

# Elisha #2

Notes for 21 Mar

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Read: [2 Kings 6](#)

## Seeing the Unseen: Divine Presence, Power, and Judgment



### Geography

Key Locations:

- Jordan River – provision (axe head)
- Dothan – revelation (heavenly army)
- Samaria – crisis and siege
- Aram (Damascus) – enemy base

The movement **Jordan** → **Dothan** → **Samaria** is also a theological progression:  
**provision** → **revelation** → **crisis**

# 1. The Floating Axe Head (vv 1–7)

**Theme:** God's care in the ordinary?

**Observations:**

- Communal expansion project ("let us go...")
- Concern over borrowed property (economic ethics)
- Miracle is quiet, local, almost domestic

**Theological note:** God's power is not reserved for national deliverance—it extends to ordinary vulnerability and responsibility.

**Discussion**

1. Why is this story included alongside national and military crises?
2. What does this reveal about God's concern for *material loss and debt*?
3. Is this best understood as miracle, a sign, or theological illustration?
4. Am I right in concluding that the presence of this story in this narrative means that the story is unusual? Elisha doesn't do this sort of thing all the time, so the author feels that it is worth noting.
5. An awkward point: bear this 'nice' story in mind when we reach v29 and a truly grim story of almost casual cannibalism.

# 2. Elisha, Aram, and the Invisible Army (vv 8–23)

**Theme:** True sight vs perceived reality

**Observations:**

- Elisha knows Aramean plans → prophetic intelligence
- Dothan: exposed location, easy to surround
- Servant's fear vs Elisha's confidence
- "Chariots of fire" → unseen divine host
- Arameans struck with blindness (irony)
- Climactic twist: enemies are fed, not killed

**Key verse:**

*"Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (v16)*

**Theological notes:**

- Reality is not defined by what is visible
- God's power is expressed through restraint and mercy, not just destruction
- Prophetic vision = participation in divine perspective

**Discussion:**

- What kind of "seeing" is being contrasted in this passage?
- Why does Elisha feed the enemy rather than destroy them?
- Is this an anticipation of later biblical ethics (eg, loving enemies), or something distinct?
- What does this passage suggest about the relationship between revelation and fear?

### 3. The Siege of Samaria (vv 24–33)

**Theme:** Judgment, famine, and theological collapse

**Observations:**

- Ben-Hadad besieges Samaria
- Extreme famine → shocking cannibalism account
- King tears robes (partial repentance?) but blames Elisha
- Final statement: despair directed toward God

**Key verse:**

*"This disaster is from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?" (v.33)*

**Theological notes:**

- Clear echo of Deuteronomic covenant curses ([Deut 28](#))
- Raises the problem of:
  - divine agency
  - human responsibility
  - **theological endurance**

**Discussion:**

- What distinguishes lament from loss of faith in this passage?
- Why is Elisha targeted rather than God directly?
- In v33 is the king expressing faith, anger, or apostasy? Is he wrong? Explain!
- How should we interpret God's role in this suffering? Iron axe heads can be raised but mothers must eat their children? I know that this is repeated theme in our discussions

on Samuel and Kings - but, I'm not any clearer on *why* some miracles occur and others don't.

I don't expect an answer from our discussion - maybe we must refer it to the Bureau of Unanswered Questions - but I would like a better explanation than the usual

- if a good thing happens then God is great
- if a bad thing happens then God has mysterious ways/it was our fault/the sin thing/etc

Can we do any better than that? Must blind faith override all other considerations?

## 4. Major Themes Across the Chapter

### 1. Sight and Blindness

- Servant: blind → sees
- Arameans: see → blind
- King: sees reality → misunderstands it

**Discussion:** Is spiritual perception primarily intellectual, moral, or revelatory?

### 2. Reversal of Expectations (Geography as Theology)

- Dothan (exposed) → safest place
- Samaria (fortified) → most desperate place

### 3. Power Redefined? God:

- restores (axe)
- reveals (army)
- restrains (mercy to enemies)
- judges (siege)

**Discussion:** Which expression of power is most theologically challenging - and why? And where is the power apparently lacking?

### 4. Prophetic vs Royal Vision

- Elisha: clarity, calm, alignment with God
- King: reactionary, confused, accusatory

**Discussion:** What does this say about leadership and theological perception? For those of you who lead out in discussions and are instrumental in shaping the spiritual journeys of others what 'rules' do you use to decide what to say, and what not to say? Are there issues you dodge?!

Be honest: are you an Elisha or are you the King??

## 5. Conclusion

The decisive question is not what is happening, but how it is seen—and who is given sight.

Where do we see parallels today between visible reality and unseen truth?

How should this chapter shape a theology of:

- crisis?
- enemies?
- divine hiddenness?

The story continues into next week and so we leave Chapter 6 in the middle of the siege. To be continued...