

Most people, I fear who read this passage, interpret it as magical. The Bible is not a book of magic. I think that's very important. The Bible is a book of principles, not a book of magic. Looking at it from a magical viewpoint, how unfaithful Elisha was. Elisha says, Smite on the ground. And Joash smote three times. He did what he said, didn't he? And then Elisha gets angry! Well ~~xxxx~~ sometimes people ask me to do something and I do it the best I can. They get angry and say, You should have done it differently. I say, Why didn't you tell me how you wanted it done in the first place. It's not fair! Was Elisha unfair here? He says, Why did you only smite three times? If you had smitten 5 or 6 times you would have smitten Syria until you consumed it, but now you'll smite it but thrice. So he might say, Why didn't you tell me the rules of the game? Why didn't you explain that everytime I strike the ground with the arrows means 'I will beat Syria ~~pxx~~ once and I'd have hit it 20 times! You just said, Smite the ground. I did what you said. I did it three times. But now you get angry with me and say that on account of that we are only going to beat Syria three times.

Well it is unfair if this is magic! It isn't magic. The number three has nothing to do with it. A -- Some wonderful people have spent great amounts of time counting numbers in the Bible. Numbers may have meaning, but if they do it is apt to be brought out clearly in the context. Counting up numbers, trying to get a mystic meaning out of them, that's not the way to interpret the Bible. What is the principle here? The principle is this: Elisha whom Joash pretends is the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof, he pretends so that the people will think Joash is the kind of king the people will want to follow because he recognized how important Elisha is to the life of the nation. Elisha says, Smite the ground. & Joash takes the arrows and says, If you want me to do it, I'm glad to please a poor old dying fellow, and I'm glad to have the people think that I'm doing whatever he says, but ~~xx~~ his heart isn't in it. That's what you think. If he had thought, Here's what Elisha says; I don't understand it; I don't know the meaning, but it must be important. If he says Smite it, I'll smite it with vigor. If he had shown that vigorous attitude of trying to carry out the == what Elisha' God's messenger said, That would have been a sign that the nation was turning back to God and that it could expect God's blessing upon it in the future.

If we say, Well, I want to serve the Lord. I'd like to have my life count for Him, yes. I want to try to get some money together so I can buy a car for myself now so I'll have a little fun along the way. And of course if I just got a thorough education and just worked at it why I might get my education and be ready to serve the Lord by the time I'm 25, but wouldn't it be a lot better if I got married when I'm 20 or 21? So I'll get busy and work hard and get some money so I can get married ~~and~~ a lot earlier. And put all kinds of personal things ahead of working hard to fit oneself to serve the Lord effectively. I don't say it's the Lord's will for everyone to put off marriage until they reach a certain age. It might be God's will in some cases to do it young. It might be God's will in some cases that they wait until they are 30 or 35. That is a thing for the ~~xx~~ individual to learn. But what is important is that, Are we seeking our pleasure? Are we seeking our objectives? Are we trying to do what will give us a little personal pleasure and enjoyment along the way, or are we putting God first and endeavoring to serve Him to the utmost and He'll give us plenty of the good things along the way. But that's not what we're seeking. What we're seeking is to do His will and put Him first. Are we really working for our objective, or are we laxadazically going through things -- this is the next thing