



ELIJAH AND ELISHA

MESSENGERS IN WORD AND DEED

Turning Away From God

- Turning away from God leads to desperate, despairing situations
- 2 Kings 6:24-31, Deuteronomy 28:52-57
- In the last chapter, Elisha made peace with the army of Syria, but this did not last.

Turning Away From God

- The Aramean army returned.
- It could have been years later – but the kings of Israel (Jehoram) and Syria (Ben-Hadad) were still the same kings who had reigned during the last raid on Samaria.
- The king blamed Elisha for this siege because Elisha had not let him destroy the army when he had the chance.

Turning Away From God

- Samaria was on top of a large, insulated hill that was surrounded by a broad deep valley and high hills all around that.
- This topography made it a difficult city to attack.
- Archaeologists said that in the ancient system of warfare, “Nothing but famine could have reduced such a place.”

Samaria



Turning Away From God

- The text doesn't specify how long the siege against the city lasted, but it was long enough that they ran out of food.
- In the ancient world, cities were surrounded by walls to protect them from attack and to control who came in and out of the city via the gates in the walls.
- The city gates also made it so access to all supplies could be cut off when an army laid siege to the city.

Turning Away From God

- Another detail in the text shows us how their entire society had broken down.
- People were paying exorbitant prices for a donkey's head and dove's dung.
- A donkey was an unclean animal, and the head would have very little meat on it. Even in cultures where they could eat donkey, it was considered a low-quality meat.

Turning Away From God

- It seems almost unbelievable that something like this would happen, but God said it all the way back in Deuteronomy.
- It was one of the curses of the covenant, which shows us that the “curses” weren’t random punishments God inflicted on the people when they disobeyed (Deuteronomy 28:15–68).

Turning Away From God

- When that second exodus generation, who were about to enter the land for the first time, heard this curse in Deuteronomy, they probably couldn't imagine any of them would ever do something like that.
- While cannibalism was normal in some ancient cultures, it was considered abhorrent in God's law (Genesis 9:6).

Turning Away From God

- Tearing your clothes and wearing sackcloth were signs of mourning, which would have been great if it meant that Jehoram were humbling himself and repenting of their sins against the Lord. Instead, he was blaming God's prophet for the siege.
- When the women cried out to the king, he responded, "If the Lord will not help you, how shall I help you?"

Turning Away From God

- How often do we do the same thing when we find ourselves in difficult situations?
- We point fingers at everyone else but don't take the time to look inward and see what we may have done to have brought ourselves to that point.
- Sometimes we haven't done anything; bad things can just happen because we live in a fallen world.

Trust in the Lord

- Those who trust in the Lord will find true strength
- 2 Kings 6:31-7:2
- Jehoram swore he would kill Elisha before the day was over.
- The story creates a stark contrast between Jehoram's anger and Elisha's calm.

Trust in the Lord

- Jehoram was making murderous threats, while Elisha was simply sitting in his house with the elders sitting around him. Before the messenger from the king even arrived, Elisha knew he was coming and told the elders so.
- He called Jehoram a “murderer,” making clear that Jehoram’s desire for vengeance wasn’t a justifiable act of war but a personal vendetta. Elisha told the elders to shut the door and hold it fast.

Trust in the Lord

- He also asked, “Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?” This implies that Elisha had told Jehoram to wait on the Lord for direction about what to do.
- Jehoram wasn’t just rejecting that idea; he was rejecting listening to the Lord or trusting Him altogether.
- Jehoram had been waiting but without real trust.

Trust in the Lord

- Jehoram was thinking on a physical level – God isn't helping us. But the narrative shows something much deeper was going on spiritually.
- This was the consequence of Israel's disobedience. It wasn't that God wasn't coming through for them or was taking too long to act.
- God was looking for repentance.

Trust in the Lord

- Other places in Scripture tell us those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength; that it is good for us to wait on the Lord (Psalm 27:14; Isaiah 40:31; Lamentations 3:25–26).
- Jehoram was supposed to be learning something in the waiting. He wanted physical help without any spiritual change. He wanted God's help, but he didn't want to submit to God's authority.

Trust in the Lord

- Elisha's reaction is somewhat surprising.
- When he told the king what God was about to do, Elisha wasn't complying with the king under pressure.
- He was doing what prophets always do – declaring what God had already determined.
- He answered with “the word of the Lord.”

Trust in the Lord

- When Elisha declared that fine flour would sell for a shekel in Samaria by the next day—a dramatic drop in price—the captain scoffed at the prophecy. Even if God opened a window from heaven, a phrase reminiscent of the manna in the wilderness, how could this be?
- Because he doubted, Elisha told the captain he would see it come to pass but would not eat of it.

Trust in the Lord

- This moment reinforces the themes of Kings – that 1) God is not manipulated by human beings, 2) deliverance only comes by God, and 3) the word of God's true prophets is reliable even when it seems absurd.
- This scene fits into a very consistent biblical pattern: kings trying to control the prophet, but the prophet remaining accountable only to God (1 Kings 13, 22; 2 Chronicles 16; Jeremiah 37–38).

God Can Do the Impossible

- God can do the impossible
- 2 Kings 7:3-20
- God made the army hear the sound of a great army – chariots and horses.
- No human battle was fought, no alliance was formed, no human strategy was executed.

God Can Do the Impossible

- God alone intervened with His supernatural power.
- This is a vivid demonstration that the deliverance of Israel did not depend on military strength, political leadership or human ingenuity.
- A besieged city on the brink of collapse was transformed into a place of abundance within hours.

God Can Do the Impossible

- We go from the perspective of prophets, elders, kings, and army commanders to that of four lepers sitting at the city gate, a common place for the outcasts of society to beg money from those entering the city.
- But no one was entering the city under these circumstances; even that small hope was gone.

God Can Do the Impossible

- These men who were cut off from society and felt doomed became the unlikely instruments through which God revealed His miraculous power.
- Their reasoning was simple. If they stayed where they were or entered the city, they would surely die of the famine.
- But if they went to the camp of the Arameans, there was a slight chance they would let them live.

God Can Do the Impossible

- The lepers initially kept the good news to themselves, feasting and hoarding, but they soon realized they had to share the good news.
- The king didn't believe them at first. He thought the Aramean army was just hiding, waiting to ambush them, so he sent out two horses to check out the situation.

God Can Do the Impossible

- This passage underscores a central theological truth which runs throughout all of Scripture: God can do the impossible.
- Not only did the promised abundance arrive, but it came in a way no one could have predicted.
- The invisible work of God overturned visible reality.

God Can Do the Impossible

- At the same time, this story affirms the reliability of the prophetic word. Everything unfolded exactly as Elisha had declared: the timing, the abundance, and even the judgment.
- The officer who doubted was trampled in the gate as the people surged out to seize the spoil. Both promise and warning come to pass without fail.

God Can Do the Impossible

- In many cases throughout the Old Testament, the word of the prophet brought judgment, but here, his word brought unexpected salvation. Not because the people deserved it; the king did not repent.
- God saved His people because of His great steadfast covenant love for them, not because of anything they did to deserve it.

God Can Do the Impossible

- This points us ahead to the gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel of grace, unmerited favor.
- Just as Israel was delivered by the supernatural work of God, so our salvation and deliverance come not by human effort but through the powerful and faithful intervention of God.

Death of Common Sense

Death of Common Sense

- Common sense is part of common grace. Everyone should have common sense, but it isn't so common anymore.
- Contrasts:
 - Outside was plenty, inside was poverty.
 - Outside was hope, inside was despair.

Death of Common Sense

- Principle #1: Time to be realistic.
- Why are we sitting here? Many never get off the couch.
- The lepers considered the four ifs: sitting and dying, dying in the city, surrendering being killed, live by surrendering.
- We need to be realistic: Americans are in denial about terrorism, national debt, temptations children face.

Death of Common Sense

- Principle #2: Time to be risky.
- They took a risk but approached from the outskirts.
- The same God who struck the army blind, now caused them to hear things that were not there.
- Perhaps it is time for you to take a risk.

Death of Common Sense

- Principle #3: Time to be right.
- They realized they were not doing right. They could have concluded, “I’ve got mine. Go get yours.”
- They decided to do the right thing and tell the king.
- Maybe its time to do the right thing in your life.

Death of Common Sense

- Personal application:
- Learn to be realistic - time to assess your situation.
- It may be time for you to take a risk, time is running out.
- Make sure you do the right thing.