

2 Kings 7 – Divine Deliverance of Samaria

- The Israelites assumed defeat, but 4 lepers who went to surrender to the enemy discovered God's deliverance. From the most unexpected sources, at the most surprising moment, God transformed defeat into relief and victory.

1. God's Promise of Deliverance (7:1-2)

- Though the king of Israel blamed the Lord for the calamity that came upon Samaria, God still had a good word for the king and the nation. God's promise through Elisha was that in 24 hours the dire situation in Samaria would be completely reversed - the famine would have ceased and food would be plentiful and inexpensive. Elisha's message of hope came just in the nick of time. All hope was lost and God's promise of deliverance was desperately needed (Heb 11:1).
- So incredible was Elisha's optimistic prediction that the king's officer refused to believe it and even sarcastically belittled the message. The king's officer doubted the prophecy, but his doubt was based on several faulty premises.
 - First, he doubted the *power* of God. If God willed it, He certainly could make windows in heaven and drop down food from the sky for the hungry, besieged city of Samaria (Mal 3:10).
 - Second, he doubted the *creativity* of God. In the mind of the king's officer, the only way food could come to the city was from above, because the city was surrounded by a hostile, besieging army. He had no idea that God could bring provisions in a completely unexpected way.
 - Third, he doubted the *messenger* of God. Though the promise was admittedly hard to believe, the king's officer could have and should have believed it because it came from a man with a track record of reliability.
- Sometimes we can think something is impossible, but we're simply wrong - Eph 3:20. This officer was like many today who mock at the message of God's grace (2 Pet 3:1-13). Through Elisha, God pronounced a harsh judgment upon the king's officer. Because of his unbelief, Elisha told the officer that he would see with his eyes the food being sold cheaply, but he would not eat of it. How sad for one to see others greatly blessed by the grace of God, and he himself having no share in it! Doubting the Word of God is a sure way to disqualify oneself from its promises. Unbelief is a tragic sin (Num 13-14).

2. The Four Lepers' Discovery (7:3-15)

- These 4 lepers are the unlikeliest men to rescue an entire city, but that's what they'll do. God can use anybody. Being without food, they reasoned that they might as well surrender to the Syrians, who might give them food. As the 4 lepers moved cautiously into the camp, to their surprise, they met not 1 man – the camp was totally empty! They discovered an empty army camp fully supplied, but empty of men.

- What no one knew at the time was that God had intervened. The Lord had caused the Syrians to hear the sounds of a massive army attacking. The same God who caused one Syrian army to be blinded (6:18) now caused another Syrian army to hear things that weren't there (Ps 2:4). The Syrians thought Israel must have hired the Hittites in the north and the Egyptians in the south to fight against them. As well as the great noise, no doubt it was God's work to put such fear in the minds of the Syrians that they decided to flee for their lives, leaving all their equipment and provisions behind (Prov 28:1).
- The lepers walked into the camp and found everything there, but with nobody around. The first inclination of these four men was to gather up all the treasures they could find and to hide it. But as the evening wore on, they were soon conscience-stricken to realise they were not right in concealing from Samaria the fact that food was available. And if they kept this important discovery secret during the whole night for their own personal advantage, when the morning came they would be found out, accused, and punished (Num 32:23). The lepers realized that the gift gave them a responsibility to share it with others. They've got the most incredible news that could save an entire city. They could either sit on it or share it. We too have "good tidings" that need to be shared. We can either sit on it or share it (1 Cor 9:16).
- With determined resolve, the 4 lepers returned to the city gate while it was still night and shared the good news. The lepers told the gatekeepers, and the gatekeepers told the officials, and the officials told the king. But the king thought it was a Syrian plot and trap. So they decided to send out a few men to investigate. Somehow the king did not entertain the possibility of God working a miracle as Elisha had predicted. It turned out to be just as the lepers had said - the Syrian camp was full of everything except people! The Syrian army had indeed fled and God had transformed defeat into relief and victory.

3. The Fulfilment of God's Word (7:16-20)

- This sudden influx of supplies and food caused prices to drop dramatically, just as the Lord had spoken through Elisha (Prov 30:5). God's Word has never been broken, nor ever shall be broken. The king appointed the officer who had doubted God's word to personally supervise the people responding to the provisions he said could never come. The prediction regarding the officer proved just as true as the prediction regarding the prices of food in the markets of Samaria. Because of his unbelief, the officer saw others enjoy God's blessings but he did not. He was trampled to death by a crowd of people at the city gate, thus he was not able to partake of it, just as the Lord had spoken through Elisha
- This man did not benefit from the work of God. He didn't believe it was possible. Do you have a famine you're struggling with in your life? God wants to do great things in your life, but you need to trust Him (Heb 11:6).