

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 4B

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 is a continuation of Chapter 6 in the literal sense. Samaria was still in captivity i.e. under economic and military sanction. The people were surrounded, with nowhere to go and no one to turn to for help. They could only look upward. The Samaritans (not like the Samaritans in Jesus' times who were half Jews and half Gentiles, these were full blooded Jews who lived in Samaria during the divided kingdom) and their king were angry with Elisha. Apparently, Elisha was blamed for the economic sanction which resulted in the boiling and eating of babies. Cannibalism has always been condemned in the Bible. This incident was recorded for us (chapter 6) to show the reality of their plight and the reality of the miracle that Elisha would perform in chapter 7.

There can be no shadow of a doubt over the miracle that ended this great man-made famine. This is the way the LORD chose to show sinful men (especially Israel, His own people who bear His Name) that the LORD is ever near and that He has not forsaken them even though they had

forsaken Him. The greatness of God is always balanced by His compassion and mercy. He needs to send trials and testings to drive His disobedient children back unto Himself. **Hebrews 12:9-11** affirms, *“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 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.”*

Chapter 7 describes how God provided for the Israelites living in the besieged city of Samaria.

OUTLINE

1. Elisha prophesied of a miracle of a deserted city and the death of the king's servant (vv.1-2);
2. Four lepers discovered food and shared the news with the Samaritans (vv.3-11);
3. The faithless King of Israel and the end of his faithless servant (vv.12-20).

COMMENTARY

The Miracle – 7:1-2

Elisha told the king to wait one more day beginning with these words “Thus saith the LORD”. This is the first

time Elisha used this introduction in his prophetic word. It stresses the importance of what he was about to say: it was not his words but the Word of the LORD God of Israel! Elisha prophesied that the following day at about the same time, a measure of fine flour and two measures of barley would cost a shekel in the gate of the city. Conditions in the city would be back to normal. Compare the price here with the price mentioned in Chapter 6. In other words, the forced "famine" which reduced God's people to cannibalism would be over by the next day! It seemed an impossible proposition. The whole city was surrounded by the elite army of the Syrians. There was no human help at all from any direction. Israel was all alone. Without faith it was impossible to believe what Elisha had just declared in the Name of the LORD!

One of the king's trusted lords on whom the king depended upon for advice, responded sarcastically by saying "Behold, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" In other words, this very foolish 'wise' man was saying that if grain and barley were to fall from heaven like a downpour of rain, there could not be any relief the next day. He belittled Elisha's prophecy, which was from God. This king's servant was without faith. In response, Elisha told the doubting servant that he would witness the truth of what Elisha had prophesied but he would not eat the food (v.1, 2).

It was a just punishment for him because of his peremptory unbelief.

His unbelief was as good as calling both Elisha and God liars for the prophecy was uttered in the name of the LORD!

The Four Lepers – 7:3-8

There were four lepers who pitched their tents not far away from the gate into Samaria (v.3). They were having a discussion and assessing their situation. They had to live outside Samaria because they were lepers. As lepers, they were outcasts who were completely rejected by society, family friends and loved ones. In short, they were the lowest of the lowest in Samaritan society. Ostracised by the world and rejected and despised by men but chosen by the LORD to bring salvation to a starving city!

Since the city was in dire straits, there was hardly any man who could give them food. They would starve to death. They rationalised among themselves about where they should be. If they would enter the city, it would be pointless as there was virtually no food at all. Then they came up with the idea of falling into the hands of the Syrians. In that way, should the Syrians not kill them, they would stay live. Otherwise, it would not matter because they would die of starvation anyway. So they decided to make their way into the Syrians' camp. They left their tents before nightfall. When they reached the Syrian camp, there was no one there.

The divine writer explained that the LORD had caused the Syrians to hear noises of an approaching great army of horses and chariots. In their confused state of mind, they thought

that the King of Israel had hired Hittites and Egyptians to attack them. As a result, they panicked and fled frantically for their lives. They left their tents and horses and chariots! The four lepers found the camp deserted. They entered into one tent and helped themselves to the food and drinks left behind by the Syrians. They also carted off and hid the silver, gold and garments they found. They returned and entered another tent and did likewise. They had a great and blessed time!

To Tell or Not to Tell – 7:9-11

Suddenly the four lepers said one to another that they were not doing the right thing. They must share the good news and not be silent and selfish. They also feared that if morning came, some evil might overtake them. They did not wish this knowledge of “free” food and deliverance to be kept from the Samaritans. If something evil happened to them and they die, the Samaritans would starve unnecessarily especially when salvation was only a stone throw away i.e. just outside the doors of the city!

So they decided there and then to return to the city to inform the King of Israel (v.9). They told the porters of the city that the Syrians had fled their camp and there was no one there.

The four lepers could have kept everything for themselves but they did not for they realised that they must share the good news, even with those who had ostracised them! When the good news came, the Samaritans did not care whether they were lepers or

not for the good news was deliverance from certain death. The porters who received the news from the four lepers straightway went to the King and related to him the fantastic news of salvation.

Faithless to the End – 7:12-15

The porters told the news to the royal family. When the King of Israel heard of the good news, he was incredulous. He concluded that it was a ruse by the Syrians to lure them out, knowing that the Israelites were starving, and then they would seize the opportunity to take their city. The king of Israel, as the leader of Israel, was supposed to be spiritual. But he still did not believe in Elisha’s prophecy. He would rather cling on to his “military” way of strategic thinking. It was the way of faithlessness. His people were dying and cannibalising one another and he was thinking strategy! Why did he not think like the four lepers? To die by starvation or by the sword of the Syrians is still death!

But one of the king’s servants had the good sense of suggesting to the king to send a small party to investigate and verify the good news. The King of Israel wisely listened to his servant and a small investigating party was sent. The king was prepared to sacrifice the small party of his men just in case it was truly a ruse by the Syrians to ensnare them. But the men returned and confirmed the truth of the news to the faithless king.

Mad Rush for Food – 7:16-20

The people came to know the good news of great deliverance. What

ensued was a mad rush for food. Everyone was rushing out of the gate of the city and heading for the Syrian camp. The King of Israel ordered his trusted servant who earlier belittled Elisha’s prediction to take control of the mad rush at the gate. In carrying out his responsibility, he was trampled to death by the people. He died just as Elisha had predicted.

There was not a single record of the king or the people praising and thanking God for His deliverance. They were too occupied with filling their stomachs and lining their pockets with the “spoils” of the Syrians to remember the LORD.

PRACTICAL VALUE

The miracle of the deliverance was done when Israel was in dire straits. They had started eating their own babies to survive! The deliverance came from the LORD via the four lepers who were outcasts and rejected by society but not by God. Very often, Christians are considered the “rejects of society” but remember, we have the good news (better than the news of the four lepers) to give to a dying people. Like the four lepers, we need to tell them now before some “evil” befall us.

The faithlessness of the King of Israel is a stark reminder to us that those in leadership must be men of spirituality and faithfulness. They cannot be measured by worldly criteria such as material wealth and social status. These are what the men of the world look for but are never God’s criteria. To care for God’s spiritual

children the church needs spiritual men who pray and trust God and believe in His holy and perfect Word. We are living in the last days and the crying need in churches today is for such men of faith and courage to stand for God’s truth against a rising tide of great unbelief.

Remember to be a grateful and thankful people. Do not forget God in times of plenty and remember Him only in times of want! AMEN

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: 2 Kings 7:1-16; Hebrews 11:1-6; 2 Corinthians 1:4.

TUESDAY: 2 Kings 7:17-20; Matthew 5:18; Romans 3:4.

WEDNESDAY: 2 Kings 7:1-20.

THURSDAY: 2 Kings 7:1-20.

FRIDAY: 2 Kings 7:1-20.

Discussion Questions

1. What lesson can we learn about faith and faithlessness from the swift and immediate judgement imposed upon the “lord” by Elisha?

2. Did the four lepers act by faith when they went to the Syrians? Please explain.

5. List the Bible references where the qualifications of a godly leader can be found? Can these qualifications be realised by God's leaders today or are they ideals that cannot be attained?

3. Does the action of the four lepers remind you of the Great Commission?

6. Are you a thankful Christian? Give reasons for your answer.

4. Which is worse -- faithlessness or famine and hunger?
