

Kings and Prophets 14-05-09b

We pick up our study in 2 Kings chapter 6, and we've seen that there are some themes that help us understand what the point is here. And it's a relatively simple issue because this is an object lesson for people who are in a state of apathy and indifference toward God. That's why they are not prosperous.

That's why their enemies are beginning to encroach and make incursions into the land. Why there is a threat, why there is uncertainty, and it is only going to get worse. But in this case, it's an early incursion.

This is actually an attack that was made on the man of God preceding an attack on the nation itself. And I would be tempted here to launch into a simile, if you will, where the Christianity in a nation gets attacked prior to the nation itself coming under hostile approach in the world. The quickest way to disarm and disable a nation is to get rid of the believers that are in it that are its salt and light.

And there is something of a metaphor here in terms of Ben Hadad realizing that he's got to get rid of the spiritual element because that's what's preserving the nation. Elisha's presence is the preservative and the preventative. And if he can attack and get rid of that with overwhelming strength, then the land will be open to his approach and attack.

But instead, they are manipulated, if you will. They are blind to what they want to see, and they are shown what Elisha wants them to see. At any given moment, what they see is completely under God's control through the prophet Elisha.

And at the appropriate point, they are shown where they are. And so Elisha rebukes Joram when Joram says, ah, they're here, I can wipe them out. And he says, no, feed them.

And everybody says, well, you know, isn't this wonderful, you know, treat them nicely, laws of hospitality, and now these guys can't come back and attack. I fell for that briefly, I think I even mentioned it in the last week or two. But I'm all out of that notion now.

That's not what's going on here, I'm convinced. This isn't a matter of hospitality, it's not, oh, be nice and you'll heap coals of fire on their head. Look at verse 24, people say, well, you know, he was so nice to them, they just couldn't come back and attack.

Look at verse 24, it happened after this, Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, gathered all his army and besieged Samaria. If the idea was to heap coals of fire on them and invoke the laws of hospitality, it didn't work because he comes right back, not with a raiding band, but with the entire Syrian army. So I think I got handed a lemon there and I wasn't quick enough to cast it aside.

I was thinking about, this is apropos of nothing, but I was out of nowhere thinking about the

expression, so quiet you can hear a pin drop. You've heard that, right? I used to have a phone commercial or something about how clear their signal was and this big pin is bouncing on the ground. So quiet you can hear a pin drop.

And I got to thinking, what if it's a grenade pin? Anyway, that's kind of what's going on here. So Elisha rebukes Joram and says, you didn't take these guys with your sword. You want to kill them now? They've been delivered to you on a plate and now you want to kill them? You know, you get the idea, he's like one of these cartoon characters that jumps up and down and rubs his hands, can I kill him, can I kill him? And by the way, in Hebrew, my father comes last.

He says, killing shall I kill, my father? Killing shall I kill, shall I kill? The word for smite here is doubled. In the same way dying thou shalt die, well this is sort of a killing shall I kill kind of a thing. It's repeated, not the way they translate it here, shall I kill, shall I kill, but they're in the imperfect and it's just, he's way too eager.

He's just an opportunist and he calls him my father here. Just keep that in mind, my father, and just take note. And, and this is a really caustic, almost catty thing for Elisha to say.

So I bring these guys in, you didn't take them with your bow, you didn't use your sword and now you want to slay them? You want to take credit for, you know, taking care of the problem when you had nothing to do with it? And he says, you will not kill them, instead set food and water before them that they may eat and drink and go to their master. They may eat and drink and go to their master. Just make a note, make a little mark, underline, eat and drink.

Repeated things are making our simple points here. This is our, this is my simple point and I'm repeating it. Repeated things make the point in this passage.

Eyes open, eyes shut, eyes open, eyes shut, chariots and horsemen, chariots and horsemen. Remember Moses in Hebrews 11 and Moses' parents, seeing they had faith and did not fear. Seeing they had faith and did not fear.

The response to faith is seeing. Moses' parents were already people of faith when they saw the child. And because they were people of faith, they had eyes to see.

Gehazi or whoever this servant is for Elisha is with Elisha because he's got some modicum of interest and positive disposition toward the things of God. And Elisha says, Lord, he's looking at the wrong things, show him what he should be looking at. Well, now you've got the Syrian army who was blind and now sees and they're sort of analogous to Joram and his people who are blind.

And the question is now, will they see? Well, if they're looking, what do they see? Joram and his company, is this a fellowship meal? Did he said throw a feast and invite everybody? Let's have a massive get together. Let's all be, you know, let's have Chrislam here. Let's have everybody be under one tent and we'll all, you know, ecumenicalism and universalism and one world churchism and won't this be great? Everybody let's all, who's eating? Who's eating? Answer me,

who's eating? The Syrians are eating.

Who's not eating? Who's not eating here in this scene? The king's not eating, people in the court are not eating, Elisha's not eating, it's the Syrian army, they've been captured and they've been brought in by God's supernatural power and now they are eating in front of the king. Elisha says, feed them your food, give them your water, let them eat and drink and then send them home unharmed, right? So now, when you continue on in the story, this is not, I'm convinced now, I've just changed my mind, erase what I said last week or whenever it was. This is not the laws of fellowship, they can't come back.

This is not heap coals of fire on their head and win them to the faith. This is a rebuke, this is open your eyes, King Joram, open your eyes, oh Israelite people. I've got a little group, a little representative faction of the enemy and you're feeding them and you're sending them away unharmed.

Hello, anybody home? Hello, your enemies are doing great because the bands of Syrian raiders came into the land of Israel. You think, oh great, problem solved. This really is bands.

When it says bands of raiders, this is the Hebrew word for a small group of guys that makes a little raid. This is like your SEAL team, this is your little, this is your problem solving guys. They come in, they're a small group, they sneak through, they take care of a problem and they go back.

That's why he can feed them. This is not the entire Syrian army. This is not a vast horde.

This is probably three or four dozen guys. Their representative, one little dusty prophet can lead them from Dothan down to Samaria and the king can set up food and water for them impromptu. They don't have to sit for three hours like the angel of God did while Manoah made the food or while Abraham made the food.

This is a quick deal. Give them some food, give them some water and they disappear. They are an object lesson.

This is a portent, something that the king should see and take a note from. Well the raiding band doesn't come in anymore. Ben-Hadad is convinced that the raiding band idea is a non-starter.

So, after this, notice in verse 24 we have a sequential marker, after this, the raiding bands come no more because the entire Syrian army is loading up and coming down. So if this was a measure to say, hey, let's all be friends and you know, ebony and ivory, living in harmony and whatever else, you know, kumbaya and we are one in the spirit, none of that. Ben-Hadad is infuriated because it's almost a mockery in his point of view.

You're not even afraid of my guys? You feed them and send them home? What? You think I'm a joke? Am I a dog that you send this little boy to me? I'll feed your flesh to the fowl, you're a

beast of the field. So Ben-Hadad is going to take his entire army and he says, the heck with surprise, the heck with the raiders and the seals and the rangers and that, I'm going down there and I'm just going to bulldoze these guys off the face of the earth. So he takes his entire army right after this down to, he gathers all his army and went up and besieged Samaria.

Notice he didn't go down and take it, he besieged it because they're fairly evenly matched and so the army collapses its defenses and they're around the city and in the city and they're hiding behind the walls and they can't go forth and if they do, it's just going to be a meat grinder and there'll be nothing left. So they're all inside and they're going to try to wait them out. So it's a defensive situation.

There was a great famine in Samaria. Doesn't say a famine in the land, this is not the drought of Elijah where the crops don't grow, they're besieged, they're surrounded, the supply lines are cut. Ben-Hadad is starving them out.

He can't beat them militarily, they can't beat him militarily, so he is winning the war by attrition. He's winning it by cutting off food and waiting for them to starve. And notice the option is not on the table, well, assemble the troops and let's go out and fight.

That's not an option. They can't do that and win. So indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was sold for 80 shekels of silver and one-fourth of a cab of dove's droppings, dove's dung.

This is about, near as I can tell, about a half a pint. I think a half a pint, isn't that the size of a milk carton when you get a school lunch? Weren't those half pint, those little cartons? Well one of those full of dove droppings was selling for silver in the city. Now if you read commentaries and stuff, they say, oh, you know what, and I think even like the NIV or some other translations say that it's a half a pint of seed pods.

And you think, ah, come on, I mean, you can't tell in Hebrew the difference between dove droppings and seed pods? How is that? Well, this is how it is. What they've done is gone to the Arabic cognates and there is a flower that grows wild, it's sort of a weed. And when it's in bloom, it has these little white flowers against kind of a dusky background and some kind of way it acquired the nickname of dove's dung, it's the dove's dung weed.

And so they think, well, they would never be eating actual fertilizer, that somebody gathered these weed seeds and they're selling those and it's the dove's dung. This by the way is a hot box, it occurs nowhere else in scripture, so they just can't believe that people would be eating dove droppings because they say, well, if they're eating droppings, why don't they eat the doves? Because the doves are gone, you know, the doves have left, nothing to eat, so the doves have flown, flee like a bird to your mountain, you know, it says, the doves have left. But they didn't, you know, clean up after themselves and take that with them, this is what's running down the walls, this is what's in the places where they used to roost.

And so people are going around trying to find something to eat and here's these places where

the doves used to be that are now wisely gone and they're scraping this stuff up with whatever passes for a putty knife in the ancient world and putting it in milk cartons and selling it and making soup out of it and eating it. Now how do I know this? How do I know this is not seed pods? Read the next couple of verses. As the king of Israel was passing by on a wall, the wall, notice on the wall, why does it say he's on the wall? Why isn't he just walking down the street? The king is walking along the wall, picture it.

If you're on the wall, there's stuff inside the wall, there's stuff outside the wall, right? When you're standing on the wall, you see what's outside and you see what's inside. When he looks out on the encamped masses of the Syrians, what does he see? Prosperity, campfires, he smells the stew cooking out there, he sees guys laughing and talking, jamming their knives into the pot, pulling out big pieces of meat, chomping down, plenty of bread, plenty of water, plenty of wine, they're just out there feasting. That's on one side of the wall.

He turns around and looks inside the wall and what does he see? People are haggling, there's eBay sniping wars going on over donkey heads and cups of dove droppings outside the wall. Now what did the king recently see? Which side of the wall did he recently see? Didn't he recently see Syrians eating and feasting away and he and his people not feasting? And now is it not that same scene on steroids where they're really feasting and he's really hungry? It's a repetition. You know, there are guys with guns and there are guys who dig, right? There's just two kinds of people.

Some people have guns, other people dig, if you're up on your Eastwood movies. Same thing here, there are people who eat and people who don't eat. And this is the second time and he's walking along.

The truth of God is trying to penetrate. The mighty hammer of the Word of God is thumping away on Joram's cranium. Do you not see? Do you not yet understand? Remember the other case where guys watched people eating bread but they themselves are quibbling and harping and not taking in the truth of God? And Jesus says, look, my disciples, did you not get the lesson of the bread? You're quibbling over whether you've got bread you can see and you're not thinking about the bread you should see that is right before you, the bread of life, the bread that comes down from heaven, the manna from heaven.

Unless you eat this flesh and drink this blood, you have no life in you, that he extemporized at length in what, John 7, John 6, along in there? You remember that whole thing? Remember the blind man in John 9? I'm blind and I can see that only somebody sent from God could do this stuff. What's the matter with you Pharisees? Are we blind also? If you were blind, you would have no sin, but because you say we see, your sin remains. Seeing and not seeing.

The issue here is not hospitality or any of the rest of it. The issue is, what do you see? Here's the king walking on the wall. All he's got to do is look to the left and look to the right.

How simple can God make it? You're the people of the covenant. You're supposed to be the

people living in the land flowing with milk and honey and look at you. Look at your people.

Look at the enemy. Why do the wicked prosper? He's walking along the wall. And what does he see? What does he hear? A woman cried out to him saying, help my Lord, O king, call upon God that he may send us deliverance.

Bring the prophet that he may speak the word of God to us. Bring us the solution that will be a long term salvation for our problems. O king, why are we not down on our knees praying to the Lord God? O king, why do we not return to the God who promised us salvation? Do you remember the book of Judges, where when God's people cried out, do you not remember the prayer of Solomon, 2 Chronicles 7, 14? If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, I will hear from heaven.

I will forgive their sins. I will heal their land. O king, I'm beginning to see the problem, right? That's what the lady cries out to the king on the wall.

Yes? Oh, king, help. He says, if the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you? You know, even the illegitimate high priest in Israel says the right thing every once in a while. You know, the broken clock is right twice a day.

You know, what is it if one man should die for the sins of all the people? You remember Caiaphas, the high priest, he's not even a Levite, but he gives out with this prophecy. Well, here's the king, well, if the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the wine press? He says, well, God's not helping us, so I sure can't help you. If God's not helping you, and you have a covenant with God, and he has promised that if you will cry out to him and seek his face, he will hear from heaven and forgive your sin and heal your land, how dense do you have to be? But remember our opening thought tonight, it's not a matter of reason.

It's not a matter of logic. It's not a matter of evidence. It isn't, well, if you just give me enough to work with here, I'll draw the right conclusion.

No, you won't. It's a matter of faith. It is a matter of response.

It is a matter of attitude toward God. And without that attitude, you cannot see. He's walking along the wall, and he says, well, God ain't helping you, so I sure can't.

He doesn't think, is there a way God would help us? Is there a means that God might use? You know, not too long back, it seems to me that God blinded a whole group of Syrians and led them where he willed, but then I had to feed them. Hmm, wouldn't reason, wouldn't logic, wouldn't memory compel someone to draw a different conclusion? There are none so blind as those who will not see, and he just will not see, because he would have to acknowledge sin. He would have to acknowledge and change his mind.

He doesn't want to change his mind. I don't want to acknowledge that truth. It is extraordinary,

and we see it so much in others more so than ourselves, to see the willful denial that people will get into.

Well, I know that this is a problem, but actually that's not the problem. People are the problem. This is the problem.

That's the problem. Something else is the problem. Anything is the problem except the problem, because I am in willful denial.

I do not want to believe. My heart deceives me. My heart tells me, oh no, the woman gave to me, and I did eat.

Well, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. The problem was in the heart of Adam. The problem was in the heart of Eve.

It's not the means by which it comes. It's the problem itself, and until we acknowledge that, as long as we're looking around for somebody or something to blame, we cannot get healed. If my people who are called by my name will identify the source of the problem and tell me about it in prayer, I will go get that problem and send the mighty legions of fiery chariots and horses against them and drive them off the land.

Is that what it says? If my people who are called by my name will just analyze enough and figure out exactly where the problem lies, I'll go take care of that problem, that person, that circumstance. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and adopt a seeking attitude internally in themselves, then will I hear from heaven. These externalities are easily manipulated.

God has just demonstrated that for this king a matter of maybe weeks earlier. The king said, what is troubling you in verse 28? And she answered, I don't have enough to eat, and I know that if you will call to the man of God, no. She says, I had this deal with a lady that we would eat her baby one day and eat my baby the next, and well, we ate my baby, and now she won't bring her baby so that we can eat it.

How obvious does God have to make this that these people are looking at the wrong thing? Is this a not enough babies in the city problem? We're running out of babies to eat. That's the problem. Oh king, we need more babies to stew up and eat.

Can you please solve this? Well, this is how ridiculous it gets when we are blind. It is a matter of blindness. They do not see.

They will not see. We boiled my son and ate him, verse 29. And I said to her on the next day, give your son that we may eat him, but she has hidden her son.

Now when the king heard the words of the woman, he tore his clothes. You know, the way that they got through the blindness of David, you remember when Joab works with Nathan and the

woman, and at different times they'll tell stories to King David. And Nathan comes and tells him a story about the man that's got lots of sheep, but he steals the poor man's lamb and feeds it to a stranger.

And David gets all angry in his wrath, and he says, this guy is going to be punished. And he says, you're the man. You are the man.

And sometimes it takes looking at it at second hand, and then realizing that it is applicable to us. That's what these scriptures are. All of these things have been written for our instruction.

Why? It's easy to see looking at this king, wow, you're dope, how could you be so blind? You're walking on the wall. You just saw this episode with Elisha bringing you the band of raiders, and you had to feed them. And now, you know, your land is feeding these guys.

They're not in Syria eating and feasting. They're in northern Israel. The stuff they're eating and the water they're drinking is Israelite food.

It's Israelite bread. It's Israelite water. They are besieging.

They've been out there for days and weeks feeding off of the land. They didn't bring all of that in sea rations. They're eating Israelite food.

You had a warning about this, and you know that God has power over these guys, but you're not turning to Him. Where is Elisha during this time? Have you thought about talking to Elisha? Have you thought about sending a message to the Lord? Have you thought about getting right with God? We're down to deciding where the unboiled baby is. So when the king heard the words of the woman, he tore his clothes.

He passed by on the wall. The people looked, and there underneath, he had sackcloth on his body. Underneath his kingly robes, he has on sackcloth.

Underneath his kingly robes. He's wearing sackcloth, which is the sign of public mourning. You don't put on sackcloth for yourself.

It's like makeup. When women put on makeup, I'm going out. I'm going to be seen.

It's a lot of trouble. Well, he's put this sackcloth on, but what's his rationale? Well, I don't want to discourage the people. I don't want to let them know how despairing and discouraged I really am, so I'll put on my kingly robes and walk along the wall and let everybody see me, but what is this? The tears of a clown? He's smiling on the outside, and he's sackcloth on the inside.

What's going on here? Why does it tell us that not until he tears his robes do they see the sackcloth inside? Well, this is his final act of despair. There's no point putting on a show for these people. They're eating boiled children.

Encouraging them with a noble example is pretty pointless, and so he no longer needs to

disguise the fact that he is equally in despair. He has no solution in his mind. How can he not have a solution? He's the king.

The prophet of God has spoken directly to him, given him a big object lesson. He's blind to it. Why? Has God not done everything to open his eyes, and he's just shutting them? That's what's going on here.

He says, God do so to me, and more also, if I do not get down on my knees and offer sacrifices to the Lord God of Israel and we get this problem solved, I have had enough of this. I'm going to repent. No, Elisha's the problem.

How is he any different than the Syrian king? Isn't this what the Syrian king concluded? Did he not see what happened when the Syrian king concluded that Elisha was the problem and went to try to take him? A few weeks ago, did he not see the raiders that were sent to take Elisha? God do so to me, and more also, if I don't have the head of Elisha on a stick today, I'm going to take him today. So Elisha is sitting in his house, and the elders are sitting with him. Notice the elders are smarter than the king.

They've gone to Elisha, and they're just sitting. They're not out preaching. They're not having a revival.

If this was the modern day church, they would have all gone to street corners and tried to win 2,000 languages by the year 2000, or whatever that push was. Notice the man of God and the elders who recognize the importance of appealing to him are sitting indoors doing nothing. You will never find a church revival preaching this passage.

You'll never see the purpose-driven church manual go to this passage. The smart elders and the man of God are sitting indoors at the peak of the crisis where people are eating their own children, doing nothing, because it is a time to wait. And the king says, I am not going to wait.

Elisha is sitting in his house. The elders are with him. The king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, do you see how this son of a murderer, of course, both his parents are murderers, Joram's parents are Ahab and Jezebel, if you recall.

Remember the field of Naboth? You remember what Jezebel did to the guy and Ahab is slaying these guys? When the messenger comes, shut the door and hold him fast at the door. Make him wait. Make the messenger wait.

He's going to come to the door and while he's still speaking, the guy shows up at the door and the elders get up and shut the door and they don't let the messenger in. This messenger has a sword. This messenger is coming to take the head of Elisha, but they've stopped him at the door.

These leaders, they're not soldiers, but he said, just shut the door. It's a minor threat. Just shut

the door.

The guy can't take my head if he can't get in the door. So he shuts the door. It's not the sound of his master's feet behind him.

And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger coming down to him. And then the king says, surely this calamity is from the Lord. Why should I wait for the Lord any longer? Why should I expect deliverance from the Lord? This calamity is from the Lord.

So phooey on the Lord and the things of the Lord. I'm going to kill the man of the Lord and I'll just take this stuff into my own hands. Utterly, utterly illogical response.

Then Elisha said, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord tomorrow about this time, a sea of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel and two seas of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria. So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be? I just don't believe that.

Now these are the guys that did the right thing and came to the man of the Lord. But he says, how can this be? And he doesn't believe it. Now this isn't just an innocent question.

Well, you know, is the Lord going to open? How could this guy is saying it ain't going to happen? He's basically saying God could open a window in heaven and pour grain out of it. And this still wouldn't happen. You're he's denying what Elisha says.

How do I know that? Read the next phrase. You shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it. Read that last phrase in that verse again.

You shall do what? What's the verb? See, you shall see, but you shall not do what? Eat, seeing and eating, seeing and eating. Syrian raider band sees and then doesn't see, doesn't eat and then eats. The people in Samaria were eating, but now they're not.

Servant of God sees and doesn't see. It's all about what do you see? What do you look at? Elisha, the man of God, has delivered the word of God and has said, this time tomorrow, here's the way it's going to be. And this guy says, I don't see it.

What is it you never see? Does anybody ever see windows in heaven open? He says, even if I saw what nobody has ever seen, windows in heaven opening, your words would not come true. And he says, you're going to see it, but you're not going to eat. You're going to be like the Syrians whose eyes are opened.

But if I had let Joram kill them, instead of letting them go, as an object lesson for you, well, that's what's going to happen. You will see, but you will not eat. You'll see it with your eyes.

Then you have the story of the lepers, and we'll look at that next time. But here's the point. The truth of God has been made plain for us.

There is not a single one of us to whom this does not have pertinence. And a challenge and a potential. What is it that we are looking at and we're looking at the wrong thing? What is it that we are looking at and we're not really seeing? What is the great curse on Israel that is given in the Old Testament and repeated by the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament? Seeing, they see, but they do not perceive.

Hearing, they hear, but they do not understand. The heart of this people is the problem. If they would see, if they would hear, I would turn.

What is the key to seeing and hearing? It is the attitude of heart, and this is what we control. We don't have the power of God, but we can avail ourselves of the grace of God. We can look and we can live.

We can believe and we can be delivered. The power that we have is to choose, to decide, to accept. But it is a matter of looking at the right things.

You can look at the wrong things like King Joram, and nothing is gonna save this guy. And he's gonna die a very unhappy death. And this guy who says, my father, one day, to Elisha, wants to take his head off a few weeks later.

Such is the friendship of the unfaithful. Those who do not have a relationship with God, don't waste your time trying to cultivate a close intimate friendship, because they'll call you my father one day, and they're sending a guy with a sword to chop off your head the next. Anything bad, it's your fault.

It's the Lord's fault, and the man of God is gonna pay the price. God's not delivering. I'm tired of waiting on God.

Kill the prophet. So, our challenge is to be different than this, to learn from this example. Think about Hebrews 11.

What is the category into which the parents of Moses fall? What is their group? What do you call them? The parents of Moses, what are they when Moses is born? They are slaves in the land of Egypt. They are oppressed. Moses' father is stamping straw into clay to make brick.

His mother is doing menial jobs, maybe even a little bit of farming. Maybe cooking for all of the workers. They are slaves, but that slavery does not define them.

They are people of faith, and when they see this extraordinary child, they recognize that he is from God, and they are not afraid of the king's command. They defy the king's command as slaves, and they preserve the life of this child. They recognize that he's from God, and they are not afraid.

Moses looks at the treasures of Egypt, and he recognizes that there is a reward from God that is infinitely greater, and he is not afraid, and he chooses. That's the difference between the slaves

in Egypt that produced Moses, the great deliverer, from their marriage. These two slaves who trusted God produce the deliverer in the same way that Mary and Joseph, in very humble circumstances, are going to be God's means of producing the deliverer, people of faith.

Here is the king. He's at the opposite end, and he's worse than a slave. He's worse than a captive.

He's worse. Why? It's all about faith, and faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of what? Things not seen. By faith, we understand what? That the worlds were framed by the word of God so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

What do you look at? What do you consider? What do you believe? Do you believe the word of God, or do you believe the power of circumstance? Do you believe in the chariots and horsemen of God, or do you believe in the chariots and horsemen of the Syrians? Do you believe the promise of God, or do you believe that it's a matter of chance and circumstance? That's the challenge that we face. That's why God has told us this story outside of ourselves, so that we can look inside ourselves, just the way he did for Joram. He brought these guys ten miles.

Elisha marches them blinded ten miles to bring them to Samaria and show them to King Joram. Show that God can open the eyes of the heathen, God can feed the heathen with Joram's bread as an object lesson to knock on the door. Because what God really wants to do is sit down for a fellowship meal with his people.

But it's our choice. It's a very powerful illustration, don't you think? This repetition through this passage, and it repeats. It's the hammer of the word of God banging on the rock.

So what kind of rock are we? Are we going to fall upon the rock and be delivered, or is the bigger rock not made with hands going to fall on us and crush us? It's a powerful example. We'll pick up here with these lepers. And this is a really funny story, and there's numbers in it.

If you want to start working on it ahead of time, look at the numbers. How many lepers, how many horses, etc. It's an interesting mathematical presentation among many other things.

But let's close here in the word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the creative and inspired ways that you deliver the truth to us.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, that it will remain in our memory and in our thinking, that it will provoke us to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith, that it will rebuke and correct and instruct us. And the eyes of our hearts having been opened, that we can look at and behold with unveiled face your glory revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we will lay hold of it, that we will reflect it both now and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.

