

7/3/11

God Never Is Biting His Nails
2Kings 6:24-7:20

The prophet Jeremiah was in the court of the prison and had just received a word of knowledge from the Lord Yahweh, telling him that his cousin Hanamel the son of Shallum his uncle was coming to him to the prison, in order that he might buy a field in Anathoth, because the right of redemption was his. Jer. 32:6-7

When Hanamel arrived with the very request, confirming God's word to Jeremiah the prophet, Jeremiah said, "Then I Knew that this was the word of the Lord". Jer. 32:8g

The customary transaction was then executed the money and the signing the deed and sealing it before witnesses and Baruch was to place the document of the purchased deed in an earthen vessel because. "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land". Jer. 32:9-15

Jeremiah had stepped out in faith believing and then affirming that it was Yahweh who had spoken to him, but afterwards doubt set in and his faith began to be tested, so he turned to God in prayer.

Then as Jeremiah the prophet was in the court of the prison in the king of Judah's house, the word of Yahweh came to him a second time. Jer. 33:1

God then assured Jeremiah again that He was the Creator of the heavens and the earth who had formed it all, Yahweh was His name. Jer. 33:2

Then came the solution to Jeremiah's doubt and confusion by way of a simple exhortation, to seek Yahweh, "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Jer. 33:3

1. It would be not difficulty for God to bring back the remnant after 70 years of captivity!
2. "Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" Jer. 32:26-27

In a similar occasion God revealed His faithfulness to His word when Syria had besieged the city of Samaria despite the human difficulties, laid out in three scenes: 2Kings 6:24-7:20

- I. The difficult condition of the city. 6:24-7:2
- II. The desperate situation of the lepers. 7:3-11
- III. The distrustful apprehension of the king. vs. 7:12-20

I. The difficult condition of the city. 6:24-7:2

A. The King of Syria had continued his war against Israel. vs. 24-29

1. The historical setting is given, “And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria.”
 - a. The phrase “after this”, points back to the kindness shown to his troops by Elisha and Jehoram, after their failed attempt to apprehend Elisha. 2Kings 6:8-23
 - 1) This was still part of the judgment of God against Israel for her idolatry.
 - 2) Jehoram had still not repented.
 - b. Ben-Hadad had gotten over it and besieged the city of Samaria with his army.
 - 1) The word besieged “tsuwr”, means to confine, enclose or shut-up.
 - 2) No one was allowed to go out of the city for anything.
2. The consequences resulted in the depletion of food resources. vs. 25
 - a. The people were starving, “And there was a great famine in Samaria.” vs. 25a
 - b. The severity of the famine is marked by the high price for detestable food

being sold, “and indeed they besieged it until a donkey’s head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five shekels of silver.” vs. 25b-c

3. The horrible measure taken by some of the people was cannibalism. vs. 26-27
 - a. The king was confronted by a woman, “Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, “Help, my lord, O king!” vs. 26
 - b. The king responded to the woman. vs. 27
 - 1) He acknowledged his inability to help her, “And he said, “If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you?” vs. 27a
* He said regarding Naaman, “Am I God to kill and make alive” 2Kings 5:7
 - 2) He revealed all the food was gone, “From the threshing floor or from the winepress?” vs. 27b
 - c. The king inquired about her problem. vs. 28-29
 - 1) She revealed a pack she had made with another woman, “Then the king said to her, “What is troubling you?” And she answered, “This woman said to me, ‘Give your son,

that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.’

- 2) She confessed to fulfillment of her promise, “So we boiled my son, and ate him.” vs. 29a
- 3) She complained about the failure of the other woman, “And I said to her on the next day, ‘Give your son, that we may eat him’; but she has hidden her son.” vs. 29b-d

B. The king of Israel had continued his rebellion against Yahweh. vs. 30-33

1. Jehoram was not truly repentant, but merely been remorseful, due to the consequences of his rebellion. vs. 30
 - a. He showed outward grief, “Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes.” vs. 30a-c
 - 1) As sign of grief and lamentation.
 - 2) Cannibalism was one of the curses and it took place in the siege by Babylon, as prophesied in the Law and by the prophets, due to their rebellion against God. Lev. 26:25-29, Deut. 28:52-57
 - 3) Jeremiah records it in his lamentation, “The hands of the compassionate women Have cooked their own children; They

became food for them In the destruction of the daughter of my people.” Lam. 4:10

- b. He even clothes himself with the garment of repentance, “and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body.” vs. 30d-f
 - 1) The evil king wanted to appear godly.
 - 2) The appearance, did not make it so.
2. Jehoram demonstrated he was not repented, “Then he said, “God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today.” vs. 31
 - a. He took an oath against himself, if he did not take Elisha’s head off.
 - b. He was blaming Elisha, but ultimately God.
 - c. He had rejoiced when God delivered the entire army of Syria by Elisha and had been pleased with Elisha.
3. Jehoram revealed his evil heart. vs. 32-33
 - a. Elisha was in the city, “But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him.” vs. 32a-b
 - b. Elisha was warned by God, “And the king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, “Do you see how

this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head?" vs. 32c-e

* He was the son of Ahab and Jezebel! 2Kings 3:1

- c. Elisha gave instructions to the elders, "Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" vs. 32f-i
- d. Elisha heard the defiance of Jehoram against God, "And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; and then the king said, "Surely this calamity is from the LORD; why should I wait for the LORD any longer?" vs. 33
 - 1) God through Elisha must of told Jehoram to wait on God for deliverance.
 - 2) This is the implication by the words, "Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

C. The King of heaven had continued His mercy over Israel. vs. 1-2

- 1. The prophet Elisha declared the deliverance of the LORD. vs. 1
 - a. The words were not Elisha's, but God's speaking to Jehoram and the

officer, "Then Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD." vs. 1a-c

- b. The precise time was given, "Tomorrow about this time." vs. 1b
- c. The provision to be given, "a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria." vs. 1b-d
- 2. The officer of king Jehoram mocked the prophesy of Elisha. vs. 2
 - a. The officer had no trust in God despite His ongoing mercy to Israel, "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?" vs. 2a-d
 - b. The prophet Elisha pronounced the judgment of the officer, "And he said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." vs. 2e-h

Illustration

Our nation has become very corrupt against God, our Universities are on top of the list, I am quoting Harvard psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce speaking as an expert in public education at the 1973 International Education Seminar, "Every child in America entering school at the age of 5 is mentally

ill because he comes to school with certain allegiances to our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural being, and toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity. It's up to you as teachers to make all these sick children well by creating the international child of the future.”

Application

1. People who continue to be self-willed after God repeatedly has dealt with them, often become hardened in heart.

- a. They become hypocrites.
- b. They become cynical.
- c. They become presumptuous.

* “He who is often rebuked, and **hardens** his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” Prov. 29:1

2. People who trust God, due only to the circumstances or consequences in their lives and then God does not come through the way they want or expect, will lash out against God and the person who told them to trust God.

- a. God is not ignorant to their falsehood, even though He may be merciful to them.
- b. God is not ignorant to their intentions, He knows the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- c. God is merely demonstrating that when judgment falls, it is all due to man's

rebellious evil heart, not the lack of God's mercy.

* “Do you not know this of old, since man was place on earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, And the joy of the **hypocrite** is but for a moment?” Job 20:4-5

3. People who mock the word of God are in a very dangerous condition.

- a. It could be the mocking of creation.
- b. It could be the mocking the Salvation of Jesus.
- c. It could be mocking the Second Coming of Jesus to the earth to set up the Kingdom.

* “Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.” Prov. 1:24-28

The difficult condition of the city was due to rebellion against God's word!

II. The desperate situation of the lepers. 7:3-11

- A. The lepers knew they were dead men. vs. 3-4
1. They reasoned about their perilous condition. vs. 3
 - a. Their location was outside the city, “Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate.” vs. 3a
 - 1) Lepers were condemned to live outside the city walls.
 - 2) Usually in the city dump.
 - b. Their conversation dealt with reality. vs. 3b-4-f
 - 1) They were rational, “and they said to one another, “Why are we sitting here until we die?” vs. 3b-c
 - 2) They were logical, “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.” vs. 4a-f
 - c. Their conclusion was unanimous. vs. 4g-1
 - 1) To give up to Syria, “Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians.” vs. 4g-i
 - 2) To be ready to die, “If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die.” vs. 4j-1

- B. The lepers discovered a great provision of food. vs. 5-8
1. The lepers stuck to their decision. vs. 5
 - a. They headed out, “And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians.” vs. 5a
 - 1) Twilight most likely meaning the dawn of the day.
 - 2) Some say morning dawn.
 - 3) Verse nine confirms it was the dawn of the day.
 - b. They got the surprise of their lives, “and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there.” vs. 5b-c
 2. The super-natural commentary to explain the unnatural condition of the Syrian camp. vs. 6-7
 - a. God had brought great fear on the Syrian army. “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.” vs. 6a-b
 - 1) This was a divine miracle.
 - 2) There had been no army, but God let them hear the noise of a great army!
 - b. God caused them to conclude they were being overrun, “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!” vs. 6c-e

- 1) That Jehoram had hired mercenaries.
 - 2) That they would die.
- c. God struck such fear in them, they immediately fled. vs. 7
- 1) The lepers began their walk to the Syrian, “Therefore they arose and **fled at twilight.**” vs. 7a
* At the same time the lepers were headed out, God was directing all!
 - 2) The Syrians left all, “and left the camp intact--their tents, their horses, and their donkeys.” vs. 7b-e
 - 3) The fear of death was real to them. “and they fled for their lives.” vs. 7f
3. The lepers began to take advantage of the great resources. vs. 8
- a. They nourished themselves, “And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank.” vs. 8a-b
 - b. They took wealth for themselves, “and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them.” vs. 8c-d

- c. They took more wealth for themselves, “then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it.” vs. 8e-f
- C. The lepers recognized their responsibility to tell the city of the food provisions. vs. 9-10
1. They were convicted of their selfishness. vs. 9
 - a. They confessed their wrong, “Then they said to one another, “We are not doing right.” vs. 9a-b
 - b. They agreed their silence would condemn them, “This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us.” vs. 9c-e
 - c. They decided to tell the king, “Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king’s household.” vs. 9f-h
 2. They went to report it to the city. vs. 10
 - a. They returned to the gate, “So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city.” vs. 10a
 - b. They related the details, “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.” vs. 10b-h

3. The information was communicated to the King’s house. vs. 11
 - a. The ones to receive the information were the city guards, “And the gatekeepers called out.” vs. 11a
 - b. The message was relayed, “and they told it to the king’s household inside.” vs. 11b

Illustration

There is no more horrible situation than the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, yet it resulted in the fulfillment of God’s word, in order to save sinners.

Application

1. So often like the lepers of Elisha’s day, when a person finds themselves with no other alternatives and say, “I have nothing to lose”, that they trust God for their lives.
 - a. Some times it is hitting the bottom with alcohol.
 - b. Other times it is drugs that take all, even their dignity.
 - c. Still other times it is through sexual promiscuity or unfaithfulness.
 - d. Leprosy is a type of sin in the Scriptures and were considered as dead people.
 - * Listen to God pours His heart out to persuade the sinner to trust Him for his

salvation, “Come now, and let us **reason** together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.” Is. 1:18

2. Like these lepers, once a person trust God for salvation, they are amazed at the benefits of their new life and understand their responsibility to share the great news with other sinners.
 - a. That all their sin have been forgiven.
 - b. That they have been set free from their life is sin, no longer in bondage.
 - c. That their eyes have been open to the deception of Satan, sin and the world.
 - d. That they know they are going to heaven.
 - e. That they are a child of God with a personal relationship with the Savior of the world.
 - f. That they have eternal life.
 - * Listen to what Jesus told the demoniac from Gadara, “Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.” Lk. 8:38-39

The desperate situation of the lepers was used to bring to pass God’s word!

III. The distrustful apprehension of the king.

vs. 7:12-20

A. The king Jehoram concluded it was a trap by the Syrians. vs. 12

1. The news reached the king after dark. vs. 12

a. The king was in bed, “So the king arose in the night.” vs. 12a

1) Jehoram was an idolater.

2) Jehoram was only interested in getting help from God.

b. The king's words declared the deceptive plan of the Syrians. vs. 12

1) He believed he knew, “Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us.” vs. 12a-b

2) He expressed their strategy, “They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field.” vs. 12c-d

3) He declared their goal, saying, “When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.” vs. 12e-g

2. The response of a servant was to go out to find out if it was a trap. vs. 13

a. He suggested to send a team of men out to confirm the news, “And one of his servants answered and said,

“Please, let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city.” vs. 13a-b

* Don't miss these unnamed heroes. a servant of Jehoram to seek Elisha against Moab, the servant girl, the servant of Naaman. 2Kings 3:11, 5:3, 13

b. He said they had nothing to lose, they were going to die anyway, “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.” vs. 13c-h

B. The king Jehoram permitted a few men to do some reconnoitering. vs. 14-16a

1. The men went out to investigate the claims of the lepers. vs. 14

a. They made preparations and when out, “Therefore they took two chariots with horses.” vs. 14a

b. They went by order of the king, “and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, “Go and see.” vs. 14b-d

2. The men confirmed the truth of the news from the lepers. vs. 15

- a. The men headed east, “And they went after them to the Jordan.” vs. 15a
 - b. The men observed articles strewn all along the way, “and indeed all the road was full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste.” vs. 15b
 - c. The men reported the good news, “So the messengers returned and told the king.” vs. 15c
 - d. The people of Samaria gathered the provisions, “Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians.” vs. 16a
- C. The king Jehoram witnessed the fulfillment of the prophecy of Elisha. vs. 16b-20
- 1. The prophecy of Elisha about the selling flour and wheat at the gate took place, “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.” vs. 16b-d
 - 2. The prophecy of the death of the servant that mocked the prophecy took place, “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.” vs. 17c-d

- 3. The prophecy if affirmed to be fulfilled. vs. 18-20
 - a. The proclamation of Elisha is quoted, “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.” vs. 18
 - b. The mocking of the officer is quoted, “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.” vs. 19
 - c. The judgment of the officer is the fulfillment of seeing it, but not eating of it, “And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.” vs. 20

Illustration

Ezekiel prophesied seven things about Tyre. Ezk. 26:3-5, 7, 12, 14, 16 (Science Speaks: Stoner)

- 1. Nebuchadnezzar shall take the city of Tyre.
- 2. Other nations are to participate in the fulfillment of the prophecy. (Fig 7)
- 3. The city is to be made flat like the top of a rock.
- 4. It is to become a place for spreading of nets.

- 5. Its stones and timber are to be laid in the sea.
 - 6. Other cities are to fear greatly at the fall of Tyre.
 - 7. The old city of Tyre shall never be rebuilt.
- * If Ezekiel had made these seven predictions in human wisdom, the chance of probability would have been only one chance in 75 million of all seven coming true.

Application

- 1. There are times that God is at work to bring about our provision, but it does not make sense to us at the time.
 - a. God may allow us to lose our job, only to direct our steps to another one to provide all that we need.
 - * It goes without saying that this is not always the case, but at time it is!
 - b. God allows us to bump into people we have not seen in years and in conversation God uses the person to direct or speak to us.
 - * When the bone on my ankle would not mend, Trudy and I ran into a couple we hadn't seen in years and the husband told us about Dr. Thordeson at USC, who did incredible job reconstructing his heel with coral and bone and he fixed me up.
 - c. For a child of God there are no coincidences or things that happen by chance.
 - * "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly

cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand. I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread." Ps. 37:23-25

- 2. This does not mean that as Christians we do not use common sense, but we know that we do not trust only what we can see and understand.
 - a. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones." Prov. 3:5-8
 - b. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:6-7
- 3. The word and the promises of God to the Christian is the most reliable truth they possess.
 - a. Through the difficult times, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and

find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” Jer. 29:11-13

* The 70 years captivity in Babylon.

- b.** God will be true to His word, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your **ways** My **ways**,” says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My **ways** higher than your **ways**, And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” Is. 55:8-11

The discrete apprehension of the king was used to fulfill God’s word!

Conclusion

God revealed His faithfulness to His word when Syria had besieged the city of Samaria despite the human difficulties:

- I.** The difficult condition of the city was due to rebellion against God’s word!
- II.** The desperate situation of the lepers was used to bring to pass God’s word!

- III.** The distrustful apprehension of the king was used to fulfill God’s word!