

Wednesday, November 16, 2022 ▫ Read 2Kings 6:8–23

Questions from the Scripture text. Who was doing what in v8? With whom did he consult? What did he tell them? Who speaks in v9? To whom? About what does he warn him? What does the king of Israel do (v10)? How does v10 summarize this exchange? How many times did this happen? What was troubled in v11? Whom does he call? What does he assume about one of them—what does he ask? Who answers (v12)? What does he answer? What does he somehow know? What does the king now tell them to find out (v13a)? Why? Where was Elisha (v13b)? What three things does the king send (v14)? At what time? What do they do? Who does what in v15? At what time? What does he see? What does he ask Elisha? What does Elisha tell him not to do (v16)? Why not? Now to whom does Elisha speak (v17)? For what does he ask? What does Yahweh do? What does the young man do? What were the mountains full of (cf. 2:11–12, 13:14)? Around whom were the horses and chariots centered? Who come down in v18? To whom does Elisha speak? What does he ask for now? What does Yahweh do? According to what? Now to whom does Elisha speak (v19)? What does he tell them? Where does he take them in order to “find” him? When they get there, what does Elisha pray (v20)? What does Yahweh do? What do they do? What do they see? Who else sees in v21? To whom does he speak? What does he call Elisha? What does he ask? How many times? What does Elisha answer (v22)? By what question does he imply why not? What does Elisha tell the king to do instead? How enthusiastically does the king respond—what does he prepare (v23)? After they eat what does he do? And how do the Syrian raiding forces respond?

What is the true condition of the enemies of God and His Word? 2Kings 6:8–23 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these sixteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God’s enemies are always at the mercy of His wisdom and power.**

The scene now shifts back to Syria where, apparently, Naaman’s miraculous healing has made Elisha widely known. But our reintroduction to Syria comes in the context of their being Israel’s enemy (v8). The problem for them is that Israel are God’s people. Those who war against them are warring against Him. As we see God acting through His Word, we observe several truths about God and His enemies.

God’s enemies are always out-schemed. What good does it do to have secret councils and amass the best human advice, when your Opponent has all knowledge and acts with all wisdom? Even as we read v13, we must be shaking our heads. Doesn’t he know that God’s prophet will know of this plan and defeat it too? Part of God’s enemies’ problem is that even when they have a little knowledge (like that the prophet is giving away all the plans), God gives them over to foolishly living contrary to what they know (like making plans to get the prophet).

God’s enemies are always outnumbered. The King of Syria thought that he could tilt the numbers in their favor (v14). His servant thought he had succeeded (v15). But the prophet prayed, Yahweh opened his servant’s eyes, and he saw not just a force of men around a city but a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire. The implication is that these are but the logistical accoutrements of an innumerable force of spirit-being warriors.

But the legions of angels aren’t even needed to be called to action. The prophet by himself, as the mouth of God, is the chariots and horses of Israel (cf. 2:11–12; 13:14). Indeed, Elisha continues praying. Syrians’ eyes are closed with blindness. Elisha leads them to Samaria to “find” him there. Elisha prays. Syrians’ eyes are opened. One, with God, is always in the majority. You may stand alone, if you are with the Lord.

God’s enemies are under His protection. This is an odd twist. The king of Israel wants to destroy the enemy. By amazing grace, however, he recognizes the authority of God’s Word in the mouth of His prophet. He calls Elisha, “father”! In fact, the command is to feed them like a good host, and the king obliges by throwing them a great feast.

What a strange thing that the Syrian army would come under God’s protection! That is to say that God is their only hope for protection, whether they acknowledge Him or not. He owes them nothing, and they are liable to find themselves catastrophically destroyed at any moment. Every moment of protection they enjoy is mercifully and graciously extended to them by the God Whom they hate. We must always remember this not only about ourselves but also about our enemies. They survive only as long as the Lord wills. Here, the lesson is learned at least to the extent that whether responding to God’s all-surpassing power or to His puzzling mercy, Syrian forces no longer make raids into Israel.

What enemies do you have? What is their condition before God? How does this free you to love them?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for being intimidated by our enemies, when we should know that they are out-schemed and outnumbered by You. Forgive us for forgetting Your vengeance, so that we are too ready to want our own vengeance and not ready enough to love our enemies. Thank You for loving us while we were still enemies, and purchasing us as Your people through the blood of Christ, in Whose Name we pray, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” or TPH256 “God Moves in a Mysterious Way”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Second Kings, 6:8-23. These are God's words. Now, the king of Syria is 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 since someone to the place which the man of God had told him. Let's 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 it 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 Elijah 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. Therefore, he sent horses and chariots in 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, I'll ask 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, Yahweh, I pray open his eyes that he may see. Then your way open the eyes of the young man and he saw And behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all round Elisha.

So in the Syrians, came down to him, Elisha prayed to Yahweh and said, strike this people. I pray with blindness. And he struck them with blindness according to the

word. Of Elisha. Now, Elijah 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. So it was when they had come to Samaria that Elijah said, Yahweh open the eyes of these men that they may see And you always open 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.

So I killed him. So I kill them. But he answered, you shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with 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 the ate and drink. He sent them away and they went to their master. So, the bands of Syrian Raiders came no more. Into the land. Of Israel. So far, the reading of Gods inspired and inherent word. Is good for us to know the true. Condition of God's enemies.

If we know The true condition of God's enemies, the enemies, especially of his Of his word. They're against not just Israel in this passage but a life shop. Then. We will know that we have nothing to fear from them. We have nothing to fear from them, because the true condition of God's enemies is that they are always out schemed.

Out planned. And the first place. And the second place that they are always outnumbered. And then the third place. That they are always outpowered. In fact, they are The only reason they have any success at all is because or any success, success isn't the word even any survival at all.

Is because They are dependent upon the mercy. Of God, They are to an extent under his protection. So first, they're always out schemed. God knows. Exactly what his enemies are going to do, where they are going to be. And when And he lets his people know as much as we need to know.

He doesn't always give us an Elijah is telling us everything that the enemies are going to be doing all the time. He does tell us much in Scripture about the schemes of the devil. As Paul tells Corinthians and second Corinthians, we are not ignorant of his schemes. And so he tells us a lot about how our sin works and how Satan works.

And the strategies that he uses against us that we will love the Lord well and take the appropriate precautions, how foolish are many Christians. Who are much more foolish than the king of Israel. Elisha says, don't send your forces there and the king of Israel believes the prophet, he sends a couple spies to check it out, but he doesn't send his horses to get slaughtered, He takes the appropriate action.

But how many believers are there? Who are told, this is how your sin works. And yet we walk ourselves right into temptation and they said, well, this is how Satan works. And yet we we have Hostility and bitterness and we don't reconcile with one another in the church or Or we decide to let our membership slide or attendance upon the means of grace lag.

Even though, the Bible tells us, Very plainly that these are all sorts of things that the enemy who roars of out like a Brawls about, like a roaring line is just waiting. Four to happen so that he can devour us or that he could take advantage of us by our schemes or we're puffed up and we We fall into the same condemnation.

As as the devil. Or we are. Were rely integrity and we fall into this narrant approach to the Delaware, many other things. At least the king of Israel here. Knows to To heed the warning when God tells him about the enemy's plans. And yet how foolish we are. How many put themselves into situations at temptation?

And fall into sin, even though God's Word. God's prophet has told us. Of the schemes of the enemy, But God's enemies are always outscaped. He knows exactly what they're going to do. He doesn't give us every detail of every of what everyone who is against us is going to do.

But we know that he knows them. And we know that he is perfectly acting upon them. He is taking the appropriate. Precautions. And rules and overrules, all things in his provenance. So, while you may or may not wonder about, What the wicked are doing and it's good to Observe as much as the Lord actually lets us know, in order that we may be prepared and we may plan, We need not fret.

Because, God's enemies are always out, schemed. When the second place, God's all enemies are always outnumbered. You know what they're outnumbered by. Not horses and chariots and mountains full of angels. They are at numbered by God. Elisha, praise that. A servant, probably Gehazi, although I don't think it. Names whether or not Yehazi is the specific servant here, Elijah, Praise Elijah, praise is servant's eyes would be open and he opens eyes and he sees the mountain.

Full of the horses and chariots of fire. And yet we've already heard Elisha, refer to a light jaw, As the chariots and horses of Israel. And Elisha is going to be called that. After his death. As well. Why Because oh, I saw Who prays here? Strike this people, he praised, he always says strike this people with blindness and the Lord strikes him with blindness.

The mountain full of horses and chariots, they actually don't get involved in the action. God doesn't need legions of angels. He's God. He does things just by willing it And he initiates it By his word and by prayer, As we see. In. In the mouth of Elisha and the prayer of Elisha, which means that we who have the Word of God and we who have prayer, and we who have Christ, as our prophet, who speaks His word powerfully, And we who have Christ as our priest to intercedes for us, not to mention the Holy Spirit who is called alongside us and dwells in us and who also intercedes for us.

We have we have every bit as much. The access to the benefit of the power. That is displayed here, without an angel lifting, a finger. God's enemies are outnumbered by God. Not only are they outscheemed, but they're also outnumbered.

You see how how we needn't fret at all? And just use the Word of God and prayer, obey God and serve Him. Use the wisdom, he has given us for observing and responding to his providence, in his world, in a way that is instructed and guided by the scriptures.

It's no need to worry about anything. There is cause for having however, compassion. Upon those enemies for about to be utterly. Destroyed is not only are they always out schemed and always outnumbered. They're always outpowered.

He prays that they would be struck with blindness. They haven't yet verified. That they are. That they are in the right place. It seems to be that. They've surrounded what they think is the right place and outcomes the surf and the servant to shell shocked and the servant and Elisha have the the conversation and And then a nice appraises that they would be blinded and then he comes out to them and he's like, oh, You're looking for the profit.

This isn't the, this isn't the place where You're going to see him, I'll take. I'll take you to the place where you'll see the man that you seek. That's true. When they open their eyes, they're going to see him. But, As the Lord's. Will for them that they would see him in Samaria.

Not in Dothan. So, A very completely helpless. They probably think oh what a stroke of luck. Or what a stroke of, you know, whatever they're Raman. Was that the name of this Syrian God that? Namein was going to take his master too. What a what a stroke of the providence of Raman.

This guy is gonna lead us to the prophet. But it's the Lord who sent his prophet, it's the Lord, who blinded them, as the Lord, who takes them to Samaria. And they get to some area, and everyone can see Elisha including the king, the king sees them. The king cease Elisha, When he sees Elisha, For who Elisha is.

The one whose instruction he should receive like a dad. And so there is, and this is maybe the greatest miracle in the whole passage that that the the king in the northern kingdom. Is accepting Elisha as his instructor and says, okay, daddy. Can I kill him? Tell me what to do Daddy. My father, my father. My father, shall I killed him so I kill them.

But they're under the protection of God's Word and God's prophet. It says, no, you're not allowed to kill them. This is very surprising. We know that God's enemies are going to be destroyed and they still will. And yet for a time before the, the time at which the Lord is determined to give judgment, they're actually under his protection.

That's the only reason anyone wicked on the earth is still breathing and still eating and still drinking. Is because God is still letting them breathe and God is still giving them food and God is still letting them drink. You see how humiliating this is to the enemies of God?

That they have to depend upon him. That's what the whole centers in the hands of an angry God. Sermon was When Jonathan Edwards, preached it. It wasn't this. The this tyrannical, harsh sermon. As a sermon about how we ought to expect nothing from God. But hell, but here he is still giving us life.

Still giving us even to hear His word and he doesn't owe it to us. And at any moment he could cut the thread and and we would perish and God would be righteous to do so. That his enemy is depend upon his constant protection and provision. Even those who persecute you, even those who are slaughtering, Christians believers, Throughout the ages.

They have always depended upon the continual mercy and provision of God to do so. And how great? Will be the wrath of God upon their sin. If they do not repent. Isn't this? What the Lord invites us into and he says, vengeance is mine. I will repay. If you're enemy is hungry, feed him if he is thirsty, give him something to drink in doing.

So you will heap Burning coals upon his head. Now in that context, it doesn't mean make them ashamed, but you'll notice That they're unwillingness.

You'll notice that they're on. You'll notice that they're unwillingness to. Continue to make these rating incursions. At the end of verse 23, is related to by the language. What the king had done for them, This King had spared their life. This king had provided food for food for them and drink for them and the The military raids into Israel stopped after that.

But the burning of the coals upon the head, is much more than that. Because if these men, and if the king of Syria, never repented and believed, Um, in the Lord the Redeemer whom name and had come To believe in. Then when they perish in their sin, That perished with guilt, that was against more grace and more kindness.

This enables us even to pity our enemy. And to consider with dread how great is the wrath that comes upon him. As he increases. The measure of his sin against us. And so there is much to be gained as far, As thinking rightly, before God and refusing, anxiety, and responding rightly to our enemies.

By understanding. The true condition of the enemies of God and his word and his people. That God's enemies are always out schemed. God's enemies are always outnumbered. And God's enemies. Are always out powered even to the point that they have to exist and live under his protection. And his provision.

And then, let's pray. Our Father in heaven. We thank you for Helping us by your word today. Giving us. This wonderful account of what you did. With Syria and Israel in the word of Elijah. To set before. Your people throughout the ages and to set before this family. On this.

Day. The true condition of your and our enemies. We praise you. King Jesus. That you defeat and destroy. All of your and our enemies, we pray that you would help us. Then Not to be anxious. Not to. Worry not to. To love not our lives, even unto death to overcome.

By. Your blood and the Word of your testimony. Knowing that even death and persecution cannot separate us from your love. O God. Which are in Christ Jesus. And so help us to love our enemies and feed them when hungry. And give them to drink when thirsty. And help us.

To have our confidence in you. For, we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.