

THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA (II Kings 6:24-7:20)

Parts: Narrator
woman
King of Israel, king's officer, king's messenger
Elisha
elders
lepers (1 & 2)
gatekeepers (1 & 2)

Narrator:

And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. 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. Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him.

Woman:

"Help, my lord, O king!"

King of Israel:

"If Yehowah does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress? What is troubling you?"

Woman:

"This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' 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."

King of Israel (tears his clothes, underneath he has sackcloth on):

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

Narrator:

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 spoke to the elders.

Elisha:

"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?"

Messenger *(comes to door, can't get in, stands and waits. King and officer arrive just after him. The elders open the door to the king and his men.)*

King of Israel:

"Surely this calamity is from Yehowah; why should I wait for Yehowah any longer?"

Elisha:

"Hear the word of Yehowah. Thus says Yehowah: `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.'"

Officer:

"Look, if Yehowah would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?"

Elisha:

"In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

Narrator:

Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they spoke to one another.

First Leper:

"Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say, `We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we will die there. And if we sit here, we will die also."

Second Leper:

Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we will live; and if they kill us, we will only die anyway."

Narrator:

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. For Yehowah 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. So 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 back and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it.

First Leper:

"We are not doing what is 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."

(Go back to city)

Second Leper *(calls to the gatekeepers):*

"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."

Gatekeeper 1 *(to Gatekeeper 2):*

"Go tell the king's household!"

Gatekeeper 2 *(goes to king):*

"O King, the Syrians are gone!"

King of Israel:

"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.'"

Officer:

"Please, let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city.... Let us send them and see."

King of Israel:

"Very well."

Narrator:

Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army.

King of Israel:

"Go and see."

Narrator:

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.

Messenger:

"O King, it is true. The Syrians have gone."

King of Israel (to officer):

"Go, take charge of the gate."

Narrator:

Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians.... And the people trampled the officer in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said.... 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." Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, if Yehowah 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." And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate and he died.

(The End)