

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.1, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.1, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture analyzes 2 Kings 6-8, focusing on Elisha's ministry during a siege of Samaria. The passage explores King Jehoram's despair and misplaced blame, contrasting it with the opportunity for repentance and trust in God. **Oswalt emphasizes that while God permits hardship, His ultimate aim is restoration, not destruction.** He encourages listeners to turn to God for guidance and believe in His power to transform dire situations. **The lecture highlights the importance of faith in the face of adversity, contrasting the officer's doubt with God's promise of abundance.** Ultimately, the study invites a deeper, more personal understanding of God's work in human history and individual lives.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).



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3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.1, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 1

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. John Oswalt's session on 2 Kings 6-8.

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 6-8 (Part 1)

Subject: Analysis of Elisha's Ministry of Deliverance and the Siege of Samaria in 2 Kings 6-8.

Main Themes:

- **God's Deliverance and the Importance of Trust:** The overarching theme is God's power and willingness to deliver, even in dire circumstances. However, the text highlights the critical importance of trusting in God's provision and not attributing blame to Him when facing hardship. Oswalt emphasizes that even when God permits difficult situations, His purpose is not destruction, but cleansing, refinement, and repentance.
- **The Consequences of Sin and the Erosion of Faith:** The lecture points to a decline in faith and moral standing in Israel, stemming from Solomon's sin. This decline manifests in a tendency to blame God for problems and a general lack of trust in His ability to provide.
- **The Temptation to Blame Others:** A recurring motif is the human tendency to deflect responsibility and blame external factors or individuals (like Elisha) for personal or societal problems, rather than seeking introspection and repentance.
- **The Contrast Between Faith and Doubt:** The story contrasts Elisha's unwavering faith in God's promises with the King's and his officer's doubt and despair. This contrast underscores the importance of believing in God's power to overcome seemingly impossible situations.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **The Siege of Samaria:** Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, lays siege to Samaria, causing a severe famine within the city. The situation is so dire that a donkey's head sells for 80 shekels, illustrating the extreme scarcity of food. "So that we're told a donkey's head sold for 80 shekels. Now, we're told in the book of Leviticus that a male slave was sold for 50 shekels... But here, a donkey's head is worth 80 shekels. So, we see something of the tragedy that is occurring here."

- **Despair and Blame:** King Jehoram expresses despair and blames God for the crisis, echoing a sentiment of abandonment seen earlier in the books of Kings. He says, "If the Lord doesn't help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing place? From the wine press?"
- **The King's Anger Towards Elisha:** In a moment of anger, Jehoram vows to kill Elisha, blaming him for the city's predicament, highlighting the tendency to find a scapegoat instead of seeking repentance. "May God damn me if the head of Elisha's son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today."
- **Elisha's Prophecy:** Elisha, aware of the King's intentions through divine knowledge, prophesies that the famine will end miraculously within 24 hours, with prices of flour and barley returning to normal. "This is what the Lord says: about this time tomorrow, a sea of the finest flour will sell for one shekel... at the gate of Samaria."
- **The Officer's Doubt and its Consequences:** The King's officer expresses disbelief in Elisha's prophecy, questioning God's ability to provide such abundance. Elisha prophesies that the officer will see the abundance but will not partake of it, foreshadowing his death. "The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to the man of God, look, even if Yahweh would open the floodgates of heaven... could this happen? You will see it with your own eyes, answered Elisha, but you will not eat any of it."
- **God's Permission vs. God's Direct Action:** Oswalt makes a distinction in the source. "The Bible does not tell us that Yahweh sent Ben-Hadad. He may have, but the Bible doesn't tell us that... nothing happens to us that doesn't come to us by Yahweh's permission... On the other hand, we should not think that God says Oswald needs a broken arm. I'm going to break his arm for him. That's not our God."

Quotes:

- "Your intention is to bless us if we meet just the barest conditions."
- "When sin has separated me from God, it's very easy for the enemy to come whispering around and say, yeah, he's out to get you."
- "How often, when we're in trouble, we're looking for somebody else to blame."
- "This disaster is from the Lord. So why should I trust him to save me?"
- "God's purpose is never to destroy us. His purpose is to cleanse us, to refine us, to bring us to repentance, to turn us around."

Implications:

This passage from 2 Kings, as interpreted by Oswalt, serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining a right relationship with God, trusting in His promises even in the face of adversity, and avoiding the temptation to blame Him or others for our troubles. It emphasizes that even when God permits difficult circumstances, His ultimate goal is redemption and restoration.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.1, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 1

A Study Guide to 2 Kings 6-8, Part 1

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What was the primary focus of Elijah and Elisha's ministries in the northern kingdom of Israel?
2. According to Oswalt, what is often the root cause of feeling that God is "out to get you?"
3. In 2 Kings 6, what drastic measure did a woman propose during the siege of Samaria, and what Old Testament story does it mirror?
4. What was King Jehoram's initial reaction to the famine in Samaria, and who did he blame for the situation?
5. How did Elisha know of the king's plan to harm him, and what does this illustrate about Elisha's prophetic abilities?
6. What is Oswalt's interpretation of King Jehoram's statement, "This disaster is from the Lord. Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?"
7. According to Oswalt, what should be our initial response to difficulties rather than immediately blaming God?
8. What promise does Elisha make in 2 Kings 7:1, and how does it contrast with the current situation in Samaria?
9. How does the officer on whose arm the king was leaning respond to Elisha's promise?
10. What is the moral of the exchange between Elisha and the officer?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Elijah and Elisha's ministries primarily combatted the prevalence of Baal worship and sought to maintain the ministry, power, and glory of Yahweh in Israel. They aimed to turn the people's hearts back to the one true God.

2. Oswalt suggests that the feeling that God is "out to get you" often stems from sin separating individuals from God. This separation creates an opening for negative influences to distort one's perception of God's intentions.
3. During the siege, a woman proposed that she and her neighbor eat their children, mirroring the wisdom of Solomon and the two prostitutes. However, unlike the Solomon story, the King despairs of a solution.
4. King Jehoram expressed despair and blamed Elisha for the famine, rather than taking responsibility for his own actions or seeking God's help. He felt Yahweh was out to destroy him.
5. Elisha knew of the king's plan through his prophetic gift, demonstrating his ability to perceive events before they happened. He told the elders that the king was sending someone to cut off his head.
6. Oswalt interprets Jehoram's statement as a rejection of trust in Yahweh. In Hebrew, wait is a synonym for trust so he is essentially stating why should I trust him to save me?
7. Rather than immediately blaming God, Oswalt advises that we should recognize that difficulties come with God's permission, and we should seek His guidance and prescription for our situation. We should trust that he can carry us through it.
8. Elisha promises that by the next day, food prices will drastically decrease, with a sea of the finest flour selling for one shekel. This contrasts sharply with the current famine conditions in Samaria, where food is scarce and exorbitantly priced.
9. The officer questions the possibility of Elisha's promise coming true, doubting that even divine intervention could bring about such a drastic change. He remarks that it cannot happen, as God is out to get them.
10. The moral of the exchange is that one should believe in God's promises and not question His ability to fulfill them. The officer's disbelief leads to him seeing the abundance but not partaking in it.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the role of sin and repentance in understanding God's actions in the book of 2 Kings. How does Oswalt interpret the relationship between personal sin, national disaster, and divine intervention?
2. Analyze King Jehoram's character as portrayed in 2 Kings 6-7. What are his key flaws, and how do they contribute to the unfolding events?
3. Compare and contrast the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, focusing on their roles as prophets and their interactions with the kings of Israel. How do their actions reflect the spiritual state of the northern kingdom?
4. Explore the concept of trust in Yahweh as presented in the passage. How does Oswalt define trust in this context, and what are the consequences of lacking it?
5. Examine the significance of Elisha's prophetic abilities in the narrative. How do his pronouncements and actions shape the events in 2 Kings 6-8, and what do they reveal about God's character and purposes?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Aram:** An ancient kingdom northeast of Israel, often in conflict with Israel, ruled by Ben-Hadad.
- **Baal Worship:** The worship of the Canaanite god Baal, a practice that the prophets Elijah and Elisha actively opposed in Israel.
- **Ben-Hadad:** The king of Aram who besieged Samaria, causing a severe famine.
- **Elisha:** A prophet of God in the northern kingdom of Israel, known for his miracles and prophetic insights.
- **Jehoram:** King of Israel during the siege of Samaria.
- **Samaria:** The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel.
- **Sackcloth:** A coarse cloth typically made of goat hair, used as a symbol of mourning, repentance, or distress.
- **Shekel:** A unit of weight and currency in ancient Israel.
- **Siege:** A military tactic in which an army surrounds a city, cutting off its supplies and communication to force a surrender.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.1, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about 2 Kings 6-8, Part 1 (Based on Dr. John Oswalt's Teaching)

1. What is the primary focus of Elisha's ministry in 2 Kings 6-8?

Elisha's ongoing ministry focuses on deliverance, combating Baal worship in the northern kingdom of Israel, and demonstrating the power and glory of Yahweh. He seeks to maintain the prevalence and importance of Yahweh's presence in the lives of the Israelites.

2. Why did Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, lay siege to Samaria in 2 Kings 6?

While the scripture doesn't explicitly state the reason, it seems Ben-Hadad aimed to capture the capital city of Israel and subdue the entire kingdom after ceasing smaller raiding parties. This is a repeat of tactics we've seen before in Kings, suggesting a continued conflict between Aram and Israel.

3. What does the extreme famine during the siege of Samaria reveal about the situation in Israel?

The famine highlights the dire conditions within the besieged city, emphasizing the severity of the situation. The exorbitant price of food, like a donkey's head costing 80 shekels, signifies a complete breakdown of normal life and the desperation of the people. This famine showed the tragedy that was occurring.

4. How does King Jehoram respond to the woman's plea for help regarding cannibalism, and what does this reveal about his spiritual state?

Jehoram's response, "If the Lord doesn't help you, where can I get help for you?" demonstrates a profound despair and a lack of faith in God's ability to deliver them. He believes God is out to get him, showing a spiritual disconnect and a blaming attitude rooted in his own sin.

5. Why does King Jehoram blame Elisha for the disaster befalling Samaria?

Jehoram blames Elisha as a way to deflect responsibility for the situation. Instead of acknowledging his own potential failings and turning to God in repentance, he seeks a scapegoat, revealing a lack of self-reflection and spiritual maturity.

6. What is Elisha's reaction to King Jehoram's attempt to have him killed?

Elisha, through his prophetic abilities, is aware of Jehoram's plan before the messenger even arrives. He instructs the elders to shut the door and hold it shut against the messenger, demonstrating his awareness and ability to protect himself.

7. What is Dr. Oswalt's interpretation of King Jehoram's statement, "This disaster is from the Lord. Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?"

Dr. Oswalt interprets this statement as a rejection of trust in Yahweh. Jehoram equates "waiting" with "trusting" and concludes that since he believes Yahweh sent the disaster (Ben-Hadad's siege), there is no point in trusting Him for deliverance. Dr. Oswalt argues that while God permits things to happen, we shouldn't automatically blame Him and should instead turn to Him for guidance and repentance.

8. What promise does Elisha make in 2 Kings 7:1, and how does the officer react to it?

Elisha prophesies that within a day, food prices will dramatically decrease. The officer questions the possibility of this happening, even if Yahweh were to open the floodgates of heaven. This reveals a lack of faith and an unwillingness to believe in God's power to intervene, highlighting the importance of believing God's promises despite seemingly impossible circumstances.