

The Cost of Unbelief

2 Kings 6:24-33 + 2 Kings 7

²⁴And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. ²⁵And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five shekels of silver.

²⁶Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" ²⁷And he said, "If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?" ²⁸Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' ²⁹"So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son." ³⁰Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body. ³¹Then he said, "God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!"

³²But 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?" ³³And 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?"

—2 Kings 6:24–33

¹Then 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.’” ²So an 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 he said, “In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.”

³Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, “Why are we sitting here until we die? ⁴If we say, ‘We will enter the city,’ the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die.” ⁵And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there. ⁶For the LORD had 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!” ⁷Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. ⁸And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it 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.

⁹Then they said to one another, “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. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king’s household.” ¹⁰So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, “We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one was there, not a human sound—only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact.” ¹¹And the gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king’s household inside. ¹²So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, “Let me now tell you what the

Syrians have done to us. They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.' ¹³*And one of his servants answered and said, "Please, let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they may either become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, I say, they may become like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed; so let us send them and see."*

¹⁴*Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see."*

¹⁵*And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road was full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king. ¹⁶Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.*

¹⁷*Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. ¹⁸So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria." ¹⁹Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?" And he had said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." ²⁰And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.*

—2 Kings 7

Read 2 Kings 6:24–33 and 2 Kings 7

In Psalm 18:30, David wrote, *As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.* Those who believe in and prioritize God's Word experience the veracity, fulfillment, and blessing of His Word. However, to some, God's Word seems too outrageous to believe. These

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

In those days, it was difficult to take a walled city. The way that they would capture a walled city would be to surround it, to cut off all supplies, and not let anyone in or out. After a period of time, you would just starve the city into submission. ... And so he began to besiege the city of Samaria, and it was successful.

—Chuck Smith

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

God forewarned Israel in Deuteronomy 28:56–57 of these same dire consequences that would come upon them when they rejected God's presence and protection over them.

people prefer to put their faith only in what they can see and are experiencing in their present circumstances. Such a posture of unbelief is tragic! This posture keeps those who hold it from experiencing the blessings, promises, and deliverance pledged in God's Word.

This reality is clearly portrayed in 2 Kings 7. In this chapter, a man's refusal to believe God's Word ended in tragedy. In contrast, those who believed God's Word were delivered and blessed.

God uses His Word to prepare us for His deliverance. However, even as Christians, we can miss out on God's blessing and help when we refuse to believe and obey His Word. Choosing to believe and obey God's Word is always the best thing to do in any circumstance that life throws your way.

As you consider the Scriptures this week, ask God to increase your faith in His Word.

1. Note and comment on the dire situation in Israel.
2 Kings 6:24–30

2. According to 2 Kings 6:31, what do you find intriguing about:
 - a. Who the king blamed for the famine

 - b. The king's intentions

3. Use 2 Kings 6:32 to describe Elisha's:
 - a. Location
 - b. Composure
 - c. Foreknowledge
 - d. Instruction
 - e. Accuracy
4. Comment on the king's misguided conclusions.
2 Kings 6:33
5. According to 2 Kings 7:1–2:
 - a. What did Elisha declare?
 - b. What was the messenger's reaction?
 - c. What dire consequence did Elisha prophesy for the messenger?

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

When the siege for Samaria was over, no one in the city knew it or enjoyed it.

“Everybody who went to bed that night felt that he was still in that horrible den where grim death seemed actually present in the skeleton forms of the hunger-bitten. They were as free as the harts of the wilderness had they known it: but their ignorance held them in vile durance [imprisonment].”¹⁸

—Spurgeon

6. From 2 Kings 7:3–10, briefly summarize the experience of the lepers by commenting on the following:
 - a. Their reasoning
 - b. Their discovery
 - c. The divine cause
 - d. Their conviction
 - e. Their news

7. Use 2 Kings 7:11–16 to note the following individuals’ reaction to the lepers’ news:
 - a. The gatekeepers
 - b. The king
 - c. The servants of the king
 - d. The people

8. From 2 Kings 7:16–20, observe and share your thoughts concerning:
 - a. The veracity of God's Word

 - b. The plight of the unbelieving officer

9. What is your greatest takeaway from 2 Kings 6:24–33 and 2 Kings 7?