

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings: 6: 23 – 7: 20 – “Making Windows in Heaven”, Message # 12 in the series –  
“Elisha and the Prophets”, A Bible Study conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall  
on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, for those gathered at his home.**

As you read this passage, you should be able to see with me, that it cannot be easily broken up into sections in terms of conducting a study upon it. It must be taken as a whole. Therefore I have read you the entire passage about the events which are so linked together here. There is so much material here for our consideration that I will only be able to briefly consider all the truths and applications which stand out to us in this passage. I find here, in this passage, that there are the responses of three individual men, and one group of 4 men, to the famine in Samaria, which are given to us to learn from. 1<sup>st</sup> – The response of king Jehoram to the famine and the needy people of his kingdom. 2<sup>nd</sup> – The response of Elisha to the famine and to the king of Israel. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – The response of the 4 leprous men to the famine. And then 4<sup>th</sup> – The response of the king’s officer to the great miracle of the Lord’s making windows in heaven for them all. The main purpose that I will have in relating these things to you will be to hope to see faith in God created by your hearing of this word, if you have it not. And then also, it is my desire to see faith strengthened and built up in relation to what God can do for his saints, and indeed a whole nation, during the most desperate times of the Lord’s judgments.

**1<sup>st</sup> – Let’s look at the response of king Jehoram to the famine and the needy people of his kingdom.** (verses 24-30)

We see here that Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, was a very wicked man in his response to all that the Lord had done in the past. He did not learn from the kindness and goodness of God to him. He did not learn from the kindness shown to him when Naaman, one of his chief commanders, who had given him victory in battle, was healed by Elisha. This did not deter Ben-Hadad from his purpose. He continued to go attacking Israel in battle, time and again, even though the Lord had not given him victory in those attempts. The most recent of these attacks, we read about in the section just before this, in this chapter. Even though Ben-Hadad purposed war against Israel and went about to bring his purposes to pass, the Lord let Elisha supernaturally discern those evil purposes, and thwart those purposes, through Elisha’s telling king Jehoram where Ben-Hadad would try to attack him. And then later, Elisha himself prayed and asked the Lord to strike the Syrian army with blindness. And following this, when he brought them to Samaria, he gave them back their sight. King Jehoram wondered aloud in Elisha’s presence, whether he should kill them. But Elisha told him that they should not be killed, but fed, and then that they should be sent back to their king. This ought to have convinced Ben-Hadad of the futility of fighting against Israel and God’s good purposes toward Israel. It should have shown him that he ought not to have even thought about trying to attack Israel.

But we find in this passage that king Jehoram was in just as bad a place of unbelief as Ben-Hadad was; and I believe worse, because he had not learned from all that had happened to him thus far during his reign over Israel; that he should repent and turn to the God of Israel for wisdom and for the grace to do what was right. There was a great famine in Samaria at that time, and it was at that time that Ben-Hadad determined to go up and besiege Samaria. And they besieged it until a donkey’s head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove’s droppings was sold for five shekels of silver. That how desperate a situation it was, for lack of food. By the way, we as Christians need to believe that God holds all the resources for the sustaining of our life, in His great and loving hands. But He will at time withhold food, sometimes, from whole societies because of their sins, and in order to work out His purposes in justice, as well as in goodness and mercy toward them.

Turn with me over to Amos chapter 4, and we will look at verses 1-8. “Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, ‘Bring wine, let us drink!’” “The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness: ‘Behold, the days shall come upon you when He will take you away with fishhooks, and your posterity with fishhooks.’” “You will go out through broken walls, each one straight ahead of her, ‘and you will be

cast into Harmon,' says the LORD." "Come to Bethel and transgress, at Gilgal multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days." "Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, proclaim and announce the freewill offerings; for this you love, you children of Israel!" Says the Lord GOD." "Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities." "And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD." "I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest." "I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city." "One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered." "So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me,' says the LORD."

Now it is the king of Israel and the nobles and their wives who are being addressed here; people who would have walked hand and step with king Jehoram in the way that they lived their lives. They would oppress the poor and crush the needy. They wives would say to their husbands, 'Let us have a drinking party. But for these reasons, the Lord was going to take them away into war, famine, and eventually into captivity. You can see the purpose of God's bringing the judgments of famine and draught in these verses. They are sent by God in order that a nation might repent; or at least many in that nation might repent and turn its direction back to righteousness and a consideration of doing God's will according to His word. The nation of Israel, here was worshiping the golden calves at Bethel and Gilgal, and they were at the same time bringing sacrifices every morning and tithes every three day which were according to the law of the Lord. They were offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaiming and announcing free-will offerings, but these religious exercises were not accepted by the Lord because they were not repenting of their sins of not worshiping him by giving Him their hearts, or trying to do His will by faith in Him. They were full of compromise and hypocrisy. And so, it says in verse 6, that to strive with them, to bring them to repentance, God gave them cleanness of teeth in all their cities and lack of bread in all their places; and yet, they still had not returned to Him.

Well, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him say, 'Help, my lord, O king!' "And he said, in verse 27, 'If the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you?' "From the threshing floor or from the winepress?" He seems to be sympathizing with her plight, but not knowing how he could help her himself. In the margin in the New American Standard translation it says – "No, let the Lord help you," as if he knew that he could do nothing and was trying to stop her asking for help. The NAS translates it – "If the Lord does not help you, from where shall I help you?" He asks her – "What is the matter with you?" And she tells him the sad story of how she and another woman agreed, out of their great hunger, to eat their children. They had gone ahead and boiled and eaten her son, but the next day the other woman hid her son, and wouldn't give him up to be eaten. When the king heard this, he tore his clothes, and since he was standing on the wall where the people might see him, they noticed that he was wearing sackcloth beneath his clothes on his body.

Now, this was obviously a false and hypocritical sign of his mourning over his sins before God. It appears that since he believed in this false view of religion, which he had cultivated and promoted for the people, that he was actually mourning over the sad state which they were in; but he was really only selfishly feeling sorry for himself and for the people. This is confirmed for us by his next statement when he bursts out in this oath. (Verse 31) "May God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today." This is the same kind of language that his mother Jezebel had used with Elijah years before. So we see that the response of Jehoram to the famine and the needs of the people was one which shows us that he was a man who did not love God or God's prophet. He did not understand the ways of the Lord, and even though religious, he was falsely religious. He held to this and did not repent, and perished in his sin.

**2<sup>nd</sup> - The response of Elisha to the famine and to the king of Israel's threatening to kill him.** (verses 32 and 33 and Chapter 7, verses 1 and 2)

"But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him." "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?” “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?” “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?’” “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 and said, ‘Look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?’”

Now, I want you to see Elisha’s good reaction to all of these calamitous events. He and the elders are calmly sitting in his house, waiting on the Lord for what He would want them to say or to do. It has been revealed to him that king Jehoram was going to come to his house to kill him, and yet he remains calm. How can he do this? Well, turn with me to Psalm 25, verses 1-5. “To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.” “O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me.” “Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.” “Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths.” “Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.” These are very precious verses are they not? They teach us what to do when enemies have surrounded us and they are coming to take our lives. We pray and we wait upon the Lord. We lift up our soul, and we trust in God that we shall not be ashamed and that our enemies shall not triumph over us. Why? Verse 3 – Because no one who waits upon the Lord will be ashamed, if God is for what they are doing. But those wicked persons, like Jehoram will be ashamed when they deal treacherously without a cause.

When we pray we should ask God to show us His way of doing things in the difficult situation that we are in. We ask Him to teach us His paths; the way that He would have us to proceed, and that He would lead us and guide us into whatever truth of the Bible, or into whatever way that we should proceed, that He thinks best. God really will direct us. The attitude that we should take in prayer is this; that God is the God of our salvation, and on Him we are going to wait all the day. What does it mean to wait? It means that we will not speak or act until we are quite sure of what he would have us to say or do. So, Elisha has received word from the Lord that Jehoram’s messenger is coming down to knock on the door and Jehoram is right behind him. And what a study in contrasts. Jehoram has been waiting for the Lord too, but it is not the same kind of waiting. He says – “Surely this calamity is from the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer. Two men; one waiting upon the Lord, and the other waiting for the Lord. Jehoram had been waiting to see if Elisha would prophesy good concerning him and pray to God to lift the judgment of the famine. Since he will not do so, he is now prepared to kill Elisha.

But still Elisha is calm. And now he prophesies in Chapter 7, verse 1 – “Hear the word of the Lord.” “Thus says the Lord: ‘Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.’” See, my brethren, how we can trust in the Lord to do all things well, and do all things for the good of his people, and those who fear Him? He is going to lift the judgment of the famine by bringing food to his people. But he is going to do it in a very unusual way. And so the 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 Elisha said, ‘In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.’ I hope that you can see how unbelieving people are by nature, that when a proven man of God like Elisha stands before this man, and gives him the best of news, that he still skeptically refuses to believe it. Let us not think that God cannot change the worst of situations, in a moment’s notice, for the good of His people; indeed for the good of any person when He wants to do it. So let us learn to wait upon the Lord all the day.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – The response of the 4 leprous men to the famine.** (verses 3-11)

I am not going to read you the whole passage again, but I will summarize it and make application. Four leprous men are sitting at the entrance of the gate, and they think that they are going to die. They think that it would be better to try to do something drastic before they die, and so, having heard

that the Syrians are outside the city, they reason that if they go over to them, and surrender, that perhaps they might have mercy upon them and be kept alive by them. So they head out and when they came to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise, no one was there. And here is the miracle which the Lord did for Elisha and all the people of Israel. He 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!” And because of this they all fled at twilight and left their whole camp intact; that is, all their tents, their horses, their donkeys, and all of their food. They left their silver and gold and clothing, and the lepers found this great provision just like the Syrian army had left it!

So they went into one tent and ate and drank, and they carried away 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. And then they said to one another in verse 9 – “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.” So they went and told the king’s household and reported the whole thing to them. I want to stop here and make application. This whole little section of verses is meant to be a picture to us who live in New Testament times, of the salvation of sinners, and what should be done in terms of spreading the good news of salvation, once we have found it for ourselves. These four leprosy men represent all and any sinners. All men by nature are defiled by sin in their being. The entrance of sin into the world, through the first man Adam, has affected every part of our being, bringing pollution and defilement which is like a leprosy to our soul. We are unclean persons in the sight of God, and we need to be given the good news of the provisions of grace which are laid up for any sinner who will have Christ; something that none of us deserves or can earn, but which we find as a treasure and hide it in the field. Matthew 13: 44 – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid, and for joy over it goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

These men knew that these provisions were there because of other men’s efforts. The provisions of grace are in the same way, laid up and waiting for sinners through what Jesus Christ our Lord has done. There is the food of the bread of life and the water of life in the Lord Jesus. There is spiritual clothing to clothe ourselves in; that is the garments of salvation. There are the spiritual riches of His grace which are lavished upon us. All of these great provisions we stumble upon in our hearing the gospel and seeing what has been laid up for us, not by a wicked persecuting king, but by the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who has gone into the spiritual battle that was set against us, and suffered, bled, and died for sinners and for sins, that we might be saved. These men knew that it was a day of good news, and that they would be negligent if they did not speak of it to the others in the city. And even so, we who have come to know the riches of Christ’s grace and salvation, know that we too shall be negligent if we do not go and tell others the good news. We live in a day of good news, where we can preach the gospel freely, and so we ought to go and do so.

**And then 4<sup>th</sup> – The response of the king’s officer to the great miracle of the Lord’s making windows in heaven for them all.** (verses 12-20)

The lepers go and tell their good news. At first they were not believed. The king thought that it was a trick to lure their army out to them where they would be caught alive and the Syrians would get into the city. But one of the king’s servants persuaded him to let him take five of the remaining horses, and go and go see whether the report was true. This they did. Even so, people who are eager to know whether there is something laid up for them in the gospel with make trial of it, by faith. They will “come and see”. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” says Nathanael to Philip in John 1: 46. Philip said, “Come and see”. What do you seek?” says Jesus to those who came to him in John 1: 37. And they wanted to know where He was staying. And so Jesus says – “Come and see”. Now, we must understand that when we hear a promise of the good things of salvation that we do not question whether provision has really been laid up, or whether the Lord could bring about a miracle of grace

which would save our soul and nourish it daily. No, we must believe it. We must come and see for ourselves.

Look what happened to king's officer who said, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?" He would see it with his own eyes, said Elisha, but he wouldn't be able to eat of it. And thus when the miraculous provision was revealed to the many people who heard the good news, they all rushed to receive the benefit of it, and this man who had been skeptical, was trampled on and he died. Those who had rushed forward to get the good deal on all of the provision of food, they had to pay something for it. But in thinking about how this relates to the gospel, we only need to understand that we need to transact salvation with Christ; not actually pay the price for our sins. Jesus paid the full price, and we believe, and receive the benefits. Listen to Isaiah 55: 1-3 – "Ho!" "Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat." "Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?" "Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance." "Incline your ear, and come to Me." "Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you – the sure mercies of David."