

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Elisha

No 13

Live Up to Your Income!

Second Kings 6:24-7:20

There are a number of ways to apply the passage before us. We are more focussed on the study of Elisha's life, and how he responded in times of crisis. He has much to teach us about the life of faith and how we ought to walk before the Lord. The crises that Elisha faced were his. Ours will be different, yet there is a commonness to all these events. They come as a testing, and they can embitter us or turn us to the Lord. The detail may differ, but what Elisha did, we too in essence may do. We can learn from him, for Elisha's God is our God. God has not changed. His ear is still open. His arm is still strong. He is never at a loss. He is still able to save.

Life's Reverses Teach Us to Rely Upon our God. Elisha had just demonstrated God's ability to care for His people when they are in trouble, and immediately God brought an opportunity for them all to put it to the test v24. 'After this', a term implying time sequence, Ben Hadad put a seige upon the capital, Samaria.

The situation was dire. A donkey's head cost eight times the normal price of the whole animal. A 'kab' was about 1.6 litres dry measure; dove's dung was probably the common name for a vegetable mash or grain pulse (Sparrow's dung was once the common name for the vegetable kali) and cost five days wages. This situation was impossible and it turned the people to cannibalism v28&9. It accords with God's warning in Leviticus 26:27-9.

The king's sackcloth was a sign of remorse in this emergency, one for which he blamed Elisha v31. It was a reprisal against his recently humiliating the Syrian army. Elisha was at that moment conferring with Israel's elders (kings advisors.)

It is evident from v31&v33, that Ben Hadad had required the head of Elisha in return for him lifting the siege.

Elisha had called on Israel to resist, declaring that the event was a test from the Lord, and the appropriate course of action was repentance for sin (hence the sackcloth) and to wait on God for His salvation.

When the cannibalism was revealed, king Joram, who had no heart for God, decided the capitulate and sue for peace, by trading Elisha's head. Why wait any longer for God to act!

We Also are Put to the Test. In this God has not changed. He also allows us be besieged by life's crises. We call to Him. We read His word. We hear His promises. We search the environment for His answer, and we wait, wait, wait. God is not uncaring. He has not left us in the lurch. He is not unfaithful. He has us in His school. He is teaching us to trust Him. He will do all that He says He will do. The Bible is replete with examples of men and women who took a hand to help God out: Abraham and the birth of an heir, Saul and the sacrifices, David numbering Israel are a few. Beware of the arm of the flesh! Jesus was tempted by Satan to do the same! Wherever the master is, there shall the servant be also.

Discouragements, Doubt and Disappointments Often Accompany Testing v32&33. Shut the door and open the window!

Elisha was in moment by moment communion with His Lord. He knew who was coming and why, the servant followed closely by the king with murderous intent.

At this time Elisha was taking his input from God, not the world. In the world

even his friends were his enemies. He commanded to shut the door on the world and wait by the open windows¹ of heaven.

The King's message:

"Why should I wait on the Lord, since this evil is all His doing v33b ctv."

The Lord's message:

Tomorrow about this time 6 litres of flour will be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel² ch7v1.

Or,

Tomorrow everything will be back to normal. ctv

Elisha's message:

Listen to the word of the Lord!

Now to whom will you listen in your time of trial? How do you respond to testing-Anger, blame shifting depression, disbelief, withdrawal, unbelief?

There are always three steps to victory in a time like this:

1. Prayer, bring the matter before the Lord. Search your heart. 2. Listen to what He says. Search His word. (He will usually tell you what, when and how much, but not always why.) 3. Trust. Believe what He tells you. Search for the fulfilment of His promise to you. *Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He will do it* Psalm 37:4&5.

We could now consider:

The Panic of the Arameans
The Perceptiveness of the Lepers
The Perverseness of the King
The Plenteousness of the Supply
The Provision of the Lord
The Prudence of the Prophet

But instead:

The Uniqueness of God's Dealings in that He turned Israel's great problem into a greater blessing. And He did this without causing loss of life to the Arameans, or cost to the Israelis. This is unique, a one-off. All God does is unique. He Has no need to repeat the flood, or the Red Sea crossing, or Calvary. Once is enough. And all He does in your life and mine will be another unique blessing, if we trust Him. In our blessing many can share.

Last, The Tenacious, Evil Heart of Unbelief.

Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God Hebrews 3:12.

The King's officer epitomises unbelief³.

His task was to provide physical, logistic and moral support. He could not see beyond it. It was not that he was atheistic, but that he could not see that God was either able or willing to help.

When he looked to heaven, he could only see closed windows; and only shadows moved behind the lattice.

We ask ourselves these same questions Can God? Will God? We often quickly affirm the first, but get stuck on the second.

If we say God cannot, we affirm God will not. Strangely, God does not. See v4:19

Endnotes: 1. Window (Strong's 699), a lattice grill, Noah's floodgate in the heavens; as also Isaiah 24:18, Malachi's windows of blessing, a chimney in Hosea 13:3, eyes clouded with cataracts in Ecclesiastes 12:3 and a dove-cote Isaiah 60:8 because of the latticed openings. Door (Strong's 1817) something swinging. 2. A measure, about 6 litres, shekel about 10 drams avorp., an everyday measure. 'In the gate' is the space just inside the gate where the farmers market was held. 3. There are two words for unbelief in the Greek NT *pistia* (Strong's 570) or distrust Hebrews 3:12, and *apeitheia* (Strong's 543) or apathy, i.e. disobedience Hebrews 4:6. Both forms rob us of our blessing. The NASB text was used in the preparation of this study.

Welcome Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

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