

## 2 Kings 7:1-20

### A Prophecy, Then The Syrians Take Flight

In the previous chapter we left the Samaritan capital suffering a famine and under siege by the Syrian army. Things were so bad that people were eating their children, and "an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver."

The only positive sign was that the King of Israel, instead of trying to blame Elisha, had confessed that their grim situation was the judgment of God on their idolatry.

Now Elisha delivers a prophecy to the king.

**2 Kings 7:1** - "Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria."

But one of the king's advisors mocked the prophet:

**2 Kings 7:2** - "Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof."

i.e. because of the man's unbelief, he would see it but not partake of it.

### Four Lepers Bring News of the Syrians Flight

**2 Kings 7:3** - "And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?"

Jewish tradition says this was Gehazi, Elisha's former disciple, and his three sons, who had all been cursed with leprosy (See **2 Kings 5:27**).

**2 Kings 7:4** - "If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die."

With nothing to lose, they decide to approach the Syrian encampment.

**2 Kings 7:5-7** - "And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the

Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life."

It seems like God opened their ears to hear the sound of his angelic hosts with their chariots of fire - in the same way God had opened the eyes of Elisha's young servant earlier (**2 Kings 6:17**).

The sight of God's heavenly host arrayed around the mountains was a great encouragement to Elisha's servant. But the sound of that same host was a terror to the Syrians. This recalls the Exodus, when the pillar of cloud was light to Israel and darkness and confusion to the Egyptians.

- **Exodus 14:20** - "And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night."

The lepers find the camp deserted and help themselves to the food drink and valuables.

**2 Kings 7:8** - "And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it."

But they have a twinge of conscience.

**2 Kings 7:9** - "Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household."

Good news is to be shared. If we keep the Gospel to ourselves, we deprive our fellow humans of salvation. In fact, people were dying all the time from the famine in the city, so time was critical. They realized there was no excuse for self-indulgence.

**2 Kings 7:10-11** - "So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were. And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within."

### **The King Suspects a Trap**

**2 Kings 7:12** - "And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city."

They decide to send out mounted scouts to determine the situation.

**2 Kings 7:13-14** - "And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see. They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see."

They might have been preserving the last horses to allow the king to try to escape in his chariot if all was lost.

### **Elisha's Prophecy Fulfilled**

**2 Kings 7:15-16** - "And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD."

... thus fulfilling Elisha's prophecy.

### **The Unbelieving Advisor is Killed**

**2 Kings 7:17** - "And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him."

**Summary:** Humanity is in the same situation that the lepers were in. The wages of sin is death, but on the other hand, to go to cross also results in our death. But the hope of resurrection and eternal life is also offered to us. It is better to fall on the rock than have the rock fall on us.

- **Matthew 21:44** - "Whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will crush him."

If we are broken, or cracked open, we can share the good news like the lepers did.

And like the lepers, we are witnesses to the reality of God's victory. The words of unbelief are swept away by the truth of eyewitness testimony. The lepers had eaten and drunk the reality of the good news they were relaying.

- **1 John 1:1-2** - "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)"