

Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 19, Part 3

2 Kings 5-6, Part 3

© 2024 John Oswalt and Ted Hildebrandt

We turn now to chapter six, verses eight through 23. And I've titled it, Opened Eyes. None of these people seems to be able to see very much.

Again, wonderful story. The king of Syria is troubled. Every time he sends out a group of raiders to Israel, it seems like the Israelite army is waiting for them.

What's going on here? So, he gets all of his commanders together. I assume Naaman was one of them. Although we don't know, these stories are probably not in chronological order.

They're, they're, I think, more in order of thought. But anyway, he gets his commanders together, and he says, okay, all right, which one of you is a spy? Obviously, one of you is telling the Israelites where I'm going to send my next raiding party. And they say, no, no, no, no.

One of his servants, Naaman? No, my Lord. But Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bed-chamber. They got a prophet.

A prophet who knows what you're thinking before you think it. To which he responds. Okay, go there and capture him.

Aye, aye, aye, aye, aye. If he knows what you're thinking before you think it, he knows you're thinking of going to capture him. We cannot see.

We cannot see what is before our eyes because our pride blinds us. So they said, okay, he's in Dothan. The Valley of Jezreel, remember, is in the north of the land running from the from your perspective running from the Mediterranean Sea south eastward toward Bashan and the Jordan Valley.

Jezreel is located on the southern shoulder of that valley, and south of it, on the way toward Samaria, is the city of Dothan. So, the Syrian troops could come up through the valley of Jezreel, up over the edge of the rim of the valley, and onto the plain where Dothan is. It is not a terribly difficult raid to make.

So, in verse 14, he sent their horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city. Easy, we got him. Now, it's interesting the servant of Elisha is not named here.

Is it Gehazi? We don't know. That's a question for heaven when we get there. But maybe because of the leprosy, Gehazi had gone away into quarantine, and this is another man we don't know.

The servant of God, excuse me, the servant of the man of God. Now, I've mentioned this several times. I'll keep mentioning it as long as we're talking about Elisha.

These people Elijah and Elisha are rarely called prophets. Other people will call them prophets like one of Ben-Hadad's commanders said there's a prophet in Israel. Other people will call him prophets but the Bible regularly calls them man of God.

What's his profession? His profession is to belong to God. His profession is to be whatever God wants, wherever God wants, whenever God wants. So the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out and behold an army with horses, and chariots were around the city.

Very possibly, they were in a room on the top of the roof of a house as the wealthy woman from Shunem had made them a room. Not necessarily, but I imagine that. He comes out of the chamber in the morning, rubbing his eyes, and there they are.

Alas, my master, what should we do? And he said don't be afraid. Great, great biblical verse. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.

Oh, I wish I believed that more firmly than I often do. How easily we get frightened by the forces that are ranged against us. So many in our own country, I become anxious because I think so many of us are ruled by our fears.

Oh my, oh my, the Reds are gaining on us. The left is winning. Oh, what are we going to do? We have to mob the Capitol building.

There are more with us than there are with them. We don't have to be ruled by our fears. We don't have to have our fears ruling us in the election booth.

Blind eyes, blind eyes. Then Elisha prayed and said oh Lord, I pray thee open his eyes that he may see. And they discovered the Lord's armies had the Syrian armies surrounded.

You think you've won? No as a matter of fact you've lost. Oh friends, again as I grow older I do, I used to, I'd hear people say I'm really looking forward to heaven. I would think yeah come on give me a break.

But as I grow older I understand a bit of that. I want to see, I want to see the armies of heaven. They're around us, all around me.

No, I'm not with it; years ago, a man named Frank Peretti wrote a novel that gained a lot of hearing. The idea that it's the invisible world that is really determining what happens here. I don't believe that.

I don't think the Bible teaches that. But they're there. They're there at God's command.

And they're there for us. Oh, to have the eyes of faith to see them and to live in that confidence. God's not going to be caught by surprise.

And so, strike this people, says Elisha with blindness. So, the whole Syrian army was struck blind. As blind as the servant of God had been.

And Elisha said to them, this is not the way, and this is not the city. You guys have been misled. Follow me, and I'll bring you to the man whom you seek.

And he led them to Samaria, down the road about ten miles. As soon as they entered Samaria, Elisha said, O Lord, open the eyes of these men that they may see. So, the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw, and so they were in the midst of Samaria.

Open our eyes Lord to see where we have ended up in our blindness. Not only to see his divine power but to see the desperate reality of our circumstances. We think they're bad.

They're a whole lot worse than we think. Help us to see how needy we are and how gracious you are. How often do we get it reversed?

Well, I'm doing fine. I'm going to make it. No, you're not.

No you're not. Not in your power you're not. Help us to see our real situation.

We are naked and helpless and hopeless. But he is with us. He is able.

And that's the picture you see here. The king of Israel says, Oh, okay, you want me to kill them all? And Elisha says no. No, they're your captives.

You wouldn't kill them in war. That's God. That's God.

Why does he open our eyes as he did with Isaiah chapter 6? Why does he open our eyes? Oh, to let us see how worthless we are. What worms we are. How rotten we are.

No, he lets us see who we really are so that we can see who he really is for us. No set bread and water are before them so that they may eat, drink, and go to their master. So, he prepared a great feast for them.

Oh, my goodness. God, I am your enemy. I know that child.

Sit down. Again, it's the 23rd Psalm. And when they had eaten drunk he sent them away and they went to their master.

And the Syrians came no more on raids to the land of Israel. This raiding thing is not going to work. We figured that one out.

Yes, Lord. Open our eyes. Now, before I let you go, some of you who are really sharp may remember that Ahab was condemned because he let the king of Syria, Benhadad, go.

And God said no, you should have killed him. I brought him into your hand so you could kill him. Now, wait a minute, what's the difference here?

I think the difference is that it was a battle where Benhadad, for the second time, was trying to destroy the people of God. He had cast himself in the role of the enemy of God. This is not the same kind of situation.

These people are helpless. They have been led here by God. And so, they're not God's captives.

They're God's beneficiaries, if you will. So, it's a different situation. Who is the enemy that God has put into our hands to dispense with and get rid of?

And who are those whom God has put in our power? He wants to use us to bless them. Opened eyes. Discernment.

Wisdom. What is God wanting to do here? Not what I want to do.

Not what I think is best. But what do you want to do, God? Opened eyes.

May we have them? God bless you.