

**"The Famine and the Provision"**

**2 Kings 6:24-7:20**

**Introduction:** Tonight, in our study of Elisha's life we have come to a rather long portion of Scripture. Before we get into our text tonight I want to go back and look briefly at what we considered last week. In our previous study we looked at how Elisha prayed for the Syrians to be blinded so that he could lead them into a vulnerable situation and then show grace to them. When their eyes were open they were in Samaria standing before the king of Israel. But instead of putting them to death Elisha instructed the king to set food before them and they were "killed with kindness". They were then sent back to the king of Syria with a testimony of grace.

Last week I explained that Elisha set an example for us and he was living what Paul recorded in Romans.

**Romans 12:17-21**

*17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

*18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

*19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

*20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

*21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Then I gave you the words of Booker Washington;

***"The only real way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend."***

Someone came to me last week and asked some very good questions which were probably in the mind of many. Let me raise a few questions and then answer them.

**1. Does this mean it is a sin to defend myself and my family?**

It is not a sin to defend yourself. Last week we talked about "vengeance" and how vengeance belongs to the Lord. But there is no sin in protecting yourself and your family. Let me show you what Jesus said to His disciples as He sent them out into the world.

**Luke 22:35-36**

<sup>35</sup> And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

<sup>36</sup> Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Jesus was sending them into a very hostile world and so He advised them to take a SWORD for self-defense.

## 2. Does this mean I should look the other way when people break the law?

The answer to this question is, NO!". We should not look the other way when people break the law for the laws and those who enforce them are the ministers of God and they are for the purpose of keeping society safe and in order.

### Romans 13:1-6

*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

<sup>2</sup> *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

<sup>3</sup> *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

<sup>4</sup> *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

<sup>5</sup> *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

<sup>6</sup> *For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.*

So, when someone breaks the law they are to be held accountable.

The point we were looking at last week was that we are to do all we can when someone offends us to show grace to that person for we have been shown the grace of God in our lives. Vengeance is not ours to carry out. God will take care of all vengeance in His time. Our responsibility is to live in a way that others see Jesus Christ in us.

Now let us get to where we are going tonight.

## I. The Famine

**Notice 2 Kings 6:23-24**

Before we get to the famine I want to address something here which at first glance looks like a contradiction in God's Word. In verse 23 we are told that the bands of Syrians came no more into the land of Israel. Then in verse 24 we are told the king of Syria gathered all his host and besieged Samaria. Is this a contradiction? The answer is, "NO". In verse 23 we are told the BANDS of Syria came no more. These were the small groups that would come and terrorize the Samaritans from time to time. But in verse 24 we see this is the army of Ben-hadad came in an organized fashion to lay siege to the city. So, this is not a contradiction as some would have us to believe. Now let us get to our text.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:24-25**

The famine already existed before the Syrians besieged the city of Samaria and this information helps us to gain a picture of what was going on in Israel at the time. Let me show you the promises which God gave to Israel in Deuteronomy 28.

**Deuteronomy 28:1-5, 15-17, 23-25**

*And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:*

*<sup>2</sup> And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.*

*<sup>3</sup> Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.*

*<sup>4</sup> Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.*

*<sup>5</sup> Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

*<sup>15</sup> But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:*

*<sup>16</sup> Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.*

*<sup>17</sup> Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

*<sup>23</sup> And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.*

<sup>24</sup> The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

<sup>25</sup> The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

From this text and the famine in 2 Kings we can know for sure that Israel had turned away from God and now they were deep into idolatry.

Now, while they are faced with the famine they are also attacked by the Syrians. Things were so bad that head of an unclean animal, a donkey, was selling for about 32 oz of silver and a small amount of dove droppings were selling for 2 oz of silver. It is important her to see that God was behind not only the famine but also the siege by the Syrians.

### **Isaiah 10:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

<sup>6</sup> I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

The Syrians were the whip in the hand of God to bring the chastening upon His people and this was all to drive them to repentance.

Let me show you what God said about Nebuchadnezzar.

### **Jeremiah 51:20-23**

<sup>20</sup> Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;

<sup>21</sup> And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider;

<sup>22</sup> With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid;

<sup>23</sup> I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers.

The Syrians here in 2 Kings 6 are used of God to bring the chastening. The famine did not cause them to repent so now they would face the Syrians in the midst of the famine.

Application:

Let us not miss the applications here. There are three ways I see to apply this lesson.

**1. To each of us personally.**

It is very dangerous for God's children to fall into sin and then ignore the chastening which He brings into our lives. Let us know that God will continue to apply the pressure and to turn up the heat until repentance comes, or death takes us home. No believer can step into sin and remain there without the chastening of God bringing misery into their lives.

**2. To the church as a body.**

This can also be applied to a church that drifts away from the will of God and allows itself to incorporate the ways of the world. The chastening may start out as a spiritual famine and the end result can be the loss of testimony. Let us never forget the Words Jesus spoke to the church at Ephesus.

**Revelation 2:5**

*<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

**3. To our nation.**

The third way this is applicable is to our nation and I believe we are seeing these things unfold today. There is a famine in our nation and it is not a famine of physical food but spiritual food. The Truth of God's Word is getting suppressed more and more every day and so people are starving for the Truth and there are few places to turn to get it.

Let us not miss the important lesson that when God brings the rod of correction and it is ignored He will smite even harder the second time.

Now the Holy Spirit is going to focus upon the king of Israel as we move on. The reason is because it was his responsibility to call the nation to repentance and confess their sins. It was the king who allowed the idolatry and even participated in the false worship so as the leader he is responsible for the conditions which they are facing in the famine.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:26-27**

The king became irritated when the woman looked to him for help and in his answer, he was blaming God for not helping in this dire situation. But we never see him cry out to God.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:28-29**

Here we see just how dire the situation was. These two women had killed one of their sons and ate him. The famine was so great that hunger had overtaken natural affection. Now when she related this story to the king this should have cause him to fall to his knees and repent. It should have told him that the nation was under the chastening hand of God. God had fore warned what would happen if they turned away from Him.

**Leviticus 26:27-29**

*27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;*

*28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.*

*29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.*

**Deuteronomy 28:49-53**

*49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;*

*50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:*

*51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.*

*52 And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.*

*53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:*

**Notice 2 Kings 6:30**

When the king rent his clothing, it was made known to those around him that he was wearing sackcloth under his garment. Now the wearing of sackcloth was an outward sign of sorrow but with the king there was no repentance. He was full of sorrow because of what the nation was facing but he was not to the point where he was ready to repent. He was sorrowful, but it was not a Godly sorrow. Let me show you what Paul said to the Corinthians concerning a letter which he had sent to them.

**2 Corinthians 7:8-11**

<sup>8</sup> For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

<sup>9</sup> Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but **that ye sorrowed to repentance**: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

<sup>10</sup> For **godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**

<sup>11</sup> For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

The king of Israel did not have a Godly sorrow which would lead to repentance, but he had a worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow does not produce repentance, but it produces bitterness and resentment. Let me show you the bitterness in the king.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:31**

The king blamed Elisha for the dire situations they were facing. He could not see that he needed to repent and call the nation to repentance.

**Conclusion:**

Next week we shall pick this matter up again and we will continue in this text. Until then let me remind you of the danger of walking away from God and ignoring His rod of correction. It will not only have repercussions upon your life but also on all who are around you, namely your family.