instruction. All these principles will operate during Messiah's Kingdom; and under these the world will gradually make progress. "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." – Isaiah 26:9.

AWAKENING THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON

Millions of people will long remember a most touching scene in the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, representing the death of the Shunammite's son, and showing how Elisha awakened the lad from the sleep of death and restored him to his parents. Perhaps no more touching film was ever produced. Few saw it without tears. It pictured the coming Restitution work of the Millennium, when all the sleeping dead will be awakened, to resume their lives and to complete their education in the school of experience under

more happy and more favorable conditions than any enjoy at the present time, except the Church – those who during this Age are blessed of the Lord with hearing ears, eyes of faith and obedient hearts.

GEHAZI SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY

Gehazi had in many respects been a faithful servant to Elisha. As a result, he had blessings of knowledge which the majority of people did not possess. With the knowledge came responsibility; hence the severe punishment inflicted upon the man for hypocrisy and deception. We are reminded of the text which declares that if a good man depart from his well-doing and sin wilfully, his past good deeds shall not be remembered, even as it is with the evil-doer who, coming to God with full repentance and change of heart, is forgiven and received into God's family. His past evil is entirely ignored, except as it may bear its fruit in certain weaknesses of mind or body. – Ezekiel 3:17-21; 18:20-24; 33:10-16.

When General Naaman perceived the great miracle accomplished in his cleansing from leprosy, he returned to Elisha, offering thanks to God and desiring the Prophet to receive the presents which he had brought. But Elisha would receive none of them. In this he manifested what we believe is always the Lord's Spirit – never to sell spiritual things for money. It is for this reason that some ministers now object to taking up collections, holding fairs or soliciting money in any manner. Their contention is that whatever is given to the Lord's service should be given with a free hand and a ready heart. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23.) It is a privilege to give to the Lord and His Cause; for the Almighty is not poor, that He should need our gifts. All the gold and silver are His, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. – Haggai 2:8; Psalms 50:10.

Under such a noble example Gehazi should have profited, but did not. He allowed covetousness to come into his mind. He had

seen the rich Babylonish garments, and thought how fine it would be if he could have some of these and plenty of changes of linen garments. He would be like a prince. He had perceived that General Naaman regretted that his presents were not accepted. He pursued, and told the general that the Prophet had said that while he did not desire any of the garments or other things for himself, he had concluded that he might use some of these for his servants, and that he would accept gifts for them. The ruse was successful. The servant was recognized as the one seen at Elisha's place. The goods were joyfully given to him. He hid them away secretly, until the Prophet called him, told him all about the matter and pronounced his punishment – leprosy.

So will it be in the coming Age. Any disobedience will meet with swift punishment. Of the judges of that time it is written that they will not judge with the hearing of the ear nor with the sight of the eye; they will judge righteously. – Isaiah 11:3,4.

ELISHA'S CAPTURE ATTEMPTED

It was probably after the death of General Naaman that the king of Syria declared war against the Israelites. To his surprise he found that every move he made was checkmated. If he planned to capture a certain city, it seemed as though the Israelitish king knew every detail. Thus his endeavors came to naught. He looked for a traitor amongst his own people in his own household, or for some explanation. Then it was told him by one of his servants, "Behold, the Prophet Elisha is in Israel and makes known to their king all thy counsels, even those of thy bed-chamber." Apparently the knowledge of Jehovah and Elisha had spread from General Naaman to some of the household of the king.

Intent upon his conquest, the king sought to capture Elisha. If he could not get some profit out of the man for himself and his side, he could at least keep him from communicating with the king of Israel. He sent spies to find where Elisha dwelt, and located him

at the little city of Dothan. Thereupon he sent a good-sized force, quite sufficient to surround the city and make it impossible for Elisha to escape – horses, chariots, etc. He would do two things – not only capture a city, but capture the Prophet.

In the morning early, Elisha's servant looked forth and beheld the companies of the enemy on every side, barring every way of escape. He was terrified and said, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Promptly came the answer, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." The servant did not appreciate this; for he had not come to realize fully what Divine [R5781 : page 302] powers were with his master. Then Elisha prayed that the eyes of the young man might be opened; and he beheld angelic hosts, horses and chariots of fire around about Elisha. This was sufficient to give the young man the needed courage and to assure him of God's Power.

Just what kind of vision this was makes no particular difference. Undoubtedly it was merely a vision, without any reality; but it served its purpose. God's Power surrounds all of His consecrated people in an unlimited measure. These powers are exercised by spirit beings, entirely invisible to men. The important thing is to get the right thought – that under all conditions Omnipotent Power stands behind and completely surrounds those who are His. Nothing can befall this special class except in accord with the Divine program. Whatever may occur in their experience will be of Divine foreknowledge and permission; hence the promise to this class is that all things shall work together for their good. – Romans 8:28.

THE SYRIAN HOST CAPTURED

The Prophet exercised a supernatural power of blinding the Syrian host; but just what the power was or how it was accomplished we can only conjecture. Doubtless their eyes were wide open; and doubtless they saw the hills, valleys, roads, etc.;

but the eyes of their understanding were closed, apparently, in some hypnotic manner. Elisha gave them to understand that he would lead them to the proper city; and he did so, guiding them straight to the city of Samaria, in through its gates. There, surrounded by the hosts of the capital, he broke the hypnotic spell. Their eyes opened; and they perceived that they were in the hands of their enemies, who, with drawn swords and leveled spears, offered no opportunity of escape. They had been entrapped, but not to their injury – for their good, for their instruction.

The king of Israel inquired of the Prophet whether or not he should smite these and destroy them, or what. The answer was, "No; feed them and let them return peaceably to their own home." The king caught the spirit of the proposition, and not merely gave them bread and water, such as might be given prisoners, but made them a bountiful feast – treated them royally, treated them as friends. Then they were set free to go to their own land, there to tell the strange experience that had occurred and to demonstrate to their king the impossibility of successfully fighting against the kingdom of Israel under such circumstances.

