

2 Kings 7-8

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us here at Calvary Chapel. Would you please turn in your Bibles to second Kings chapter seven? Last time we were in our study, the nation of Israel appears to be in a hopeless situation. The nation of Syria has not only surrounded them, the Syrians have besieged the area of Samaria. This doesn't only mean surrounded, to besiege means to cut off all the supplies. It can be a slow, drawn out process to force a nation to surrender because it's citizens are starving to death. As chapter 7 opens up Israel finds herself desperate.

But praise God, because our Heavenly Father is on the throne, there is no such thing as a hopeless situation!! We're gonna study both chapters 7-8

The title of this mornings message is IT'S NEVER HOPELESS
Let's pray.

HURRICANE ANALOGY

Last week we saw how the conditions in Samaria, a part of Israel, had gotten so bad that 2 women made an agreement to resort to cannibalism. They agreed to kill their babies, boil them to eat them. People were paying to eat the excrement of doves in order to survive! That's how desperate this situation is.

And this is what makes the prophet Elisha's proclamation so shocking!!

1 Then Elisha said, “Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: ‘Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.’ ” A seah was 8 gallons. “A shekel” was the Hebrew equivalent of 60 cents. Now as Elisha says this one pint of dove-do-do sells for 5 shekels

And Elisha declares that 24 hours later 8 gallons of fine flour, and 16 gallons of barley grain, will each sell for a single shekel.

How could such a dramatic turnaround happen in such a short time? This is economically impossible. That was the conclusion of one of the king’s officials...

2 So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, “Look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?” Pause here. This unnamed king’s officer scoffed at God’s promise. There was no way that such a hopeless situation could turn around so quickly!

You know what this unnamed official’s problem was just as I do—it’s the old adage “His heart wouldn’t believe what his mind couldn’t conceive.”

There is perhaps no larger stumbling block to faith than this. As long as we can see a way for God to work it out, we’ll believe. But what happens when God’s promise seems impossible?

It’s always a mistake to limit God to only what we can figure out. Hey, God is able to work outside the lines. He has ways and

resources we know nothing about. **Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says thLORD.**
9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. So the king's servant scoffs at Elisha's promise...

...2 And he said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

Elijah warns the king's scoffing servant that God will make this happen, but this servant will not get to enjoy it.

God is about to do the miraculous, and look who God chooses to start His miracle.

3 Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? These men stayed at the entrance of the gate because they weren't welcome in the city. Their leprous condition made them outcasts and untouchables.

4 If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." " Talk about difficult decisions. These 4 lepers recognized they would die soon from the famine if they stayed by the city. If any food did become available, as lepers they would certainly be the last to

receive it. So they decided that their chances were better if they surrendered to the Syrians.

All this sets the stage for God starting to work His miracle, and He begins with four desperate social outcasts who've got nothing to lose.

5 And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there. The Syrians had surrounded Israel, ready to destroy them. Imagine expecting to see tens of thousands of soldiers, only to find it deserted. It's a ghost town-tumbleweed blowing...

But what causes an entire army to drop their weapons and flee?
6-7

6 For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, “Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!” 7 Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. ” God fooled the Syrians by creating an audio illusion. The Syrians thought they were under attack by other nations nations. So, Syria panicked and split - and left tables full of food. Supplies were stocked.

8 And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came

back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it. They've gone from starving to death to not only finding an abundance of food, but also hitting the jackpot-like winning the lottery.

Can you imagine the scene?

But that's when it dawns on them there are many other hungry people to consider.

9 Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household." Now at first glance we may not think we have much in common with these 4 lepers, but we do! At one point you and I were just like them—we were spiritually dead! Until one day we trusted in our Lord, and think of the spiritual riches given to us!! We've eaten of the bread of life! **John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."**

But here's the question—are we sharing the Bread of Life and spiritual treasures with others, or are we just keeping it to ourselves?

10 So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, "We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one was there, not a human sound—only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact." 11 And the gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king's household inside. Since the lepers weren't

welcome in the city, they could only communicate with the gatekeepers.

And there's an important lesson here for us. There were many people the lepers couldn't speak to, but they were faithful to speak to the ones they could speak to. There's lots of people we'd proly love to get to the share the gospel with. But are we faithful to share the gospel with those whom we can share it with?

So word gets to the king of Israel of the Syrians fleeing, and how does he react?

12 So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we are hungry; therefore they have 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.'" He's cynical.

Have you ever noticed that fear has a way of making us cynical to what God is doing! When we're cynical we forget Who it is that's on the throne!

13 And one of his servants answered and said, "Please, let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they may either become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, I say, they may become like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed; so let us send them and see." This servant comes to the same conclusion that the 4 lepers came to-what have we got to lose!

Story of Dan Baumann of YWAM

I don't know about you but I need to die more. Die more to my flesh. Die more to the fear of embarrassment. Die more to fear...

14-16

14 Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." 15 And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road was full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king. 16 Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD. God's promises always come true, even when we cannot imagine how they could!

17 Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. The man who scoffed back in verse 3 was given the task of gatekeeper. Not a good job to have when you're between the tables of cooked food and desperately starving people.

18-20

18 So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria."

19 Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?"

And he had said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." 20 And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died. The prediction regarding the officer dying proved just as true as the prediction regarding the prices of food in the markets of Samaria.

Whenever we limit God to what is humanly possible - or personally conceivable - we'll miss out on many of His blessings.

Luke 18:27 But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

So often we think what's easy for us is easy for God. But that which is hard for us must be hard for God. Genesis 18:14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

Chapter 8 the scene shifts

1-4

1 Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the LORD has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years." 2 So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years.

3 It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. 4 Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done." Gehazi was Elisha's former servant before he was fired for his greediness. He coaxed payment from Naaman after Elisha had healed him of his leprosy. The king of Israel is talking to Gehazi about all the miracles Elisha has done.

This must've been an interesting conversation. King Jehoram and Gehazi are sitting around, and the King wants to hear about the miracles of Elisha. He's amazed at God's power.

But tragically this was merely entertainment... The king spent a nice evening admiring Elisha's miracles, but he could care less about Elisha's message. Jehoram, the son of Ahab, should've repented of Israel's idolatry.

Which brings up an interesting point... apparently, Elisha had many admirers, but few followers.

This could also have been said about Jesus. There were those who marveled at his miracles, but wanted no part of the way of life He taught. Remember in **Luke 23:8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.**

But when Jesus didn't perform to his satisfaction Herod "treated him with contempt and mocked Him... and sent Him back to Pilate."

There's an eternal difference in knowing about Jesus and following Jesus. For some people Jesus is a fascination, a hobby – they watch television specials that speculate about Him. They're admirers – but they've never embraced Him as Lord and God.

5 Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life." The Shunnamite and son walk up right in the middle of their story.

6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. Pause here...this must've pleased the king – he gets to hear the incredible story straight from the horses' mouth!

...6 So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now." She not only gets her land back, but any profits it yielded over the last 7 years. God worked out the details at that exact moment!!

Don't miss though-7 long, hard years.

7-13

7 Then Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, "The man of God has come here." 8 And the king said to Hazael, "Take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD

by him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?' ” 9 So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, of every good thing of Damascus, forty camel-loads; and he came and stood before him, and said, “Your son Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, ‘Shall I recover from this disease?’ ”

10 And Elisha said to him, “Go, say to him, ‘You shall certainly recover.’ However the LORD has shown me that he will really die.” 11 Then he set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept. 12 And Hazael said, “Why is my lord weeping?”

He answered, “Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child.”

13 So Hazael said, “But what is your servant—a dog, that he should do this gross thing?”

And Elisha answered, “The LORD has shown me that you will become king over Syria.” Hazael is appalled. How dare Elisha think that he could commit such barbarous acts as crushing infants, and tearing open pregnant wombs?

Here’s what happened. Hazael underestimated his depravity. He didn’t think he was capable of the grizzly crimes Elisha declares he’ll commit.

And this can happen to us too! Have you ever been surprised at a sin you committed? Remember Peter. He said he would never deny the Lord – even if all the other disciples denied Him, Peter would not deny Jesus - yet he did so three times before the rooster crowed twice. Never underestimate our potential for evil.

We need to live in daily dependence on Jesus.

14-15

14 Then he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me you would surely recover." 15 But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped it in water, and spread it over his face so that he died; and Hazael reigned in his place.

That escalated quickly! Hazael suffocated King Ben-Hadad. It was an assassination. And notice-"Hazael reigned in his place."

SHOW PIC Archeologists have unearthed an ancient Assyrian inscription, called "The Berlin Inscription" - it reads, "Hazael the son of nobody, seized the throne." Hazael was a usurper. He had no dynastic claim to the Syrian throne. **CLOSE PIC**

16-18

16 Now in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat having been king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign as king of Judah. 17 He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. Here's where names can cause confusion. First, Joram and Jehoram are variants of the same name. So for 10 years Jehoram, son of Ahab, rules in the northern kingdom of Israel.

While Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, rules in the southern kingdom of Judah. And we learn that Judah's Jehoram makes a huge mistake. He weds an unbeliever named "Athaliah". She was the daughter of Ahab. And you can bet she followed his idolatrous practices... And this is why an unequal yoke is no joke.

This evil woman, Athaliah, brings the idolatry of her parents to Judah. 2 Chronicles 21 says after taking the throne Jehoram killed his brothers to wipe out any rivals to the throne. Josephus says this heinous act was carried out at the insistence of Athaliah. She was a very wicked woman with political aspirations.

19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah, for the sake of His servant David, as He promised him to give a lamp to him and his sons forever. Jehoram's evil was great enough to justify annihilation, but God withheld judgment because of His promise. Of course, who would be the future descendent of David, from the tribe of Judah? Jesus!

20-24

20 In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. 21 So Joram^[fn] went to Zair, and all his chariots with him. Then he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; and the troops fled to their tents. 22 Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. And Libnah revolted at that time.

23 Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 24 So Joram rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his

place. The King of Judah thought that the marriage alliance with Ahab and the northern kingdom of Israel would make Judah stronger, but this act of disobedience only made them weaker.
25-29

25 In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign. 26 Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel. 27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab, for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

28 Now he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 29 Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.