

INTRODUCTION 引言

How reliable are our senses? Not much. There are many animals in the world that can see, hear and smell better than humans. Worse still, when you come to a certain age, body functions begin to deteriorate. I once giggled over a brother who had to take off his glasses to read his Bible on the podium. Laugh no more. I found myself doing the same thing soon afterward. Besides, there are guys who are capable of shutting down part of their senses when needed. For example, when their eyes are glued to a sport game on TV, his ears can filter out the crying of his baby or words from his wife in the background. God gives us senses to interact with the physical world. Moreover, God wants us to experience His presence in our lives. The two stories in our passage today tell us how God overrides people's senses to fulfill His plans. The northern kingdom of Israel was under a siege by Aram on two separate occasions. It is the same country whose commander Naaman was healed of his leprosy. We studied the story last week. Perhaps some time had passed, or now the Aramean troop was led by a different general. It shows that Aram was a constant threat to Israel. In both instances, God delivered His people from danger. There are three main characters in our stories today: Elisha the prophet, Joram the king of Israel and Ben-Hadad the king of Aram.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Intercession to God 向神求助

In the first story, we see how God delivered His people through the intercession of Elisha. Let us read from **verse 8 to 12** to understand the background. God sent His supernatural protection to save the Israel king. Aram put soldiers at a strategic location, expecting to capture the enemy's king. Israel somehow got the intelligence and Joram changed his plan and dodged the threat. The same situation was repeated. Ben-Hadad was mad. Did Israel use a spy satellite to snoop on them? Ben-Hadad came to a logical conclusion – a traitor leaked information to his enemy. An official corrected the king. Elisha the prophet heard everything Ben-Hadad told his generals in his bedroom. Elisha then alerted his king. How can you beat that kind of intelligence? Such all-knowing power can only come from a true God. Even though the whole nation of Israel fell to idol worship, God continued to show His mercy. You may be surrounded by non-believers in your school, work place or neighborhood. This country is going further away from the truth. Do not feel hopeless, and do not underestimate a powerful tool God gives us. We can and should keep on praying that God will lead people to repentance. Our hope is not in our government but in the Lord. We may not have that kind of supernatural knowledge Elisha had. However, people around us should be able to tell that we are Christ's followers. The way we talk and do things should be different from non-believers. Our values, priorities and character should testify that God is living in us.

In the second scene, Elisha taught his servant to see things from a supernatural perspective. When Ben-Hadad heard that Elisha was in Dothan, he immediately dispatched some soldiers to surround the city. Let us continue to read [verse 15 to 17](#). Elisha assured his servant that those who were on their side were greater in numbers than the enemy. If I were the man, I would have responded: “Yeah, right. Maybe you’re a kung-fu master. But I’m prepared to surrender.” Elisha did not panic. He prayed that God would open the eyes of his servant. Then the man saw many soldiers of God. The Arameans had many strong men on horses and chariots. In comparison, God sent many more horses and chariots of fire. They could fly over the terrains. In the Old Testament, “Lord of Armies” (or “Lord of Hosts” in other translations) is a common title for God. He has a multitude of angelic troop at His disposal. Why was Elisha able to see what his servant could not see? The servant used binocular to focus on the earthly enemies. Whereas, Elisha used telescope to gaze at heaven. More specifically, the servant used physical eyes to look at the circumstance. However, Elisha used spiritual eyes to look beyond the circumstance. Brothers and sisters: Do not be afraid when you are in trouble. We should pray: “Lord, open my spiritual eyes to see that You are with me.” Paul prayed in a similar way for believers in [Ephesians 1:18-19](#) – 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength. Paul prays that God would enlighten the spiritual eyes of believers to see three things. First, our future hope and second, our glorious inheritance. We will enjoy God’s eternal blessings and we will forever be in His presence. The third thing Paul prays for is God’s power in us. The subsequent context states that God used that power to raise Christ from the dead. The same energy is at work in every child of God in our daily life. No, it will not make you fly. But God’s power helps us live in obedience to His will. For example, God will give you strength to overcome temptations. God will give you wisdom and articulation to win people to Christ. God will give you humility to apologize to a person you offended. We need to ask God to energize us so that we can see things with a supernatural perspective. Then we can see beyond the fact that we have limited manpower, resources or opportunities in our church, or that many people are still staying home. We pray: “Lord, what do You want us to do?” We can do greater things for God. It begins with a change of our perspective.

God gave the servant a supernatural perspective to see God’s army. However, God did not intend to eliminate the Arameans. Instead, He let them go. Please continue to read [verse 18 to 20](#). Elisha prayed again. This time he asked God to cover the eyesight of the enemies. Elisha could have killed those soldiers. Instead, he led them to Samaria. It was about a 12-mile trip. Upon their arrival, Elisha prayed for God to restore their vision. Ops! Now they found themselves in the capital city of Israel. King Joram surely knew that the whole operation could only be God’s work. He consulted the prophet if he could slaughter his enemies. Elisha disapproved. Rather, he advised the king to treat them well. Look at [verse 23](#): So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel’s territory. Those soldiers must be very grateful that Joram spared their lives. They even returned home with a full stomach. They would definitely share their experience with their king, fellow comrades and family members. Elisha was a real deal. The God of the

Israelites was unlike any other deity. The outcome was a period of peace. Jesus sent us into the world as messengers of peace. How will you react when people offend you with words or actions? It is surely a Biblical thing to seek help from the authority if your life is in danger. However, we should seek peace in most other cases. We extend God's grace to pardon people of their offenses. In the process, we can turn enemies into friends. The key thing is not to show them that you are a nice person. But to prove that you believe in a real God, and Biblical principles really work.

2. Intervention from God 得神幫助

God delivered Israel from the threat of Aram through the intercession of Elisha. Ben-Hadad later returned with a new campaign. This time, God intervened and delivered His people. Please read [verse 24 to 25](#). Cutting off food supply was a common tactic in the ancient warfare. People were either starved to death, or they would eventually surrender. When food was running low, prices skyrocketed. In the Chinese Union Version, "seed pods" was rendered as "dove's dung." The point is that people had to pay multiple times in exchange for anything edible. People resort to desperate means in a dire situation. In the story, a woman asked Joram for help. She made an agreement with another lady. She cooked her son as food and shared among the two families. The other lady was supposed to cook her son the next day. But she hid her son instead. It was truly a tragic situation. The king reacted by blaming God and Elisha. He responded in [verse 27](#) even before the woman pleaded her case: ... "If the Lord does not help you, where can I get help for you...?" After knowing her grievance, Joram pledged in [verse 31](#): ... "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today!" He grumbled again in [verse 33](#): ... "This disaster is from the Lord. Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?" The king forgot that Elisha saved him multiple times by alerting him of the ambush from Aram. It is easy to shift blames when problems arise. Difficulty is actually an opportunity for us to pause and examine our relationship with God. If there is any sin, then we should humbly confess it to the Lord. If we need some adjustments in our life, we then ask Him for strength. Perhaps we need to grow in our faith, refine our character or change our priorities. God can use any life experience as a teaching moment.

Next, Joram went with some officials to Elisha's home to capture him. The prophet had no fear. He revealed a message from God to the king. Food would be sufficient and affordable the very next day. The news was too good to be true. An army officer reacted in [7:2](#) – "Look, even if the Lord should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?" "You will see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha, "but you will not eat any of it!" Once again, the difference is seeing things with different perspectives. God can work against nature because He is supernatural. God would intervene and send a next-day delivery. Elisha did not know how God would fulfill it. But whatever God promised will come true. Imagine we are watching the story in a movie. Now the camera is shifted to four lepers outside the city gate. Continue to read [verse 3 to 8](#). We learned last week that lepers are considered unclean based on the Old Testament Law. They must be isolated from the community. That was why the four lepers gathered outside the city. They reasoned that they would eventually be died of

hunger anyway. Why not took a chance and surrendered to the enemies? To their great surprise, the Arameans were gone. How did it happen? Verse 6 tells us that God caused the soldiers to hear sound of chariots and horses. They thought the Israelites called for help from neighboring nations. The Arameans left so abruptly that they did not even have time to pack their stuff. In the previous story, God controlled people's eyesight. This time God altered people's hearing. God is sovereign over nature, our circumstances and people to accomplish His plans. God still perform miracles even today. No, I am not talking about separating the Mississippi River so that we can walk from downtown to Arkansas. You have experienced God's miracle if you are a follower of Christ. In the past you have zero interest in the Bible. You might even ridicule about the Christian faith. But God showed you mercy and awaken your soul. He called you back to His family. God will work the same way in any non-believer. We do our part to share the gospel with other. But do not forget to pray for them too. Only God can change people's hearts.

The Aramean troop retreated so quickly that they left everything. The lepers enjoyed a picnic with food and drink. They also looted some valuable items. It is like kids find out that the pantry is full of snack. The parents are asleep. It is time to call for a party! Suddenly, the lepers remembered that their peers were still suffering inside the city. Therefore, they informed some gatekeepers immediately. But Joram thought Aram set a trap to lure the Israelites to the wilderness. The king thus dispatched some soldiers to check it out. Later, the news was confirmed. The public wasted no time to go for a treasure hunt. Continue to read [verse 16 and 17](#). Things happened just as Elisha predicted. It proved over and again that Elisha was a true prophet. Sadly, the army officer who was skeptical to Elisha's prophecy was trampled to death. It is better not to know about good news than to miss it or ignore it. Perhaps your friends got some deals of a lifetime because a store was having a liquidation sale. Before you realized it, the doors were already close. But it would be more foolish to say to yourself: "That can't be true. I'd rather pay full price and shop elsewhere." However, there is no alternative in the spiritual realm. Jesus is the only way to God. Accept Him as Savior and Lord, and you will be saved. Jesus promised that those who seek Him will find Him. We need to pray that God will clear the spiritual eye-sight of the non-believers. Only God can convince them in the hearts that they are sinners and they need a Savior.

CONCLUSION 解釋

Our God is sovereign and all-powerful. He can override our senses to fulfill His plans. The most important sense God gives us is spiritual in nature. God testify to our hearts that He exists and He is the one true God. Follow those signs and you will find Him. To Christians, we need God's help to sharpen our spiritual eyesight so that we can see His work. We also need God's help to tune our spiritual hearing so that we can hear His voice. We will be blessed when we follow His guidance.

INTRODUCTION 引言

我們的感官有多可靠？也許很有限。有很多動物的視覺、聽覺和嗅覺都比人類更敏銳。更糟糕的是，當你到了某個年齡時，身體機能就會開始退化。我曾經取笑一位弟兄，他在講台上讀聖經時必須先把眼鏡拿下來。不久之後我也再笑不出來了，因為我發現自己也做同樣的事情。此外，有些男士有能力在需要時關閉部分感官。例如，當他們的眼睛粘在電視上的球賽時，他們的耳朵可以過濾掉嬰兒的哭聲或太太講話的聲音。神賜給我們感官來感應世界。此外，神希望我們在生活中經歷祂的同在。今天的經文中的兩個故事告訴我們神能夠超越人的感官來成就祂的計劃。北國以色列兩次被亞蘭圍困。上週我們看到亞蘭國的元帥乃縵的大麻風得到了醫治。也許已經過去了一段時間，或者現在亞蘭的軍隊是由另一位將軍來率領。這表明亞蘭是以色列的一個持續的威脅。在兩次的危險中，神都保護祂的子民。我們的故事中有三個主要人物：先知以利沙、以色列王約蘭和亞蘭王便哈達。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Intercession to God 向神求助

在第一個故事中，我們看到以利沙向神求助，然後神便拯救祂的子民。讓我們讀第 8 至 12 節來了解背景。神以超自然的方式保護以色列王。亞蘭國的士兵埋伏在某些地點，打算要抓以色列王。但以色列收到了情報，約蘭便改變行程，脫離了危險。相同的情形重覆發生。便哈達當然很生氣了。以色列是否使用間諜衛星窺探他們？便哈達得出了結論，有叛徒向敵人洩露軍情。一位官員糾正王的想法。是先知以利沙聽到便哈達在臥室裡告訴將軍們的一切。以利沙隨後將消息告訴他的王。你怎麼對抗如此的超自然能力？這種無所不知的力量只能來自真神。即使整個以色列國都敬拜偶像，但是神仍然繼續施憐憫。在你的學校、工作地點或社區，可能到處都是非信徒。這個國家離開真理越來越遠。不要感到絕望，也不要低估神賜給我們一個強而有力的武器。我們可以並且應該繼續為非信徒禱告，求神使他們悔改。我們的盼望不是在於我們的政府，而是在於主。我們可能沒有以利沙所擁有的那種超自然的知識。但是，我們周圍的人應該能夠看出我們是基督的跟隨者。我們言行應該有別於非信徒。我們的價值觀、優先次序和品格應該證明神是活在我們裡面的。

在第二個場景中，以利沙教導他的僕人以超自然的視野來看事物。當便哈達得知以利沙在多坍時，他立即派遣一些士兵包圍那個城市。讓我們繼續閱讀**第 15 至 17 節**。以利沙向他的僕人保證，與他們同在的勢力比敵人的更多。如果我是那個僕人，我會回答：「是嗎？也許你是武林高手。但我已經準備好要投降了。」以利沙毫不害怕。他祈求神打開他僕人的眼睛。於是他便看見了許多神的士兵。亞蘭人有許多車馬和軍隊。相比之下，神派出了更多的火車和火馬。他們甚至可以飛越山野。在舊約中，「萬軍之耶和華」是神的一個普遍稱號。是指祂擁有眾多的天使天軍。以利沙為什麼能看見他的僕人看不見的東西？僕人只看到地上的敵人，但以利沙卻注視著天上。更具體地說，僕人用肉眼看現狀。但是，以利沙卻用屬靈的視野超越現狀。弟兄姐妹：當你碰到困難時不必害怕。我們應該禱告：「主啊，求祢打開我的屬靈眼睛，知道祢與我同在。」保羅以類似的方式在以弗所書 1:18-19 為信徒禱告。**18 並且照明你們心中的眼睛，使你們知道他的恩召有何等指望，他在聖徒中得的基業有何等豐盛的榮耀；19 並知道他向我們這信的人所顯的能力是何等浩大。**保羅求神打開信徒屬靈的眼睛去看三件事情。首先是我們對將來盼望，其次是我們榮耀的基業。我們將享受神永恆的祝福，我們會永遠與祂同在。保羅祈求的第三件事是神彰顯祂的能力在我們裡面。隨後的經節指出，神使用這股能力使基督從死裡復活。在我們的日常生活中，神也在我們裡面發揮同樣的能力。這個力量不會使你飛起來。但是神的能力幫助我們順服祂的旨意。例如，神會給你力量來勝過試探。神會賜給你智慧和口才，帶領別人歸向基督。神也會讓你謙卑下來，向你冒犯的人道歉。我們需要神激勵我們，使我們能以超自然的視野來看事情。然後我們便可以超越現狀，例如我們不再定睛在教會有限的人力、資源或機會，或者許多人仍留在家裡。我們禱告：「主，你要我們做什麼？」我們可以為神做更大的事情。但我們要先改變自己的視野。

神賜給那個僕人超自然的視野來看見神的軍隊。但是，神並不打算消滅那些亞蘭人。神卻要把他們放走。請繼續閱讀**第 18 至 20 節**。以利沙再次禱告。這次他要求神使敵人眼瞎。以利沙本可以趁機消滅那些士兵。但是，他引領他們去撒瑪利亞。那是大概 12 英里的路程。他們抵達後，以利沙向神懇求，恢復他們的視力。糟糕！現在他們發現自己在以色列的首都。約蘭王很清楚整件事只可能是神的作為。他問先知可否將敵人殺死。以利沙不允許。相反，他建議王要恩待他們。看第 23 節：**王就為他們預備了許多食物；他們吃喝完了，打發他們回到他們主人那裡。從此，亞蘭軍不再犯以色列境了。**那些士兵肯定非常感激約蘭饒了他們的性命。他們甚至可以吃飽才回家。他們一定會跟他們的王、同僚和家人分享他們的經歷。以利沙是真正的先知。以色列人的神與其他神明不一樣。結果以色列享受一段太平時期。耶穌差派我們成為和平之子進入世界。當別人的言語或行為冒犯你時，你將如何應對？如果你的生命處於危險之中，

那麼你應該打 911 尋求幫助。那是合乎聖經原則的事情。但是，在大多數其他情況下，我們應該尋求和平。我們學習神的恩典，赦免別人的過錯。在過程中，我們可以將敵人變成朋友。關鍵不只是一定要向他們表明你是一個友善的人。重點是證明你相信的是一位真神，聖經的原則是行得通的。

2. Intervention from God 得神幫助

以利沙向神求助，使以色列脫離了亞蘭的威脅。便哈達之後發起了新的軍事行動。以色列人再次得到神的幫助。請閱讀第 24 至 25 節。切斷糧食供應是古代戰爭中常見的策略。人們要不然餓死，要不然最終投降。當糧食短缺時，價格自然會暴漲。在中文聖經中，「豆莢」被翻譯為「鴿子糞」。重點是人們要付出幾倍的價錢才能買到任何可以食用的東西。在嚴峻的情形下，人們會想盡辦法為求生存。在故事中，一個婦人向約蘭求助。她與另一位女士達成協議。她把兒子煮來吃，並和另一個家庭分享。另一位女士本應隔天把她的兒子煮掉。但是她卻把孩子藏起來。這確實是一個悲慘的情況。王的反應是責怪神和以利沙。在那位婦女訴苦之前，約蘭就在第 27 節中說：…「耶和華不幫助你，我從何處幫助你…？」在得知她的情形之後，約蘭在第 31 節保證：…「我今日若容沙法的兒子以利沙的頭仍在他項上，願神重重的降罰與我！」在第 33 節中，他再次埋怨：…「這災禍是從耶和華那裡來的，我何必再仰望耶和華呢？」王忘記了以利沙多次提醒他來自亞蘭的埋伏而救了他。當問題出現時，人們很容易會推卸責任。困難實際上是我們停下來檢視我們與神關係的機會。如果我們犯了罪，那麼我們應該謙卑地向主認罪。如果我們在生活中需要一些調整，那我們就向主求力量。也許我們的信心需要成長、我們的品格需要改進或是我們的優先次序需要改變。神可以使用我們的經歷成為教導我們的機會。

接下來，約蘭和一些官員到以利沙的家想要抓他。先知沒有害怕。他傳遞從神而來的啟示。第二天會有足夠而且便宜的糧食供應。這個消息確實令人難以置信。一名軍官在 7:2 中回應 - …「即便耶和華使天開了窗戶，也不能有這事。」以利沙說：「你必親眼看見，卻不得吃。」我們再次看到不同的視野。神可以超越自然，因為祂是超自然的主宰。神會干預，並在第二天送來食物。以利沙不知道神會如何達成。但是，神應許的事情一定會成就。想像一下我們把這段經文拍成電影。現在，鏡頭轉移到城門外的四個大麻風病人。繼續閱讀第 3 至 8 節。我們上週學過，根據舊約律法，大麻風被視為不潔淨。病人必須與社區隔離。因此這四個病人聚集在城外。他們認為，最終他們可能都會餓死。為什麼不向敵人投降呢？他們很驚訝，發現亞蘭人通通走光了。這是怎麼回事？第 6 節告訴我們，神使士兵們聽到了車、馬和大軍的聲音。他們以為以色列人向鄰國請求援助。亞蘭人緊急撤退，他們甚至沒有時間收拾東西。在上

一個故事中，神掌管人的視力。這次神控制人的聽力。神擁有主權，超越大自然、我們的遭遇和人事，以成就祂的計劃。神在今天依然在行神蹟。我不是在說神會把密西西比河分開，使我們可以從市中心步行到阿肯色州。如果你是基督的跟隨者，你已經經歷了神蹟。過去，你對聖經毫無興趣。你甚至可能嘲笑基督信仰。但是神向你施憐憫，喚醒了你的靈魂。他呼召你回到祂的家。神在任何非信徒中，都會以同樣的方式工作。我們盡本份向人分享福音。但是也不要忘記為他們禱告。唯有神才能改變人們的心。

亞蘭軍隊撤退得如此之快，以至他們留下所有物品。四個大麻風病人大吃一頓，而且還拿了一些貴重財物。他們就像一群孩子發現儲藏室裡有很多零食一樣。因為父母還在睡覺，於是他們便開派對！忽然，大麻風病人想起他們在城裡的同胞仍在受苦。因此，他們立即通知一些守衛。但是約蘭認為那是亞蘭人設計的陷阱，要騙以色列人到曠野去。王因此派一些士兵去調查。後來，消息得到證實。民眾馬上蜂擁去尋寶。繼續閱讀第 16 節和第 17 節。事情正如以利沙所預言的那樣發生。一再證明以利沙是一位真正的先知。可悲的是，懷疑以利沙的預言的那位軍官被踩死了。與其錯過或忽略好消息，倒不如不知道更好。也許你的朋友告訴你一家商店要關門大清倉，他說一輩子都沒有買過那麼便宜的東西。在你收到消息之前，店子已經關了。或是你對自己說：「那不可能是真的。我寧願全價購買或是光顧其他店子。」但是，屬靈的事情卻別無選擇。耶穌是通往神的唯一途徑。接受祂成為救主和生命的主宰，你就會得救。耶穌應許那些尋求祂的人必然會尋見祂。我們需要神糾正非信徒的屬靈視力。只有神才能使他們知道自己是罪人，需要救主。

CONCLUSION 解釋

我們的神是滿有主權並全能的。祂可以超越我們的感官來成就祂的計劃。神給我們最重要的感官是屬乎靈的。神向我們證明了祂的存在，祂是獨一的真神。跟隨那些跡象，你便會找到祂。對於基督徒來說，我們需要神的幫助來加強我們的屬靈視野，使我們能夠看到神的作為。我們還需要神的幫助來調整我們的屬靈聽覺，使我們能聽到祂的聲音。當我們跟隨祂的指引時，我們便能蒙福。