

Kings and Prophets 14-05-16a

This is Friday the 16th of May 2014. We're prosecuting our study of Kings and Prophets tonight. We're in 2 Kings chapter 7. 2 Kings chapter 7. In your New King James, the title of this chapter, the subtitle is, Elisha prophesies coming abundance in Samaria.

And the unbelieving officer trampled to death. Not your typical Mother's Day chapter. People don't come to this and read it at festive occasions.

But it really is a fascinating story and we're going to see what we can understand from it. Let's take a moment before we begin to dedicate our time to the Lord and ask His blessing on our fellowship and on our study. Father, we're grateful for this opportunity to look into your Word and to try to understand it better, to glean from it the truth that is pertinent and meaningful and will make a difference in our lives.

We thank you for preserving it. We thank you for presenting it to us. We thank you for the ministry of your Holy Spirit to help us to understand it and to remember it and to see its pertinence to our decision making and the priorities that we set, the goals that we pursue.

We pray that as we spend this time together that the time will be profitable to everyone who invests it, that the Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in us both now and in the days ahead. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's take a look at this. You remember the background. We're in the time of the divided kingdom.

We're in the northern part of the divided kingdom. You've got the little postage stamp of the land of Israel, two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin are down there doing reasonably well. God doesn't have a bone to pick with them at this time.

They've had a pretty good king. They've had Bible teachers circulating. They've got faithful people down there living their lives as under the Lord.

And they are largely unmolested, undisturbed and doing what they're supposed to do. However, in the northern kingdom, the northern ten tribes, which is actually more like eight and a half tribes. You remember Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh were over on the other side of the Jordan.

They got left there in the days of Moses. But you've got what is now called Ephraim or the northern kingdom and its capital city is Samaria. This is the Samaria that will later be the area where the Lord Jesus will spend time when many of his fellow Jews will not.

But Samaria and you've got King Joram up there. He is from a very notorious family. His mother is Jezebel.

His father is Ahab. So you know that in the Bible a lot of times the king sort of sums up and symbolizes the attitude of the nation as a whole. This again pertains in the days of the Lord Jesus where you have Herod who sits on the fence.

John the Baptist is out there proclaiming the coming of the Messiah and the coming of salvation. And Herod who is the king is fascinated by the message of John but he doesn't really believe it. He doesn't want to get rid of John but he doesn't want to accept John either so he imprisons him and just goes to visit and listen to what he has to say.

Well when push comes to shove and you get the dance of the seven veils John's head ends up on a plate. And this foreshadows what the nation is going to do. They tolerate and they are fascinated by the Lord Jesus and His disciples as they travel around.

But when push comes to shove the Lord Jesus will end up on the cross for the same reasons. Well here in this earlier day we're in the eighth something B.C. King Joram personifies in many ways the people of this land. And so because he is his father's son and his mother's son he's not big on God or the things of God.

He likes being the king. He likes doing things himself. He's really not interested in the fact that they are the covenant people of God and are supposed to be living in the light of God's revealed word.

So they're doing their own thing and they're having all kinds of problems. And King Joram refuses to believe that it's his fault. He doesn't attribute this to failing to honor God which is his God given responsibility as the king of Israel.

So you have the prophet Elijah who ministered in the days of Ahab and Jezebel. Now you have Elisha ministering in the days of their son. And Elisha's got the double portion.

He's you know in some ways twice the prophet that Elijah was. And Elijah is very famous. You've got the Mount Carmel thing with the fire coming down from heaven and dissolving the altar.

You've got the drought followed by rain. You have the raising of the widow's child and so on. But Elisha has already done similar things and more.

So Elisha is the prophet in the northern kingdom. And we've already asked and answered the question if all the people down south are so faithful and obedient and the people up north are disobedient and apathetic and have a terrible king, why does God send the prophet up north? Why doesn't he send this guy with these miraculous powers and the word of God to proclaim down to the people who are really interested and receptive to it? Instead he sends him up to the north. Well there are a couple of reasons for this.

One is you don't send a doctor to people that are well. Secondly, Elisha foreshadows the Lord Jesus. And you remember in John chapter one he came unto his own and his own received him not.

And again the John the Baptist treatment, the treatment of the Lord Jesus in the day that he comes. One of the reasons Jesus knew so much about what was going to happen isn't because he accessed his omniscience from deity but because he knew his Old Testament scriptures. And it was foreshadowed in the days of Elisha as well as many other places how it would go when Jesus came.

He knew he was going to be rejected. He knew that his message would only be accepted by a small few. And we have that here.

So here's the setup for tonight's chapter. Because they are apathetic and indifferent, because they've ignored God and the things of God and have just been sort of going for it and adopting the practices of the land which includes idolatry and promiscuity and double dealing. They're just like any crowd of Canaanites or Amorites.

They're indistinguishable. They look just like the inhabitants that God sent Israel to drive out and replace. God said the iniquity of the Amorites is full.

They are Moloch worshippers. They are baby sacrifices. They are immoral.

They are degenerate. They are corrupt. They are a cancer in humanity and they need to be eliminated.

Joshua went in and they got a really good start. They had a lot of momentum. But then the people kind of relaxed.

If you ever had a project like working on your house or refinishing a thing and you get like 80 or 85 or 90 percent finished and then you just never get that last little bit. It's like when you move and you've got stuff in cardboard boxes. You get most of the boxes unpacked but the last three or four just sit there and you finally put them in a spare room or in the garage.

I've done renovation and stuff in my house. I did a shower project upstairs. You guys have seen it.

And it's almost finished but I never have grouted the little tiles along the tub. I never have replaced the baseboard. The flooring that I put in my office, I put baseboard all the way around except under the window and I just never got the baseboard under the window.

You just don't quite finish. The Israelites didn't quite finish. They just relaxed.

They said, look, we've got most of the land. We drove out most of the people. Well, God didn't say most of.

He said all. And he said to the extent that you don't drive them out and leave them in the land, I will do to you what I had intended to do to them. That's back in Deuteronomy.

Well, that's what happened. So this is like going in for cancer treatment and they don't get it all.

Do you really want to go in and have the doctor operate on a malignant tumor and just get 95 percent of it? But he gets tired.

He's tired of using the laser. He's tired of using the scalpel. He says, well, there's 5 percent.

I got most of it. Then he just sews you back up. Well, this is the problem and it has festered and it has grown and it has corrupted and it has spread throughout northern Israel.

So it's an object lesson for us. Why is this in the Bible? It's a bunch of dusty old history about a bunch of dusty old people in a dusty old land in a dusty old time, a long time ago. There's Syrians and people.

Why do we care? It's been 2800 years since all this stuff happened. Because these things have been written as an example to us. The Lord Jesus looked at them 800 odd years later and it was an example for him.

He learned from it and benefited from it and knew how to fulfill his father's will because he knew these scriptures. We can do the same thing. It's important to look at this.

It's way better than Aesop's Fables. It's way better than Dr. Phil. It's way better than a self-help book or Tony Robbins' Mouthful of Teeth Man or that guy that's on PBS all the time, that Mr. Clean looking guy.

I can never think of his name. Or L. Ron Hubbard Dianetics or any of the rest of it because not only does this show us what needs to be done and how to do it, but there is power in it to enable us. Dr. Phil talks to people all the time and says, you know, you've really got an anger management problem here, Bob, and you keep taking it out on your wife and you're wrecking your marriage.

Bob, you shouldn't be so angry. And Bob says, well, Dr. Phil, you're right. And I've really got to work on that anger management thing.

But he goes home and the words of Dr. Phil do not have any power to change Bob's inner man. And so the next time Bob has a flash of anger, after it's over, he can say, you know, Dr. Phil told me I shouldn't do that. But it just has no transforming, no energizing power.

People know they shouldn't smoke, but they smoke. They know they shouldn't drink, but they drink. They know they shouldn't drive under the influence, but they do.

They know they shouldn't do things, but they do it anyway, because knowledge in and of itself of the problem doesn't empower us to change and to reform. God's Word does. That's why it's written down.

That's why we're looking at it. So here's a situation. Not all of us are in this situation, but maybe we have been in the past.

We might be in the future. These people have drifted away from God. They got complacent.

They got apathetic. They started partaking of the stuff that was in the culture. It all seemed to go pretty well, but their country, their economy, their situation vis-a-vis their neighbors has all gone downhill.

And now they're in pretty dire straits. They can barely fend off the Syrian army that has come down multiple times to raid them. You remember Ben Hadad coming down, and he's almost strong enough to take them.

And so there's a threat and there's uncertainty, and this wrecks the economy. Nobody wants to make long-term investments. People don't want to trade.

They don't want to make long-term contracts with people in Israel because they don't know if Syria is going to wipe them out. So this affects their international stuff. It affects their national stuff.

Why do we care? Because as goes the nation in the Old Testament, it is a picture of the individual in this age. And we similarly, if we ignore our relationship with God, we'll find ourselves just having increasing amounts of friction, increasing difficulty enjoying blessing and realizing potential, exploiting opportunities. It just all starts unraveling at the seams because our Heavenly Father is trying to get our attention to say, you're not just here to succeed.

You're not just here to enjoy. You are here for a purpose. You are here to reflect the presence and power of God to the world.

That was Israel's mission. God gave every other people group, every other continent on the planet over to the God of this world and said, you make your best shot with them. You take your views and your, I will be like the most high philosophy.

You do it with the Chinese. You do it with the Asians. You do it with the aborigines all around the world.

You can have all the rest of them. I'm going to take this one little people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I'll just work with them.

Satan, you can have all the rest of them to do with what you will. I already know that they're not interested in me. So the only purpose they serve is to be a demonstration in your hands.

You knock yourself out. They think like you do. They don't want to be under the authority of a God.

At the point of God consciousness, they reject. They don't want to hear about it. They don't want, why can't you just leave me alone? Who needs your righteousness? I give you crowds of them.

I give you generations of them. I give you continents full of them to do with what you will. That's what Satan does.

God says, I got this one little group. Well, that little group who does know God, who does respond to God and enters into covenant relationship with God, has a responsibility to be the people of God. That was kind of the agreement at Mount Sinai.

You follow me. I will give you a land. I will settle you in it.

I will protect you. I will reflect my glory in through and out from you to the rest of the world. You'll be a light to the Gentiles.

Well, these people like the idea of having the land and the blessings, but they don't want to reflect the glory of God. They don't want to be obedient. They want to sort of have their cake and eat it too.

They want the blessings of God without any of the responsibilities of being accountable to him or serving him or holding up their end of the covenant. Well, that's why they are now in dire straits. And the Syrian incursion is getting ever stronger and ever stronger.

It used to be they would just raid. Elisha blinded that band of raiders that came down and were trying to set up a surprise attack, led them into Samaria, had the king feed them, sent them home with full tummies as an object lesson to the king and to the people in Samaria. It wasn't so much mercy to the Syrians as a warning to the people of Samaria, watch out and be aware that God in heaven has power.

You need to be paying attention to him. So now we come to a situation where there is a stronger Syrian army that has now come down and is besieging Samaria. And they are surrounded and no supplies can get in or out of the city.

And they're starving. And King Joram walks along the wall. You remember this from last time? He looks on the outside where the besieging Syrian army is and what does he see? The same guys that he fed a meal to some weeks or a few months earlier are out there munching away just like Elisha showed him they would do.

He looks on the inside of the wall. Remember these are high walls, they're wide. It's like the wall that Rahab lived in.

And so there's a walkway up there. And he's walking along this thick high wall around Samaria. On the outside, fat, happy, well-fed Assyrians just biding their time.

They're out there playing Monopoly and stuff with each other. They're playing mumbledy peg and they're just killing time. They don't have to do anything but wait.

Time is on their side because the supplies are running out. He looks inside and what does he see? These two ladies are in an argument and one of them appeals to the king and says, we

made a deal that yesterday we would eat my baby and today we would eat hers. Well, yesterday we boiled and ate my baby and today she has hidden her baby and won't show me where it is.

And the king just tears his clothes. Are you kidding? This is what we've come to? Justice in the land is now boiling down to boiling the children? And it's terrible. And so what is dire circumstance like this designed to do for the people of God? Why would God allow the people that are called by his name to descend into such dire straits? It's an attention getter, right? It is designed.

Does God enjoy letting people starve and letting them be besieged by their enemies? No. But what else will force them to the point of recognizing that they have failed a responsibility and an obligation, a commitment that they made to God? It is their purpose. It is their destiny and they've utterly abandoned it.

And God says, look, we have a covenant here and if you're not going to hold up your end, I'm no longer going to hold up my end. And I told you at the beginning that if you were unfaithful and disobedient, I would allow to happen to you just what you did to the Canaanites when you came in. And so now they are starving and they're besieged and they're at the point of being wiped out.

So the king, representing the people, what does he do? King Joram, walking along the wall, looks on the outside, looks on the inside, realizes that the blessing of God has departed from the people. So he tears his clothes, gets down on his face, repents and says, oh Lord God, I see the error of my ways. I recognize that I've not been a good leader, haven't done what I was supposed to do as the conscience and intelligence of these people and I'm going to lead them back to you.

We're going to have a sacrifice. We're going to repent. We're going to get right with you and we're going to depend on you for a great victory.

This would be the logical thing to do, would it not? Historically, this is what often happened. King David did this. His ancestor, King David.

What does Joram do? May the Lord do so to me and more also if today I don't chop off Elisha's head. This is God's fault, so I'm going to find the man of God and chop off his head. That'll solve the problem.

What is the application that we can draw just from that little portion of the story? When we, as the people of God, get far from God, we get stupid. This is really stupid. What just happened a few weeks earlier when the king of Syria sent an armed band down to try to take Elisha? Elisha, implementing the power of God, blinded them, led them 12 miles from Dothan down to Samaria, presented them to the king, had the king feed them, opened their eyes to show them where they were, and sent them home unharmed.

And now this same king who saw what happened to an entire raider band who tried to take

Elisha says, I'm going to send one messenger with a sword and I'm going to follow him and we're going to chop off Elisha's head. The whole reason the Syrians could never achieve a victory is because Elisha knew ahead of time every time they were going to come down and try to attack the land. Faithlessness and disobedience makes us clinically stupid, just clinically dumb.

And you can see it here. Do you seriously think you're going to sneak up on the man of God and chop off his head when he's not looking, this man? It's insane. And how is that going to solve the problem? Suppose he succeeded.

Suppose God said, well, Elisha is going to be a prototype of John the Baptist. We'll let him cut off his head. How has that helped the problem? Are they going to put it on a pole and wave it at the Syrians and scare them away? And again, this is the kind of dumbness that overtakes us when we abandon our spiritual resources and our advantages and our blessings and our privileges.

The people of God have privileges. We have an inside track with the God of the universe. He, in this age, is our Heavenly Father.

We are in Christ. Why would we throw that over to try to make it on our own? I did it my way. It's just not smart.

But this picture is here to show us how not smart it is, because when we're in the middle of doing it, it seems smart to us. Have you ever seen people that thought something was smart when it wasn't? Have you ever watched these trick bicyclists and skateboarders guys, and they have these fail videos on TV where they're trying to slide down a thing and do some trick, and a guy is going to jump from one building to another on his bicycle, and he almost makes it? Missed it by that much. And you think, what's the matter with these people? The worst thing I have seen recently was, have you seen the videos of these flying squirrel guys? They put on these flying squirrel suits, and they jump off a really high mountain, and they fly down these canyons at like 250 miles an hour, just gliding with their little rocky suit.

Well, there was a guy that didn't make the turn, and he's just a grease mark along one of these cliff walls. And you think, is it worth your life to do this? Is it worth your life? I mean, it's such a high-risk thing. Maybe so, but I would consider myself to have been infected with stupidity if I suddenly had the urge to do that.

So this is the situation. This is where we find ourselves now at the beginning of chapter 7. You look at the tail end of that chapter. While he was still talking with them, there was the messenger coming down to him.

This is the messenger of the king coming to try to take off Elisha's head. Surely this calamity is from the Lord. Why should I wait for the Lord any longer? That's the king talking.

Why should I wait for the Lord? It'll make me feel better to slay his prophet. Yeah, that'll fix him.

I'll show the Lord who's in charge.

I'll slay his prophet. The only one who has the power to actually fix this problem is the Lord. And instead of going to the Lord in repentance, which God would accept, God can solve this problem immediately, which he's going to do anyway.

The king instead is going to do everything he can to aggravate God, to distance himself from God. Well, that's where chapter 7 begins. So when the messenger is stopped outside the door and the king arrives outside the door, the king of Israel is standing outside Elisha's door.

The messenger with the sword in his hand is standing outside the door. Elisha stopped them just by telling somebody inside, would you get up and shut the door? It isn't the chariots and horsemen of the Lord. It's not a mighty flaming sword angel.

When Elisha knows from his prophetic knowledge that the king and his head-taking messenger are coming, he says, excuse me, Bildad, could you get up and shut that door? And that's it. That's all it took. And the king, in fuming frustration, is out there and Elisha says through the door, hear the word of the Lord.

That's the most important part of this whole message. Hear the word of the Lord. If Joram were capable of doing this, if he had already done it, this problem would have never arisen.

It would have never reached this point. People wouldn't be eating their own children. They wouldn't be starving to death in droves.

They wouldn't be at the mercy of an enemy at the gates just waiting for them to get too weak to resist and overwhelm and destroy them. Hear the word of the Lord. It's so simple.

You know, so many religions you've seen where, well, you've got to make a pilgrimage to Mecca or you've got to go climb up a set of steps on your hands and knees or, you know, people that used to get a whip and flagellate themselves. They used to, you know, beat themselves till they bled. This last Easter, there was a bunch of guys down in Mexico that had themselves nailed to crosses and people think, I've got to do all of these things, you know, to try to please God.

And it's incredibly simple. Just listen. It's not hard.

God's not asking us to climb anything. He's not asking us to suffer anything. He's not asking us to do some grueling set of tasks.

It's not the labors of Hercules. It's not anything that requires all kinds of ritualistic endeavors on our part. All we have to do is just listen, just heed.

God says, if you would just listen, I'll do the work. I will solve the problem. I will bring you to a good land flowing with milk and honey.

I will bless you. I will bless your crops. I will bless your herds.

I will give you peace from your enemies round about. You will be fruitful and multiply if you will just hear, if you will just listen. You remember our memory verse in Proverbs chapter 2, our little section there? My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, just remember them.

If you incline your ear to wisdom, if you apply your heart to understanding, how hard is this? A little bit of time every day, kind of think back, what did I learn Friday night? What passage were, oh yeah, 2 Kings. Yeah, that king with his obstinate reliance on himself instead of being submissive and obedient and thankful to God. How difficult is it to listen and be obedient and submissive and thankful? What does the Lord require of you, oh man, but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God? God resists the proud.

God gives grace to the humble. We're not given all of these incredible efforts and that's what Elisha says, hear the word of the Lord, just listen. And he doesn't say, now, here's what you've got to do, build a catapult, build a Trojan horse and send it out of the walls instead of in.

If you will slay everything, slay 70 of the remaining people in the city, what does he say? The people don't have to do anything. He says, 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.

This by the way is 6 times as much as a cab. Remember a quarter of a cab of dove dung was selling for outrageous amounts of money. People were eating dove dung, putty knifing it off the ledges and stuff.

The birds have all long gone, there's nothing to eat. And so they're scraping this stuff off and it's valuable. They're selling it.

Guys are finding it in little crevices, putting it in little half pint cups and selling it for outrageous prices so that people will have something to, you know, dove dung stew, dove dung sandwich spread. You know, that's all there is to eat. I mean, seriously, for meat, they're boiling children.

It's serious. And now that little tiny thing that was worth so much, he says, a big half bushel basket of fine flour is going to sell for a shekel. Just minimum money.

And twice that much barley will sell for that price about this time tomorrow. Now the people look around and say, are you kidding me? There's this huge besieging Syrian army. There's nothing to eat.

I see no angelic armies. I see no chariots and horsemen of fire. I don't see any rescuing, you know, the army of Judah is not coming over the hill to rescue us, our brethren from the South.

And you say tomorrow it's going to be so transformed and so plentiful that big baskets of wheat and barley are going to sell for just a few bucks. And they just can't believe it. How many times in history has God miraculously intervened on behalf of his people? Do these people not know their history? Do they not know the stories? Do they not remember Elisha a few weeks

earlier marching a raider band of these same Syrians down, utterly captive by one little prophet, brought them into the city, helpless, and had the king almost insult them by feeding them and send them home.

He's like, I'm so not afraid of you, I'm going to give you a big meal and send you back to your master. And at the same time it's a rebuke and a warning to the king. All of that is forgotten.

The freshening of the waters that Elisha did down in Jericho, it's forgotten. The miracles of Elijah in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, forgotten. All of it is forgotten.

All they can see is the immediate circumstance before them. This is tragic for you and me. Are we going to live our lives just like everybody else and circumstances dictate our response? Well, this is hopeless.

I have a limited set of options. I'm just going to have to pick one of these options. No thought for who we are and why we're here.

No thought for the God of the universe. No thought that He is still able. He's the same God.

He is able to intervene. He doesn't do things in quite the splashy, miraculous way in terms of fire from heaven and angel appearances and all that. But from our perspective, it is just as miraculous.

We see no hope. We see no solution. And suddenly, out of nowhere, as if by magic, there is a solution.

There is an answer. There is a provision. Especially when we are looking for it and we are qualified for it and we are waiting for it because we are doing what we're supposed to do and being what we're supposed to be.

So he says about this time tomorrow, it's all going to be reversed. The economic problem will be over. The famine will be over.

And notice particularly it says at the gate of Samaria. Does that strike you at all? See a fine flower, two seas of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria. Now there is in a normal town in the ancient Near East, there is a marketplace.

There is a place, you know, it's like the casbah. It's like an open air huge market. But it's not in the gate.

It's not big enough. Huge congestion. Nobody could get in or out.

You don't do commerce at the gate. You do it in the market. You do it in what the Greeks called the agora.

But it's got to be spread out. You need a couple, three acres for all of these vendors and tents

and supplies to be stacked up. And he says this is going to happen in the gate.

And this should have been an eye opener, something to cause them to pause and think, what do you mean these prices are going to pertain at the gate? Why the gate? Nobody does business at the gate. Judgment takes place at the gate. You go visit the mayor or the king or whoever it is that is dispensing justice.

Remember Absalom is going to sit at the gate of Jerusalem and try to short circuit the justice system of his father in 2 Samuel. Why are these prices at the gate? What's the status of the gate as Elisha speaks? Open or shut? Open or shut? Shut. Why? They're under siege, right? You don't open the gate when you're under siege.

The gate is shut. So what does this prophecy tell them not only about sudden plenty, but about the siege itself? About this time tomorrow the gate will be open. That's why these prices are at the gate, because something outside is going to be coming in, because there's nothing in the city, and they're going to be buying it.

It won't even make it into the city. It won't get as far as the market. People are going to be standing at the gate and outside the gate buying this stuff because the gate is open and there's stuff flowing in in such abundance that it's cheap.

It's a very succinct and very condensed prophecy. Because these prices are at the gate, the gate is open and there's plenty flowing in the gate. And so this is why the guy says an officer, this is a really fascinating word too and we need to pause and take our break, but let me tell you this.

Verse 2, so an officer on whose hand the king leaned. On whose hand the king leaned. Now this is, you've heard of the king of England and he's got like a knight of the bath and a knight of the garter and a knight of the, you know, these sort of intimate, knight of the bath.

It's supposed to be somebody that gives the king a bath, but it has become this honorary office where it's a big deal to be a knight of the bath or a knight of the garter. These long ago medieval times and earlier even, this was a guy that was an intimate of the king. On whom the king leaned.

This, and the word officer here is shalisha in Hebrew which means third. It's the word for three. He's number three.

You know on the Starship Enterprise there's number one. You've got the captain and he's got like number one. Well this guy's not number one or number two, he's number three.

So he's a guy on whom the king leans, but there's a couple of other closer advisors. But he's in the cabinet. He's a cabinet guy.

He's a very high ranking potentate type of guy. Of course that's kind of meaningless when everybody's starving and eating their children and scraping up, you know, dove droppings to

stay alive. But he's still got this rank.

But that's what it means. Shalisha, he's number three. And so number three hears this prophecy.

Now, how does he hear it? Well, where is this prophecy delivered? Yeah, what happened? How many people are standing out there? There's just two, right? The king sent a guy, number three, to go take Elisha's head. And the king couldn't wait to hear the news and so he follows. This guy and number three are standing outside the door and Elisha shouts this prophecy basically through the door, right? What kind of door? Open or shut? Shut gate, shut door.

This guy is standing outside the shut door arguing with the prophet about the prophecy that the gate is going to be opened about this time tomorrow. But he's the guy. He's one of the few guys that the king can trust to carry this out, but he doesn't really trust him because he followed him.

He wants to see it happen. So the officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God through the shut door and says, look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven. This phrase, windows in heaven, is the one that is used back in Genesis for the flood when the fountains of the deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened.

It's the one that's used later on in the later minor prophets where he says, bring your tithes into the storehouse and will God not open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings? Windows in heaven, it's kind of a stock phrase. It's old, it's current, it's going to persist. Windows in heaven, God opened windows in heaven.

It has the idea of a sluice gate, like the flood. In Song of Solomon, it's metaphorical for the girl's eyes. It says your towers are this and your chambers are that and your windows, talking about her eyes.

But it's literally the holes in her head, the eye sockets. This is why I'm not ever going to do that book. I don't think I can ever get the poetry of it out.

But that's what he's saying. And so look, are the windows in heaven normally open or shut? If you look out right now, are you going to see any window into heaven? No, because it's shut. The windows of heaven don't open except metaphorically with blessing, but they haven't opened since the days of the flood.

God said, I'll never do that again. I put my bow in the sky, never going to open the windows and dump water on you and wipe everybody out. There's this open shut motif here.

Just as we've seen throughout these recent chapters, and this is the repetition, it's Mr. Holland's opus, it's the little drum beat on your helmet. Pay attention, pay attention, pay attention, open or shut, open or shut, open or shut. Do you want your gates to be open or shut? Do you want the windows of heaven to be open or shut? Right now, everything is shut.

The gate is shut. The door to the prophet's house is shut. Can't see the prophet, can't access the prophet.

You get a distant message through the door, and the windows of heaven are shut. And so this guy, sort of prophetically like Caiaphas, says, look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this be? He's mocking the prophet, saying, look, God could open the windows of heaven and dump wheat out, and you still wouldn't achieve those prices in our shut gate. He just doesn't believe it.

And Elisha says, it's going to happen, and you will see it, but you will not partake of it. You will see it, but you will not enjoy it. Closing thought before we go to the break, what's going to happen to so many people in Israel in the millennial kingdom? They will see the plenty, but they will not partake.

They will be in the darkness which is outside. What's going to happen to church age believers like you and me, who don't get with the program, who are apathetic and indifferent, act like these northern Israelites? What's going to happen when the Lord Jesus comes back, and it is time to enter into all of the victory blessings, all of the rewards, and the opportunities, and the potentials that the Lord Jesus has opened up for us in the eternal future? There's going to be people who will see it, but they will not partake of it. Why? Don't believe it.

Don't think it's important. Just like number three. I don't want to be number three.

You don't want to be number three. I don't want to be on the outside looking in. What did Jesus say? Many will come to me in that day.

I'm going to go in and sit down at the table with my disciples, with my faithful followers, and there will be a knock at the door. And the master is going to rise up and open the little sliding door in the green door there and look out. And he says, Lord, I'm here.

Where's my seat? And in your name, I did all these wonderful things. And he's going to say, I don't know who you are or where you're from. Outside a closed door.

Jesus says in Revelation 3:20, behold, I stand at your closed door and I knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and share a fellowship meal with him. This is our opportunity.

It's not too late. We are still alive. God still has a plan for our life.

We've got hours, days, however much time is allocated to us, still ahead. It is time to recognize where our doors are shut and get them open. It's time to recognize that this is the time to be a southern kingdom of Judah type believer and not a northern kingdom of Israel type of believer.

To heed the warning. To learn from the mistakes that these people made. Don't be number three.

Be Jehoshaphat. Be Josiah. Be like Elisha, who is sitting quietly, unperturbed.

It's written for our instruction. Let's pause here and take our break.