

### God Delivers Samaria from the Syrian Army

#### 2 Kings 7

**2 Kings 7:1-11** - *“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.’” 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.”*

*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? 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.” 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. 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 Egyptians to attack us!” 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. And when the 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. 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.” 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.” And the gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king’s household inside.”*

#### Background Notes for 2 Kings 7:1-11

In 2 Kings 6, the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, Samaria, was under siege by the Syrian army. The resulting famine was so bad that the people were starving to death, and some had literally stooped to the sin of cannibalism. In 2 Kings 7, we have the story of the miraculous deliverance of Samaria from the siege of the Syrian army - a direct fulfillment of Elisha’s prophecy in verse 1.

Then we have the story of the four lepers who were outside the gates. They were infectious - “unclean” - because of their leprosy, so they were forbidden to enter the city. But they reasoned, “We’re going to die here, and we’re not allowed to go into the city. Why don’t we go over and surrender to the Syrians. If they kill us, we’re going to die anyway, but maybe they’ll spare us.” So they went to the Syrian army camp - and guess what? The Syrians were no longer there! They had

fled! After the lepers ate their fill and hid some of the Syrian treasure, they felt convicted that they were eating while fellow-Israelis in the city were starving, so they brought the word to the city.

## **Doctrinal Point for 2 Kings 7:1-11**

### **1. The good news of God's gospel is for sinners.**

It doesn't take much spiritual insight to realize that there's a wonderful picture of the gospel, God's good news, in this story. And in some ways, Elisha, the prophet of God, may be a "type" or picture of Christ.

As Elisha predicted that the siege of Samaria would be over, and the enemy would no longer be in control, and food would be abundant and readily available, so our Lord predicted the good news that Satan's power would be broken. Our enemy would be subdued. Satan and his forces would be subdued. Captives would be set free. The blessings of God would be readily available to all who would believe the good news. So here we have a picture of the gospel, God's super-abounding grace.

The lepers are a picture of mankind in his sin. Leprosy was a disease that led to death. According to the Old Testament Law, lepers were "unclean." They had to live outside the city to prevent the spread of the disease. The four lepers were living outside the gates of Samaria, and they thought their best chance for survival was to surrender to the enemy. But to their amazement, they discovered the good news that the enemy has been conquered and is no longer in control.

In the same way, we as sinners may at one time have been living in fear of the enemy, and we might even have willing to surrender to the enemy thinking that was our best option. But to our amazement we've discovered the good news that the enemy has been defeated, and salvation and blessing are available. We've discovered that the good news of God's gospel is for sinners!

## **Practical Application for 2 Kings 7:1-11**

### **Let's not hoard the gospel.**

The lepers realized that they had a responsibility to share the good news, not hoard it (v9). And they realized that it was an urgent matter to share the good news. Don't wait until morning! And they further realized that if they didn't share the good news, there might even be some kind of divine punishment.

In the same way, we have a responsibility to share the gospel. Like the lepers, we are beggars who have found bread, and we can't keep the good news to ourselves. We have a responsibility to share this good news with others. We are not to hoard the gospel. And there's an urgency associated with the gospel. People are perishing. Maybe God is convicting

you about your responsibility to share the gospel with non-Christians. Maybe God is calling you to share the gospel full-time on the mission field.

Furthermore, as the lepers talked about divine punishment if they did not share the good news, so there is divine discipline if we hoard the gospel. Let's not hoard the gospel!

**2 Kings 7:12-20** - *"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.'" 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."*

*Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road was full of garments and weapons that the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king. 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.*

*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. 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." 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." And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died."*

## **Background Notes for 2 Kings 7:12-20**

When King Jehoram got the word that the Syrians were gone, he thought it was a trap. He thought the Syrians had purposely left their siege camp to draw the people of Samaria outside the city, and then they would spring an ambush. So King Jehoram sent riders out toward the Jordan River to check out the story. Sure enough, the story was true! The road was strewn with clothes and weapons left by the fleeing Syrians. Doesn't sound like a battle-hardened army, does it? Well, God can scatter the greatest of armies!

So the people stampeded out of the city to plunder the Syrian camp, and the official who didn't believe Elisha's prediction was trampled to death. Elisha's prediction came true.

## **Doctrinal Point for 2 Kings 7:12-20**

### **The good news of God's gospel brings different reactions.**

When you present the gospel to people, you'd think that everyone would believe it. "Free forgiveness, eternal life, ticket to heaven, escape from hell!" But most people don't accept the good news. Here we see a couple of different reactions to the gospel.

King Jehoram is your "typical skeptic." Elisha the prophet had announced the good news. The lepers had confirmed it. But Jehoram the skeptic thought it was a trap. Even though Elisha had proved to be reliable over the years, Jehoram still doubted. Like the typical skeptic, he wouldn't believe. That's the way some people react to the gospel and the Bible. They won't believe, no matter how much proof is offered! They're skeptics.

The royal officer is your "typical rejecter." He would not believe Elisha's announcement of the good news because he thought the story was just too incredible. "It can't be true. Sounds too good to be true." So it is with many people who hear the gospel today – even your friends that you share the gospel with. As that royal official refused to believe, and was trampled to death at the word of the Lord through Elisha, so people who reject God's good news of the gospel today will suffer the consequences of eternal death.

## **Practical Application for 2 Kings 7:12-20**

### **Let's not compromise the gospel!**

At the beginning of the chapter Elisha announced the incredibly good news. He did not compromise. He did not modify the gospel in any way. He didn't change it or alter it, to avoid being mocked, ridiculed or laughed at. In addition, he announced the death of the royal officer. He did not compromise that fact, even though he risked his life to say it.

Well, the gospel is incredibly good news: free gift, escape from hell, eternal life! So let's not modify it in any way just because you think you've got to change it or add human words to it to make it a little more palatable for people. No! Don't compromise!

The gospel also carries with it the price of rejecting it. There is a hell - eternal separation from God - for those who reject. Let's not shy away from including that side of the gospel. It's not pleasant, and it's not easy to tell a friend that if they reject the good news of God's gospel they'll end up in hell. It's not pleasant - but it must be included.

Let's not alter, change, or modify the gospel in any way! Let's not compromise the gospel.