

2 Kings 7 – Thursday, March 17th, 2016

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.' "

- I want to point out something right here at the start that's not noticeable at first read having to do with whom this message is for.
- Namely, Jehoram, the king of Israel, the same man that blamed God for the famine, and swore he would behead Elisha for it.
- The reason I point this out is that God, in His grace and mercy, still speaks to a man such as this with the promise of a miracle.

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

- Couple of thoughts here concerning the response on the part of the king's right hand man, the first of which has to do with why.
- More specifically, why he does not believe God can miraculously end this famine in a dramatic way within the next 24-hours.
- I would suggest that his unbelief is textbook in the sense that he cannot see a way in which God could accomplish this miracle.

- I find it interesting he would say even if the Lord were to make windows miraculously appear in heaven, He still couldn't do it.
- The reason I find this interesting is that it seems he is trying to figure out one possible way that God could perform this miracle.
- In other words, because he can't see a way for God to do it, he wrongly and to his own peril, refuses to believe God can do this.

G. Campbell Morgan - "How often faith breaks down in this way! It knows that God is, and that He can act. But it only sees one way, and refuses to believe that such a way will be taken. The supply came without the opening of heaven's windows."

- The second thought has to do with the fate he will be met with because of his refusal to believe that God could actually do this.
- Notice we're told that in fact, he will be allowed only to see the miracle with his own eyes, but that he will not actually eat of it.
- The fact of the matter is because of his unbelief; Elisha is sadly prophesying his death, which we see at the end of the chapter.

Charles Spurgeon of this wrote, "Unbelievers do not really enjoy the things of this life. The mass of them find that wealth does not yield them satisfaction, their outward riches cannot conceal their inner poverty. To many men it is given to have all that heart can wish, and yet not to have what their heart does wish. They have everything except contentment."

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? 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."

- If you really think about it, this would have made perfect sense to these lepers given that they relied on scraps thrown to them.
- As such, they, to their credit, surmised that they stood a better chance of staying alive surrendering to the army of the Syrian's.
- Unbeknownst to them, as we're about to see next they made the right decision to not just sit there doing nothing until they died.

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. 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!"

- There's an interesting detail we're provided with in verse five where it says they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp.
- I believe that this detail is significant in the sense that their approach to the camp was in the opposite direction of the siege.
- In other words, the Syrian's, if they were still there, would not have assumed that these men had come from the besieged city.

Of this approach to the camp, one commentator noted this may have provided "the occasion for the miracle itself; perhaps the Lord had in some way magnified the stumbling footsteps of the men as they made their way around the camp's opposite end."

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. 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. 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."

- I can't begin to imagine what this must have been like. They went from certain death to riches and life because of their decision.
- You probably know where I'm going with this, in that, like those of us who make a decision for Christ pass from life unto death.
- Moreover, once they've partaken of these riches, they cannot "remain silent," such that they have to share the "good news."

Charles Spurgeon, speaking of those who have yet to hear the good news, wrote, "Everybody who went to bed that night felt that he was still in that horrible den where grim death seemed actually present in the skeleton forms of the hunger-bitten. They were as free as the harts of the wilderness had they known it: but their ignorance held them in durance vile."

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. 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.' "

- There's an interesting parallel here as it relates to the aforementioned sharing of the good news from the lepers to gatekeepers.
- Namely, that of responding to the good news as being too good to be true, which is what the quintessential doubters always do.
- Such is the case with Jehoram, who, true to form, is very suspect of the good news of salvation even after this was prophesied.

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 is another response to hearing of the good news of salvation such that some at least go and see for themselves if it's true.
- Actually, I see woven into the fabric of this interesting chapter a picture of three very common responses to the gospel of Christ.
- The unbeliever will die in their sin, those with leprosy, a type of sin, are saved, and then some doubters eventually are saved.

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.

- Notice Elisha's prophecy was fulfilled precisely as it was foretold, down to the exact amount fine flour and barley would sell for.
- The reason I mention this is because this is the litmus test by which we know whether or not the prophecy is from the Lord.
- It absolutely must come to pass with one hundred percent accuracy, or it is the prophecy is false and the prophet is also false.

Deuteronomy 18:19–22 (NKJV) — 19 And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. 20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' 21 And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'—22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Jeremiah 28:8–9 (NKJV) — 8 The prophets who have been before me and before you of old prophesied against many countries and great kingdoms—of war and disaster and pestilence. 9 As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the LORD has truly sent."

Ezekiel 33:33 (NKJV) — 33 And when this comes to pass—surely it will come—then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

- There's one more thing I would like to point out before we move onto verse seventeen and it has to do with another response.
- More specifically, the response of those who once they get saved, and in their zeal go full steam ahead, and never look back.
- While the way people get saved is different there's no stopping some who have tasted of the Lord and seen that He is good.

F.B. Meyer – "The king's officer derided the possibility of the prophet's prediction; and no doubt had plenty of adherents. But the leper's report swept away all his words to the winds. They had known, tasted, and handled."

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. 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.

- Here again, we have a precise fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy concerning the man who refused to believe that God could do it.
- To me, there's a fascinating contrast between this man and the lepers, who were in the greatest need and had nothing to lose.
- Here's what I'm thinking, often times, those with the greatest need are the ones who get saved, as opposed to those who don't.

Matthew 19:23–27 (NIV) 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."