

## 2 Kings 6:24 - - 7:20 **Great Famine in Samaria – caused by Syrian siege**

### Syria Besieged Samaria

24 And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria.

25 And 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.

26 Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!"

27 And he said, "If the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?" 28 Then 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."

30 Now 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. 31

Then he said, "God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!"

32 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?"

33 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?"

### 2 Kings 7:1-20]

1 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.'"

2 So 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."

### The Syrians Fled - - Famine Ended

3 Now 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? 4 If 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."

5 And 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.

6 For 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!" 7 Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact — their tents, their horses, and their donkeys — and they fled for their lives.

8 And 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.

9 Then 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." 10 So 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." 11 And the gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king's household inside.

12 So 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.

16 Then 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. 18 So 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."

19 Then 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." 20 And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.

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Facts Revealed:

### Syria Besieged Samaria

✧ So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel. [2 Kings 6:23]

✧ And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. [2 Kings 6:24]

- ✧ After the army sent to get Elisha was blinded and taken to Samaria where they were given their sight only to find themselves enclosed within the city walls, fed a banquet and allowed to return home, the Syrians did not send bands of raiders into Israel any more.
- ✧ However it did not prevent Ben-Hadad king of Syria from attempting to take Samaria with all his armies who laid siege to the city preventing anyone from entering the city or from leaving the city, cutting off all food supply from the city which caused a severe famine.
- ✧ 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. [2 Kings 6:25]
- ✧ When facing starvation, people will resort to the most unbelievable extremes to find some kind of nourishment for survival as revealed by their willingness to purchase an unclean donkey's head and even dove droppings for food, that is extreme hunger.
- ✧ When the king was faced with a case of cannibalism, he tore his royal garments and it was revealed that he was wearing sackcloth next to his body as a form of mourning. [2 Kings 6:26-30]
- ✧ Then the king said, "God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!" [2 Kings 6:31]
- ✧ Again human nature is revealed, as the king blamed the prophet for the situation that had befallen his city because of his own, and his people's sins.
- ✧ The king at this time is Jehoram son of Ahab, he reigned over Israel twelve years between the time of Ahaziah and Jehu. [2 Kings 3:1]
- ✧ 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, Elisha 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?" [2 Kings 6:32]
- ✧ With a double portion of the Holy Spirit, Elisha was informed in advance of the things that were about to happen at home and abroad and in amazing detail.
- ✧ This allowed Elisha to be prepared ahead of time to deal with the immediate threat.
- ✧ 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 Yahweh (the Lord); why should I wait for Yahweh (the Lord) any longer?" [2 Kings 6:33]
- ✧ The messenger and the king were held at the closed door.
- ✧ Then the king perceived that the Syrian siege was from Yahweh, and asked, "Why should I wait on Yahweh any longer?"
- ✧ It is not clear what the king thought he could do if the calamity was from Yahweh, but at least he did acknowledge the source of the problem.

#### 2 Kings 7:1-20]

- ✧ 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.'" [2 Kings 7:1]
- ✧ By the Word of Yahweh, the famine in Samaria will end about this time tomorrow.
- ✧ So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, if Yahweh (the Lord) would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" Elisha said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." [2 Kings 7:2]
- ✧ With the Syrian army surrounding the city, the promise of the end of the siege tomorrow seemed totally incredible to the King's officer who could not believe the promise.

- ✧ Elisha's words that he would see it but not eat of it seemed equally incredible.
- ✧ Yahweh has a way to deal with unbelievers and prove again that He alone is God in Israel.

### The Syrians Fled

- ✧ Now 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? If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we will 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."
 

And 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. [\[2 Kings 7:3-5\]](#)

  - ✧ Yahweh used the plight of 4 leprous men at the entrance of the city gate to reveal His work of fulfilling His promise spoken by Elisha the day before.
  - ✧ The king and his court were totally unaware of what Yahweh was doing.
- ✧ For Yahweh (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!"
 

Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact — their tents, their horses, and their donkeys — and they fled for their lives. [\[2 Kings 7:6-7\]](#)

  - ✧ The sound was heard only by the Syrian armies, and their imagination took it from there.
  - ✧ Yahweh is able to cause one person or an entire multitude to hear sounds no-one else can hear.
- ✧ When the leprous men came to the Syrian camp, they found everything in place except the men who had fled for their lives. [\[2 Kings 7:8-11\]](#)
  - ✧ The lepers ate and drank to satisfied their immediate needs and took some the spoils for themselves and hid it. [\[2 Kings 7:8\]](#)
  - ✧ Then they remembered that the city was starving to death, so they took the good news to the gatekeepers of the city. [\[2 Kings 7:9-10\]](#)
  - ✧ The gate keepers cried out and the Lepers told the good news to the king's household who came in response to the call of the gate keepers. [\[2 Kings 7:11\]](#)
- ✧ The king was suspicious, expecting an ambush, but at the advise of his servants he sent out two chariots to investigate the report, so they searched as far as the Jordan and returned to confirm the original report. [\[2 Kings 7:12-15\]](#)
- ✧ Then 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. [\[2 Kings 7:16\]](#)
  - ✧ The Word of Yahweh spoken by Elisha proved to be true regarding the abundance available.
  - ✧ Yahweh had compassion on the plight of the people, and an opportunity to demonstrate again to the people of Israel that He is still Yehowah Yireh the God who provides.
- ✧ 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. [\[2 Kings 7:17\]](#)
- ✧ So 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." [\[2 Kings 7:17-18\]](#)
- ✧ Then that officer had answered Elisha (the man of God), and said, "Now look, if Yahweh (the Lord) would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?"

And Elisha had said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it."  
And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died. [[2 Kings 7:19-20](#)]

- ✧ Men often doubt the Word of Yahweh, but it always comes to pass at the indicated time.
- ✧ God's Words never fail, but they each have their own time to be accomplished according to the plan of the God Most High at its "appointed time."