

We pick up our study now in 2 Kings chapter 7. Let me give you a little pop quiz here. You remember the significance of biblical numbers 5 and 7 and 12 and so on. Does anybody remember what the significance of the number 4 is scripturally, what it generally connotes beyond being a double of 2? Well, remember, it's kind of universality: northeast, southwest, the four winds. It's kind of a comprehensive, cover everything. It often talks about the world in its expanse.

You got these four lepers, and think about this now. These lepers are outside the city, outside the camp. They're not a part of the fellowship and the community within the walls of Samaria, and they are the first to partake of the bounty that is a result of God's victory over the enemy. God has driven it away, and they are the first. And it will not be until the darkness passes that the Samaritans, the Israelites, if you will, the northern Israelites, will be able to come out and partake of the spoils, right? This is a victory that was foreshadowed in the words that Elisha spoke to the king on the preceding day, but the king doesn't get there first. The Israelites don't get there first. The lepers get it first, and the lepers enjoy a double portion before the rightful, so to speak, recipients get it.

Four lepers, four corners, four winds, four cardinal directions; lepers not part of the community and the fellowship. There is that shadow, so to speak, of the Gentiles being the first to really partake in the church age, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free. It's the universality of this age being the first to benefit when really the Lord Jesus was the Messiah to Israel. But Israel has to go through the night when the nation is, as it were, asleep. The nation is like the child that has, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." Remember that? Everybody is wailing, and you have this night where it's the lepers who will sleep that night on top of their pile of booty with full bellies because the king doesn't believe the good news of deliverance and provision and blessing. They will eventually receive it, but the lepers get there first, and the lepers proclaim it to them, and they don't believe, just like the apostles are going to proclaim the good news to the nation of Israel, and they are not going to believe. And in 70 AD, the nation is going to fall asleep and be gone for quite a while while the word of the lepers and the joyous double portion blessing falls on the four.

So, just as an interesting sort of foreshadowing or anticipation, you have that. It's just such a consistent pattern that those whom you would least expect, the least, are the ones who end up—those who are looked down upon and are distinguished as unclean, unworthy, the uncircumcised, so to speak—are the ones who are going to enjoy it. So we are going to pick up the pace here a little bit, so grab a hold of something.

So the king arose in the night, verse 12, and said to his servants, "Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive and get into the city.'" Do you remember this was how Joshua took Ai, A-I, remember that? They lay in wait, and then the people marched out of the city, and then they sort of ambushed them.

So, this is a concern. This is a valid strategic piece of thinking that a king should do, except that you have the word of the Lord, and he is using human wisdom instead of accepting the word of God. From a human point of view, this makes sense, but you've got the prophet Elisha in the city telling you different. So does he believe human reasoning, human evaluation, or does he operate based on the word of the Lord? Well, he operates based on human reasoning, human wisdom. There is a way that seems right to a man, and so they are going to sit there in the city all night long waiting for confirmation, waiting for verification. What are they going to do?

His servants answered and said, "Please let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. They may either become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it, or indeed, I say, they may become like all the multitude of Israel left within it." This, in my opinion, my vast expertise in Hebrew, if you look at the Hebrew text here, this is a case of dittography. The same line is repeated almost verbatim. One or two letters change, and it's like a mem and a beth, which look almost identical in Hebrew. You know, those left in the city, this is in, and from the city is mem, and somebody repeated a line here. The Hebrew here is garbled.

Here's what I think is the gist. This is what was trying to be said before this manuscript got wrinkled up and copied twice, these lines. And, by the way, this is going to happen again toward the end of this chapter. There is a repetition—not just a line gets repeated, but a whole section gets repeated, and wrongly so.

But here's the gist of it, in my opinion. This is Sam. You're free to heave-ho the thing if you think it doesn't make sense. As near as I can tell, after working with this text in Hebrew, there are five horses left in the entire

town of Samaria. They're in the king's stable. This is what the king has been living on. He's been living on his personal guard, the army, what's left of them in the city.

The king isn't doing too bad. He's still eating. He's not eating babies. He's not eating dove's dung. He's been living on horse meat. There's five horses left in the stable, and so his servants come and say, "Look, we've got five horses left. Let's send a couple of guys out on the remaining horses, which they and us are going to be dead anyway if we don't do something." So let's take two of the five remaining horses, basically, is what they do. They send two guys out. It says chariots, but the word here that's translated chariots also means rider. It's even used to translate upper millstone. What does the upper millstone do to the lower millstone? It sits on it. It rides around on it. The upper millstone rides around on the lower millstone, and this word is translated upper millstone in some passages.

These guys are riders of horses. There's no need to send out chariots. If you're going to die, you're going to die. Does it really matter if you're in a chariot or not if you wind up in the midst of the entire Syrian army? The chariot's not going to help you. These guys are riders on horses. They're sending a couple of cavalry guys out, a couple of horsemen. Let's send them out. They're fast. They can quickly ascertain in the dark what's going on. Remember, this is nighttime. These guys are riding out in the dark to try to figure out what has happened. Seriously, do you want to advertise more of your presence by a clanking, bumping chariot going over rocks? No. These are guys riding horses.

When General Washington wanted to move his armies by night, they moved stuff on horses, and they would muffle the hooves of the horses. They tied canvas and stuff, burlap around their hooves, and tried to muffle the sound so that he could move and the British would not detect the movement. Well, these guys are going to quietly go out on these horses and try to figure out what's up.

So two of the five horses, and the king is sort of shortening his prospects for future meals. They say, "Look, we're going to die anyway. It's just a matter of when, if the siege doesn't lift. So let's invest two of your five remaining horse meals to go out and check this out. Maybe it's true." So the king says, "Fine."

But they may become like all the multitude of Israel that are left. And then you notice, "They may become like all the multitude of Israel that are left." This is a real obvious tautography in Hebrew. And the mem becomes a beth. It's real obviously somebody fell asleep and woke up and copied the same line twice, or who knows what happened. But it makes no sense in Hebrew, and nobody can make any sense out of it except by adding a bunch of words in italics. So from those who are consumed, the gist of it is these horses are what are being consumed. And out of all the multitudes they used to have, they've got five left. Let's take two of them before they're consumed and go ride them and see what's up. That's how I interpret this.

So let us send them and see. So they took two—it says chariots with horses. This is two horses and riders. Two riders on horses is what this means. It's not chariots, in my opinion. And the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." Oh boy, you know, potential suicide mission. And the king thinks that this is a ruse. So maybe they won't spring the trap for two guys. But this is a pretty risky mission. These guys figure, "Well, I can starve in the city or I can ride out and get shot. Maybe it's a quicker death. Here we go. I can get nailed by an archer or not."

So they went after them to the Jordan. This is why you need a horse. This is a 25-mile pursuit from Samaria to the Jordan at night. You figure, on the ground, somebody can walk at maybe three, four miles an hour. You can run at maybe, what, five or six miles an hour. If you're a fleet runner, you can run a seven- or eight-minute mile. Really, really fast people can run a six-minute mile. But typically, you're an average runner, not having Adidas sneakers and whatnot. They're not wearing New Balance or running shorts here. But you figure 25 miles, a round trip is going to be 50 miles at night on a horse. It's going to take several hours.

And as these guys ride, it's dark. Is there a moon? We don't know what time of the month it was, but maybe there's a little bit of moonlight or starlight if it's a clear night. But they're seeing this plunder, this detritus, these cast-off pieces of weaponry and armor and supplies and provisions. The guys say, "If I try to carry this, I'm not going to make it. I'm not going to escape." And so they're dropping stuff. So they're following the path of the army. This trail of booty is being left behind, and they follow them. They say, "Well, is this just a ruse to make it look like they left?" So they follow it all the way to the Jordan. They realize that these guys aren't going to spring a surprise attack from 20, 25 miles away. This is the real deal. These guys have fled. And the amount of booty—they've got nothing left to attack us with. If they did try to turn around and spring a trap, all of their weapons and stuff—these guys are on foot running.

And so the guys on horseback, these two guys, in the mouth of two witnesses, a thing is established. How many riders did they send out? We're in the days of Elisha. Everything is two, right? So two riders, two horsemen go out. They didn't send the five remaining horses. They sent two. And these two witnesses established the truth of the matter. In the mouth of two or three witnesses, a thing is established. So these two guys return and told the king.

Verse 16: the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was sold. Now remember, they've got to ride 25 miles to the Jordan. They've got to ride back. So it is going to be late night, early morning. Dawn is breaking. The sun is rising with healing in his wings. Remember the millennial picture of the Lord Jesus returning? The sun, S-U-N, rises with healing in his wings. This is daybreak. This is the morning star, the bright and morning star in the eastern sky, the harbinger of the dawn of the sun rising. This timing means something.

This is Israel who has had to live through the night, so to speak, starving in darkness. It's not until the morning light when the two witnesses—by the way, how many witnesses testify in the tribulation? The 70th week of Daniel, when the Israel clock is ticking again—you've got two witnesses who are harbingers of the dawn. And of course those guys don't fare too well in the tribulation. But remember, this is prophetic. This is looking ahead. You're not going to get a whole lot of detail. This is just big-picture stuff here in terms of foreshadowing. But you've got these two witnesses, and they come back and tell the king. So the people go out, and a seah of fine flour is sold for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel according to the word of the Lord.

The word of the Lord is fulfilled after this long dark night where people are still afraid to leave the gates. Could have been out there feasting if they had just believed the word of the Lord. But in the morning, when the testimony of these witnesses comes back and confirms that, the people are finally willing to believe. They're finally willing to open the gates. The king finally gives the order, "All right, let's go."

So the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned—this is number three—to have charge of the gate because he's an important guy. Charge of the gate. Now, think back. Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, go all the way back, way, way back, before creation. Who is in charge of the gate to the throne room of God? It's Lucifer, right? Who doesn't believe that God is who He says He is and can do what He says He can do. And it is the gatekeeper who falls and is trampled underfoot.

There's Old Testament Scripture. We don't have time to turn there, but you think about some of these allusions. "Is this the one who was so mighty, and now he's fallen to the earth? He's cast down to the ground? You who terrorized the nations, you who were so important, you who were the right-hand man, the right-hand angel, so to speak, of God Himself." Well, this gatekeeper thing here is a little—remember, this is looking forward. This is looking forward to the Lord Jesus. This is looking to and through His victory, His renewal and regeneration and resurrection of the nation, and the gatekeeper gets trampled in the process. The guy who is appointed to keep the gate by the king, on whom the king leaned.

And there's a little message here for our adversary. The prince of the power of the air ought to be taking note of this, because it is the gatekeeper who was naysaying, thought he had a better idea—he's going to get trampled in the process. The people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him.

So it happened, just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel. Notice, two seahs of barley, two seahs, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria."

And then you have a repetition, and this is almost verbatim from what you have a lot earlier. And I don't think, personally, I don't think this is original. I don't think that this is repeated for emphasis. It looks like a manuscript issue. But it's here, and it does remind us. And I think somebody maybe was making notes when they were going to teach this Scripture, and they said, "You remember, this is what happened," you know, a couple of pages earlier, a couple of sections earlier in the scroll. It doesn't hurt that it's repeated, but it really is a little bit unnecessary here to repeat the details at this. It is enough to say it happened according to the word of the Lord. Somebody has written their notes, and this is what the word of the Lord was, and they repeated it in great detail.

Well, it happened to him. The people trampled him in the gate, and he died. And, of course, we know that. But this is the age of two, and so you've got a big repetition here, almost verbatim, of what Elisha had said to the officer, and it happened to him just as the man of God said.

But look now at chapter 8. We've got a little bit of time here, and I want to get into chapter 8. There's a reason, because as interesting as all of this is, you're accountable for what you hear. The officer dies, but King Joram, who was much more—and this image of the gatekeeper dying, you don't press this too far and say, “Well, so is God the king that doesn't listen to His own word?” It's just the gatekeeper part that has kind of an echo. It's a little bit of a, you know, if you're the gatekeeper, you know, beware.

But we think about this king. How many times now has this king heard and seen the word of the Lord? He has seen Elisha bring the blinded Syrians into the camp. He has been instructed and has done what he was told to do in terms of feeding them. Then he saw them eating outside while his own people are starving, and then he sees the deliverance of the Lord, and he hears it predicted the day before. And even with the word of the Lord ringing in his ears, he doesn't believe it. And they spend this long dark night still starving needlessly. And the next day God fulfills the word. God is leading. God is showing His people salvation.

What is God doing historically with the nation of Israel? What does Paul talk about in Romans 9 and 10 and 11? “I will make this people jealous. I will make them jealous by a people who are not a people and a nation who is not a nation. I will break off the branches and graft wild olive branches in, but those branches can be restored if they will return to faith.” God is using the Gentiles to rebuke and to chasten and to show by blessing. He's already used judgment. Remember what we saw at the beginning of Isaiah? “I beat you till you're a bloody pulp and you're not listening. I'm going to use a new tack. I'm going to show you something that you haven't seen before. A woman is going to encompass a man. There's going to be a new thing. A virgin will conceive and bear a son. And before he's old enough to know right from wrong, that I will move away that which threatens you.”

God is drawing. He's wooing. He is showing by example of His grace and His salvation Israel to get them to turn. And they eventually will. “You're not going to see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” And they will eventually say that. And they will do so because, “Prophecy to these bones. Prophecy again.” Flesh and sinew are going to cover them. Then the Spirit is going to enter them. “I will pour my Spirit out on all flesh.” And these are the faithful of Israel. They're going to be regenerated and renewed and taken into the land. And they are going to be people who, as it is reflected here, who feast and who benefit from the victory that God, all by Himself, without their help in any way, shape, or form—in fact, despite them—God has achieved. And God has overcome. And they are going to benefit.

Well, look at chapter 8. Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, “Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can, for the Lord has called for a famine. It will come upon the land for seven years.” There's a famine in the land. Now, she was deprived of her son, and he was restored to life because of the presence of Elisha, who restored him to life, right? Now there's going to be a second demonstration of this principle. There's a famine in the land. You've got to be hidden away. Remember in Revelation where the woman and her child are taken away from the wrath of the dragon for a time, times and half a time? Half as long as this. This is a seven-year famine. And he says, “You're going to have to live in the land of the Philistines. You're going to have to go away and live somewhere else because the land is going to be under judgment.” Famine.

Now, what famine is this? Well, flip a few pages back. You remember chapter 4, verse 38, after Gehazi and the Shunammite woman called her, and when she came to him, he said, “Pick up your son.” So she went in, fell to his feet, and bowed to the ground. This is 4:37 of 2 Kings. She went in, fell at his feet, bowed to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out. Very next verse, Elisha returned to Gilgal and there was a famine in the land. Very next verse, after the son is raised and restored, the woman gives thanks, first falls at the man of God's feet, then picks up her son and went out. Elisha returned to Gilgal. There was a famine in the land.

What did Elisha tell this lady before he left? There is going to be a famine in the land. This is that famine. This is the 4:38 famine. So this information, as we mentioned when we were in chapter 4, has been displaced. And it's given to us here. And it's given to us here for a reason. Right after this episode of the Syrians and the lepers and the famine in the city, now we're reminded of the famine in the land in chapter 8.

So Elisha has told the woman, “Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can. The Lord has called for a famine.” So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years. A lot of what we've been covering since then

is this famine. Death in the pot during this famine. Floating axe head during this famine. These guys are going to go to the Jordan, a little more plentiful sustenance near the river than there is in the land where there is a famine. What does famine stem from? Most often, drought.

It came to pass at the end of the seven years, and now we're kind of caught up. Now we're back in the present. Naaman the Syrian has happened. Gehazi turning into a leper has happened. At the end of the seven years, the woman returns from the land of the Philistines, and she went to make an appeal to the king—this is Joram—for her house and for her land.

So the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, “Tell me, please, all the great things that Elisha has done.” Now, there's an objection. People say, “Well, we know that this stuff is not chronological, and this must have happened before Naaman, because the king is talking to Gehazi, and if it's after Naaman, Gehazi would be a leper, and the king wouldn't talk to him.” Not so. Think about Naaman himself. Naaman is the number three in Syria. Remember, he's the guy on whom the king leans. The king leans on him, and he's a leper, right? The king sent him to Israel to get cured, but he said, “Look, the king is going to lean on my arm when we go, and he's going to go worship his god, and may God pardon me for this. I'm taking dirt from Israel back with me,” and so on.

But remember, the king had Naaman as his right-hand man when he was a leper. Leprosy did not disqualify you from converse and function in high places, even in the king's throne room. It did disqualify you from getting anywhere near the Lord God. You know, lepers couldn't approach, and in the economy of God, they were off limits. But is the king of Samaria following any of the law of Moses that says, “Lepers, you know, unclean, unclean, stay away”? The king's got no problem with lepers because he's got no problem with idolatry. He's got no problem with a whole lot of things.

And so Gehazi, where does he go? Where does he end up? He ends up in the court of this Ahab- and Jezebel-generated king. And so Gehazi is there, and so the king is talking to Gehazi, and he is a leper at this point, but he's like Naaman. He's functional in the sense of being able to talk to the king. “Tell me the great things Elisha's done.” Why would Joram ask this question? Well, grudgingly, now that the famine has ended, now that the siege has ended, now that these other things have passed by, and remember, we're in the post-act-of-God era where the king is sort of forced to pay attention to what the man of God has to say. Well, tell me about Elisha. Now he's saying, “Tell me about Elisha.” Elisha's not there to ask. He's asking Gehazi.

So it happened, as Gehazi is telling him how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life seven years earlier, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi says, “My lord, O king, this is the woman and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life.” This is the woman, and the king is viewing the son who was dead and restored to life, but who has been gone for seven years.

Now, on the Israel clock, how long has the Lord Jesus been gone from the time that He was dead and restored to life? On the Israel clock, at the beginning of the millennium, when the famine is over and prosperity has returned, how long has the son been gone? 70th week of Daniel, seven years, right? These things hang together as a fabric. The details are important. And the reason this is given here is, this is an adumbration, a foreshadowing, an anticipation of what is going to happen later on.

And when the dearth is over, when the famine and the deprivation and the siege is over, here is the woman and here is her son, gone seven years, back now. Here is the son. Believe the word of God. Here is your opportunity to believe, because here is the son standing before you in the flesh, and here is the woman, which is the nation, so to speak. The nation is restored. The famine is over.

So when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed a certain officer for her. By the way, the king asked the woman and she told him. In the mouth of two witnesses, Gehazi witnesses, the woman herself witnesses, and the king says, “Okay, so restore all that was hers and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now.” Remember, in the millennial kingdom, all that was the nation's, that they lost all of that territory, all of that land. Remember in Ezekiel, the individual tribes get their inheritance back.

Then, verse 7, Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-hadad, king of Syria, was sick, and it was told him, saying, “The man of God has come here.” All we have time for tonight is the first phrase: Elisha went to Damascus. What? Elisha went to Damascus. Elisha gets around, does he not? The location of Elisha is important. When the kings join together and decide they're going to go attack Edom, Elisha just happens to turn up in the camp. Elisha knew that he needed to be there to deliver the word of the Lord. Elisha was in Gilgal when he needed to

be in Gilgal. Elisha was in Dothan when he needed to be in Dothan. In what we covered this evening, Elisha was in Samaria.

If he's a prophet and he knows the city's going to be besieged, why wouldn't he get out and be outside where he wouldn't starve? But he's inside. And, by the way, he doesn't appear to be in too dire of straits, despite the fact that people are boiling babies and eating dove's dung. If the widow with the cruse and people can survive, apparently Elisha's relying on God's provision the way Elijah lived at the brook Cherith, even as the brook dried up and God made provision for him. Elisha isn't starving, even though he's inside the besieged town, but he is there to deliver the word of the Lord to the king.

Now, of all places, he's not in Samaria. He's not even in the northern kingdom. He is in the capital city of what? Syria. Damascus is the capital of Syria. The besieging army—Elisha is in the capital city. I wonder if Naaman's still around. Did he go stay with Naaman? Is servant girl still there? Does she get to meet the guy that she said, “There's a man of God in Israel who can heal you”? Does she get a visit? It's interesting to speculate on what might have happened when Elisha goes to Damascus. That's all we have time to look at tonight. We'll get into this next time.

But Elisha is in the place where God needs him to deliver the word of the Lord. And he is going to deliver a word to the Gentile Syrian general, Hazael, with regard to the fate of the Syrian king, Ben-hadad. Hazael is going to figure in our narrative for the next five chapters or so. Hazael and Ben-hadad, his predecessor, are even going to be mentioned in the first prophetic book we will look at, which is upcoming, and that is the book of Amos. Amos, who comes from the shepherds in the city of Tekoa. Tekoa, a city that is down south of Bethlehem, a city of shepherds. That's where Amos is going to come from. Amos is going to come up after we finish a couple of other kings. Kings are going to come and kings are going to go. But Hazael is mentioned in verse 4 of chapter 1 of Amos, as is Ben-hadad.

Well, that cycle, that episode begins right here: Ben-hadad and Hazael. And Elisha goes to Damascus. What in the world is Elisha doing in Damascus? Well, he is where God wants him to deliver the word of the Lord.

What it is for us, it is incumbent on us to listen, to heed what we hear and what we see in the word of the Lord. Everybody that suffers disastrous consequences here doesn't pay attention to the word of the Lord. Either, like we saw at the beginning of this book, doesn't seek it out and listen to it, going to Beelzebub instead. Ahaziah, that was his mistake. He didn't even seek out the word of the Lord. Well, the word of the Lord came to him anyway and sealed his fate.

Joram sees the demonstration of God's power and God's word. He hears the proclamation of God's power and God's word. He benefits from the fulfillment of God's word through God's power. And he doesn't listen. Despite all of this, he does not listen. We have got to benefit from this example and not follow that path.

God is leaning out of heaven with double portion blessings, double portion communication. Two witnesses are establishing everything. Double deliverances through the man of God. How can we neglect so great a salvation? We can't. We can't afford it. We shouldn't. We won't. We will see these, and from our perspective, how much richer and more fulsome are these demonstrations as we have seen their later fulfillments in and through John the Baptist as Elijah who shall come and the Elisha days, the double portion going out to the four lepers, to the four winds, to those who are outside the camp. We are the first to hope in Christ. We are those who receive all of those in Him blessings. What is going to happen to us?

You think about Hebrews chapter 10. If we fail to respond, how much sorer punishment will he be thought worthy who tramples underfoot the Son of God and does despite to the Spirit of grace? The two witnesses in this age. We have the Spirit. We have the Son. We have potentially the Father. We have the witness of the Spirit. We have the witness of the Word. We have the witness of creation. We have all of these tremendous communications from God, not leading with judgment as in the days of Elijah, who proclaimed the drought as a judgment.

Elisha predicts the drought as a means of deliverance to the woman and her son. Elisha provides sustenance for the sons of the prophet and for these faithful people. He freshens water. He removes poison in the pot. He is the means of people getting through the time of famine and the time of drought. He is the one who proclaims deliverance from the siege and relief from the famine in Samaria. We live in those days. We live in Elisha days. We live in the days of the Lord Jesus.

And what's going to happen to us if we ignore this? If in spite of it, if we're like Joram, we are going to come to a very, very unhappy end if we neglect this so great salvation. Wouldn't it be great if this makes an impression on us like it didn't make on those people? To heed, to hear, to respond, and to enter into. Why would you not? What are we waiting for? What's the downside of entering into this great blessing that the Lord Jesus has secured for us through His great strategic victory?

This is what God is saying, I think, to us and to our generation in these Old Testament Scriptures that were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages have come. What an opportunity we have. What a great God. What a wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has brought all of these things to us and has proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord. It's our opportunity.

Well, we'll pick up here in chapter 8 and see Hazael and Ben-hadad. Why are we looking at the Syrians at this particular point in the narrative? It'll hopefully come clear next time.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the powerful ways You use to communicate to us and to impress on us the gracious opportunities that we have in Christ. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will keep us constantly mindful of where we are in Your plan and purpose, how short the days are, how soon the dawning will occur and the sun will arise with healing in His wings and our opportunity to move forward from this life into the next. We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified in our lives, both now and in the ages to come. We pray it in His name. Amen.