

December 16

Scriptures: Read 2 Kings 6 & 7

Key Verse: “This 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....”
(2 Kings 7:9)

Overview

The school of the prophets (probably located in Jericho, 2:4-5) had grown so much that they needed a larger building and were ambitious to expand. They first sought God’s approval by going to Elisha for his consent. While they were cutting trees for the building, the axe head being used by a man fell into the water. Elisha showed his sensitivity, and God showed His care and concern for one individual’s predicament. The loss may seem insignificant, but to the man it was very important. Miraculously God caused the borrowed iron axe head to float so it could be retrieved. Truly He cares about our every concern.

God used Elisha as Israel’s deliverer by helping to prevent many raids by the Arameans. When it was discovered that Elisha was the one who warned the Israelites, the Arameans sent a band of raiders to get him. Elisha had no fear, for as a mature spiritual believer having deep fellowship with God, he had the spiritual insight to see the army of the Lord around him to protect him (Psalm 34:7). His servant, however, still needed to grow in the Lord, for he could not perceive this and was in fear until his spiritual eyes were opened through Elisha’s prayer. Then he saw the mighty power of the Lord. It was clear to all that God had led the raiders into Samaria; therefore, they were actually the Lord’s captives, and upon Elisha’s instructions they were treated generously and mercifully.

This act of mercy caused the raids to stop for a time, but then the king of Aram waged a more conventional warfare upon the capital city of Samaria in the form of a siege. The lack of food led to great inflation: an unclean donkey’s head was normally not eaten, and bird droppings for fuel sold for exorbitant prices (6:27). The starvation even led to the point of insanity which, out of desperation, caused cannibalism (6:28; Leviticus 26:29; Deuteronomy 28:15, 53). Upon hearing of this, the king was greatly distressed, but rather than going to Elisha to seek deliverance from the Lord, he blamed him. Elisha predicted that within one day the whole situation would be totally turned around. This seemed impossible; therefore, the royal official mocked Elisha when he spoke of this great deliverance. That mocker was judged to die without tasting the deliverance of the Lord as a sign of the truth of Elisha.

Four lepers, outcasts because of the nature of their unclean disease, would be the first to taste the salvation of the Lord. They had nothing to lose, so they risked their lives by going to the camp of the Arameans. It was truly a marvelous and unusual miracle. God did not send blindness nor an angel of destruction, but He caused the army to hear the noise of a great approaching army. This brought great confusion upon the enemy, for they imagined that the Hittites from the north and the Egyptians from the far south were coming to aid Israel in an attack against them. They fled, leaving all their possessions behind.

Meanwhile, we see the providence of God at work for the salvation of His people. God used these four despised lepers to be the carriers of this good news to the city (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). While they were eating and hiding the goods, their consciences began to bother them, for they knew that the townspeople were starving. Out of love and concern for the dying, they unselfishly went in unity to tell the wonderful news of the enemy's flight. This news of freedom from oppression and abundance would bring life to all, casting away their fear of death. These lepers first experienced the satisfaction and joy, then they shared it. In such a way God was glorified.

We have even greater news to share with a dying world. It is the greatest news of all: the salvation, deliverance, satisfaction, joy, and freedom through the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings us from death unto life. Let us, like the lepers, bring the news of life to those who are oppressed by the enemy, Satan, that all may taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8). If we are not sharing this good news, it is disobedience to the great commission of Jesus and therefore is sin. We, like the lepers, must consider the danger of not telling the good news (7:9; Ezekiel 33:8). Therefore, let us work while it is still day (John 9:4)!

Prayer

O mighty God, Your Word tells us that Your angel encamps around about them that fear You. We are in awe before You when we read about Your Works for Israel. Please grant Your protection and provision today.