



What would you do if you were surrounded by a strong enemy? Syria, a land that was at the border of Israel, continually tried to attack the Jewish people. But Israel had God watching over them, for the Lord told Elisha the prophet what the king of Syria, Ben-Hadad, schemed in secret. When the king of Syria at last understood why his plans kept failing, he sent Syrian raiders after Elisha. The raiders had Elisha surrounded, but God protected him, and Elisha was kind to them. Then after some time, Ben-Hadad sent his army to besiege Israel, till the Jews faced famine and even turned to cannibalism. But again, Elisha trusted in God and prophesied of a coming abundance, and God provided for them as He had said through His prophet. In this study of 2 Kings 6–7, may we learn to trust God, who is stronger than all our enemies.

1. Context
 - a. Elijah and Elisha were both God's prophets to Israel.
 - b. Elijah was Elisha's mentor.
 - i. Before Elijah was caught up to heaven, he blessed Elisha, the man he had been mentoring.
 - ii. Elisha asked Elijah for a double portion of God's anointing and was granted his request.
 1. Elijah is recorded as performing roughly 8 miracles.
 2. Elisha is recorded as performing 16 miracles—a double portion.
2. **2 Kings 6:8–13** – *"Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, 'My camp will be in such and such a place.' And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, 'Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.' Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, 'Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?' And one of his servants said, 'None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.' So he said, 'Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him.' And it was told him, saying, 'Surely he is in Dothan.'"*
 - a. The king of Israel
 - i. Jehoram was likely the king of Israel at that time.
 - ii. Jehoram, the son of Ahab, was one of the wicked kings of Israel.
 - b. The king of Syria

- i. Though the Syrian king schemed secretly against Israel, Israel continued to thwart his plans.
 - ii. The king of Syria thought there was a traitor in his midst, but one of his servants said that there was no traitor, only the prophet Elisha.
 - 1. The truth was that Elisha was sharing God's insights with Jehoram, the king of Israel.
 - 2. God knows all things.
 - 3. Perhaps the servant found out about Elisha while spying out the land of Israel.
 - c. Dothan
 - i. This city is only mentioned twice in the Bible.
 - 1. The first mention of Dothan occurs in **Genesis 37:17**, which is where Joseph looked for his brothers and was thrown into a pit.
 - ii. Dothan was in the region of central northern Israel.
3. **2 Kings 6:14–19** – *“Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’ So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, ‘Strike this people, I pray, with blindness.’ And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. Now Elisha said to them, ‘This is not the way, nor is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek.’ But he led them to Samaria.”*
- a. Elisha's servant
 - i. Likely, this is a new servant, not Gehazi who had gotten leprosy.
 - ii. The servant panicked, for there was an army around them ready to apprehend or kill Elisha.
 - 1. Elisha told his servant *“Do not fear,”* implying his servant was afraid.
 - 2. Usually, this phrase is said by God or an angel.
 - b. Elisha's prayer
 - i. *“LORD”* is a reference to the Hebrew name of God, **Yahweh**.
 - ii. Elisha prayed for his servant, that his spiritual eyes would be opened.
 - 1. The servant saw the supernatural realm, which is more real than the physical realm.

- a. God is always present with us, even though we do not see Him.
 - b. **DISCUSS**: How has remembering God's presence helped you amid a trial?
 - 2. The servant saw a chariot of fire, which could be a vehicle that looks like a chariot.
 - a. God is bigger than any enemy set against us.
 - b. **DISCUSS**: When have you seen God take down your enemies?
 - iii. Elisha prayed that enemies' eyes would be blinded.
 - 1. Taking advantage of the Syrians' blindness, Elisha led them to the city of Samaria, pretending to help them find the man they sought—himself.
 - a. Dothan was 12 miles north of Samaria.
 - b. Walking 12 miles would take roughly 4 hours.
- c. God wants to open our eyes.
 - i. **Ephesians 1:18a** – *"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you."* (NIV)
 - 1. **DISCUSS**: How has God opened your eyes so you can understand the riches found in Christ?
 - ii. **Romans 8:31b** – *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"*
 - 1. No one is stronger than God, and He is with us.
 - 2. We still live in a fallen world, and we still make bad choices, but Believers do not face anything that God cannot redeem.
 - 3. **DISCUSS**: When has God taken what you or others meant for evil and turned that to His good purposes?
 - iii. **2 Corinthians 5:7** – *"We walk by faith, not by sight."*
 - 1. Walking by faith builds character.
 - iv. **2 Corinthians 4:18** – *"We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*
 - 1. **DISCUSS**: How do we learn to have an eternal perspective, walking in faith by the promises of God rather than by sight and following the lies of this world?
 - v. **John 20:29** – *"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"*
- 4. **2 Kings 6:20–23** – *"So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, 'LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.' And the LORD opened*

their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria! Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, 'My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?' But he answered, 'You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.' Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel."

a. "My father"

i. The king was using a respectful term for Elisha.

b. Elisha fed the Syrian raiders and sent them home in peace.

i. Let the enemy see the Lord through you.

1. **Romans 12:20–21** – *"If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.*" (NLT)

2. **Matthew 5:44** – Jesus told us, *"Pray for those who persecute you!"* (NLT)

3. Jesus commends those who invite to your table the blind and others who are unable to repay you (**Luke 14:12–14**).

4. **Matthew 5:16** – *"Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."* (NLT)

5. **DISCUSS:** When have you been affected by another person giving you unmerited kindness?

ii. Elisha's good deeds shone a light to the Syrian raiders, and they did not try to attack Israel again.

1. We can be angry, but we do not need to sinfully take out our anger on other people.

5. **2 Kings 6:24–31** – *"And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five shekels of silver. Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, 'Help, my lord, O king!' And he said, 'If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?' Then the king said to her, 'What is troubling you?' And she answered, 'This woman said to me, "Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow." So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, "Give your son, that we may eat him"; but she has hidden her son.' Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his*

clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body. Then he said, 'God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!'"

- a. "After this"
 - i. "After this" does not mean immediately following the events of verse 23. Some unknown span of time had passed.
- b. King of Syria
 - i. Most Bible scholars believe this Ben-Hadad was the same king as the one who sent the raiders a few verses prior.
 - ii. Ben-Hadad besieged Samaria, causing a famine in the land of Israel.
- c. The famine
 - i. The famine raised prices.
 - 1. A donkey's head was sold for 80 silver shekels, about 500 dollars in today's currency.
 - 2. A kab of dove dropping was sold for five shekels, or 30 dollars.
- d. Cannibalism
 - i. A woman came to the king of Israel, complaining that the woman who had promised they could eat her son next to be eaten.
 - 1. Israel went through some dark times, even resorting to cannibalism.
 - ii. Hearing this, the king ripped his clothes from grief and blamed Elisha.

6. **2 Kings 6:32–7:9** – *"But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And 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 has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is 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 said, 'Surely this calamity is from the LORD; why should I wait for the LORD any longer?' Then Elisha said, 'Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: "Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs 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?' And he said, 'In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.' Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, 'Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say, "We will enter the city," the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die.' And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp,*

to their surprise no one was there. For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, ‘Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!’ Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it. Then they said to one another, ‘We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king’s household.’”

- a. “Son of a murderer”
 - i. Elisha called the king a “son of a murderer,” knowing the king’s plans to kill him.
- b. The doubter
 - i. An official of the king doubted the word of the Lord that Elisha gave.
 - ii. Because the officer mocked, Elisha prophesied against him, saying he would not enjoy God’s abundance.
 - 1. **DISCUSS:** How do we lean into faith rather than fear when we are in a hard season and struggling with doubt?
- c. The lepers
 - i. The lepers reasoned that they should go see if the Syrian army would show them mercy and give them food or not.
 - 1. They knew there was a famine where they stayed by the gate and within the city of Samaria.
 - 2. They concluded if the Syrian army killed them, they would be no worse off than if they had died of hunger.
 - ii. The lepers saw the Syrian camp was abandoned.
 - 1. God had caused the Syrian army to hear a noise of chariots, so they had fled and left their stuff behind.
 - iii. The lepers began eating and taking the treasures, but then they were guilt-stricken.
 - 1. The lepers realized they could not feast while their Jewish brothers and sisters were facing famine.
 - 2. The lepers realized they had to share the good news.
 - a. The Gospel is the good news that we are called to share with others.

- b. We are called to both hide God's Word in our hearts so that we would not sin against the Lord, and we are called to share God's Word to the lost.
- c. **DISCUSS:** How can you share Jesus with those you come across?

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)