

**"The Famine and the Provision"**

**Part 2**

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

**Introduction:** In our study last week we looked at the setting for another miracle in the life of Elisha. It was the famine in Samaria and the siege enforced by the Syrians. Let me do a short review and then we will pick up where we stopped last week. There are a few more thoughts to share from the verses we looked at last week.

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

There was a famine in Syria and it was in the famine that the king of Syria came and besieged the city. The Syrians planned to use the famine and starve out the people of Israel.

This information helps us to understand that Israel had turned away from God and the famine and the attack by the Syrians was God's chastening upon His people.

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

*15 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:*

*16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.*

*17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

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

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

*25 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.*

God had warned the nation that if they turned from Him they would experience famine in their land and that is what we see here in 2 Kings 6.

Then we read the words of Isaiah concerning the Assyrians.

**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.*

From Deuteronomy and from Isaiah we can understand that this was all the hand of God gone out against Israel because of their sin.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:26-29**

Here we see just how dire the circumstances were. The inhabitants of Israel had turned to cannibalism. This should have caused the king to repent for it should have taken his mind to the warnings which God has issued to the nation.

**Leviticus 26:27-29**

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

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

<sup>29</sup> *And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.*

**Deuteronomy 28:49-53**

<sup>49</sup> *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;*

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

<sup>51</sup> *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.*

<sup>52</sup> *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.*

<sup>53</sup> *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, the people were able to see that under his garments he was wearing sackcloth which was normally worn as a sign of sorrow and repentance. But he wore the sackcloth UNDER his garments which tells us his sorrow was not a Godly sorrow. He was sorrowful for what was happening, but he was not broken to the point of repentance.

When I look at the king in this passage I see a man whose pride is keeping him from repentance. He wore the sackcloth but not where all could see. Here was a man who refused to believe that what was happening in the city had anything to do with him. He is a man who has not come to the place where he hates his sin. He hates the chastening but not the sin.

**Application:**

Pride in the heart of men has caused much sorrow over the years. Let me show you what the Psalmist recorded concerning the proud.

**Psalm 10:4-7**

*<sup>4</sup> The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

*<sup>5</sup> His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.*

*<sup>6</sup> He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.*

*<sup>7</sup> His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.*

**Proverbs 16:18-19**

*<sup>18</sup> Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

*<sup>19</sup> Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.*

**Proverbs 29:23**

*<sup>23</sup> A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

Let me now get your mind back to the king of Israel. When God brings chastening there are two ways in which people will respond.

1. We can repent and humble ourselves to the point of admitting our sin. This by the way is the proper response. This response brings joy into our lives.

**Hebrews 12:11**

<sup>11</sup> Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

2. We can respond in bitterness and look for someone to blame.

This was exactly how the king of Israel responded. He wanted to kill Elisha. The king could not get to God, so he chose to take his frustration out upon God's man.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:31**

The king places all the blame upon Elisha for the famine and the siege. This shows the true sinful heart of mankind. This king represents many people over the history of the world and even today. God sent prophet to the people to manifest His Truth and to show the people the way of blessing. Today God sends teachers and preachers out into the world because He has a message of grace. They tell of God's coming judgment on sinners and offer God's way of escape. Just as the prophets they cause no harm to the people they are simply the messengers of God, but they are rejected more times than they are accepted. Because man cannot lash out at God he then often turns to God's messenger and he does all he can to silence him sometimes even to the point of murder. This shows just how sinful and corrupt the heart of man is. God throws to man a life preserver and man curses God because the life preserver indicates that man is drowning in his sins and because man is prideful and believes he is in no danger and can save himself he therefore becomes bitter while casting the life preserver aside.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:32a**

Here we are introduced to a contrast. The contrast is between the king of Israel who is completely stressed out concerning the famine and Elisha who we are told is sitting in his house with the elders. Now this does not mean that Elisha is apathetic. He cares very much about what is happening. So, the question is, "How can he remain calm in the midst of what is happening?"

The answer is that Elisha knows God and he knows God's ways. Elisha knows that he can trust the Lord in the midst of what is happening.

**Proverbs 1:33**

<sup>33</sup> But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

**Psalm 112:1-8**

*Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

*<sup>2</sup> His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

*<sup>3</sup> Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*

*<sup>4</sup> Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.*

*<sup>5</sup> A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.*

*<sup>6</sup> Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*

*<sup>7</sup> He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.*

*<sup>8</sup> His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.*

**Isaiah 26:3-4**

*<sup>3</sup> Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

*<sup>4</sup> Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:*

This is the very same peace we saw in the heart of Elisha in 2 Kings 6:16.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:15-17**

Again, I will remind you that the peace in the heart of Elisha was the result of knowing God. There is a big difference in knowing God and knowing ABOUT God. Those who know ABOUT God do not have the peace in the face of trials, attacks and storms like those who know God and His ways.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:32 again.**

In verse 31 the king entered into an oath that he would see that Elisha was killed and now here we see he sends a messenger to carry out the execution.

I need to take some time here and point out something very important. The king of Israel should have known better than to attempt to kill Elisha. He had already witnessed how the Syrian military was unsuccessful because of God's protection upon him. God blinded the military and Elisha led them to the city where they were shown grace. So, the king should have known better than to attempt to take the life of Elisha. But this is what happens

when someone rejects God. They do not think rationally, nor do they act rationally. Those who reject the Lord are given up to a spirit of madness. This is true of individuals as well as nations. When God is rejected, and they are given over to madness they will do things that make no sense to you and I who know the Lord. We can step back and see how their choices are leading them down a path of destruction in one way or another. This is the very thing Paul wrote about in Romans 1 when addressing the rational sinner.

**Romans 1:28-32**

*<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*

*<sup>29</sup> Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,*

*<sup>30</sup> Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*

*<sup>31</sup> Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:*

*<sup>32</sup> Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

When we look around in our world today we see this happening. People making decisions that are not rational. They do things and as we stand at a distance and watch we can see how ridiculous they are acting. This was exactly what was happening to the king of Israel.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:32 again.**

Elisha referred to the king as a son of a murderer because he was the son of Ahab and Jezebel.

**Notice 2 Kings 6:33**

The statement made here, "Behold, this evil is of the Lord", is believed to be spoken by the king and he is not talking about the famine and the siege, but he is talking about the execution that he plans to carry out. That is, he believes he is doing God's work and that killing Elisha would be God's work.

Now we would look at this and ask, "How could the king ever think that to kill Elisha would be the will of God?" This is what happens to those who are given over to madness.

**John 16:1-3**

*These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

<sup>2</sup> *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

<sup>3</sup> *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

Jesus foretold His disciples that they would be hated and even put to death and those who would carry out the executions would believe they were doing the work of God.

This was exactly the way the king of Israel was thinking.

#### **Conclusion:**

Being given over to madness can never happen to a believer because God has promised to never leave us or forsake us. He has promised that since He has begun a work in us He will be faithful to finish what He has started.

This is however an application here and a danger which we must be aware of. We still possess a sin nature and if we allow the sin nature to control us the lusts of the flesh can take us deep into sin and blind us to the danger within the choices we make.

An example of this would be David and his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. When we step out of fellowship with the Lord and with His people we can fall deep into sin and that has happened to many people. The flesh begins to lust after that which God says is forbidden and they do not cast down the thoughts neither do they reckon themselves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. But instead they make provisions for the flesh in that they move closer in some way to that which is forbidden. The Bible commands us to make no provisions for the flesh.

#### **Romans 13:14**

<sup>14</sup> *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

We must never place ourselves in any situation where we are face to face with the lusts of the flesh.

#### **James 1:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

<sup>15</sup> *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

<sup>16</sup> *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*