

## **260204-4 2Kings 6, 24-7, 20, Israel's Miraculous Deliverance from the Syrian Siege—CThurman**

Here is another miracle by the prophet Elisha. Instantly, overnight, without Israel lifting a finger, they go from what is probably upwards three years of famine and a Syrian siege to having food and wealth in abundance.

In this present text there is a picture of the salvation of sinners as well as the salvation of an unregenerate nation in the future, the nation of Israel. Here the northern kingdom has forsaken God, showing themselves to be utterly depraved, following after the gods of the nations. It is certainly a time of great famine, worse, a true spiritual famine, and they are in a siege by their arch enemy, the Syrians. But the LORD alone, in His love and faithfulness works a miracle of almost unparalleled deliverance and restoration. Being unworthy of the least of His mercies the LORD, in a single *night*, while the people lay without hope and in the darkness of night, dispels the strong man and restores His own, in an instant, from a long and devastating famine. And of all of the things, He reveals His miracle-working power to the least of men, to four leprous men, the unclean outcasts, who in turn have the privilege of carrying the *good news* back to their own people. This reminds me very much of the demoniac of Gadara, separated from society, possessed by a legion of demons, who at Christ's command was instantly delivered from darkness and into the marvelous light of Christ. And Christ commanded him to do what we see these four leprous men do, which was to publish the good news to the whole city.

*Lu 8:39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.*

By a general overview of the text before us we can glean at least that much. But now, let's consider the history and the facts of this event.

**24 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.  
(the city of)**

‘And here the question naturally arises why such Divine interpositions should have been made on behalf of Israel. The answer is not difficult, and it will throw light upon the course of the history. Evidently, it was a period of comparative indecision, before the final attitude of the nation towards Jehovah was taken, and with it the ultimate fate of Israel decided. Active hostility to the prophet as God’s representative and to the worship of Jehovah had creased, and there were even tokens for good and of seeming return to the Lord. But, as event soon showed, there was not any real repentance, and what to a superficial observer might seem the beginning of a calm was only a lull before the storm. This interval of indecision, or token of pending decision, must be taken into account. The presence of the prophet in Israel meant the final call of God to Israel, and the possibility of national repentance and forgiveness. Every special interposition, such as those we have described, was an emphatic attestation of Elisha’s mission, and hence of his message; and every deliverance indicated how truly and easily God could help and deliver His people, if only that were in them towards which the presence of the prophet pointed. And the more minute and apparently unimportant the occasions for such interposition and deliverance were, the more strikingly would all this appear. It is with such thoughts in our minds that we must study the history of the siege and miraculous relief of Samaria.’ *Old Testament Bible History*, Alfred Edersheim, p.471, Assoc. Publishers & Authors Inc.

גָּדוֹל, adj.

**25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it,**  
large, mighty enclosed,  
assaulted, beset,  
**until an ass’s head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver,**  
eighty

*beseiged*, Qal part. of the verb צוּר, *tsoor* tss. to besiege 21, lay siege 3, distress 3, bind 2, adversaries 1, assault 1, bags 1, beset 1, cast 1, fashioned 1, fortify 1, inclose 1, bind up 1; 38

It the LORD that gives and takes away. He causes the ground to bring forth abundantly, and He also bring the famine. That’s right, the LORD does all of this.

*Ge.41.25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: GOD HATH SHEWED PHARAOH WHAT HE IS ABOUT TO DO. (By bringing 7 yrs. of plenty and 7 years of famine. This is all by the LORD.)*

...

*32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because THE THING (FAMINE) IS ESTABLISHED BY GOD, AND GOD WILL SHORTLY BRING IT TO PASS.*

Of this time the Psalmist wrote:

*Ps.105.16 Moreover HE CALLED FOR A FAMINE upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.*

*Lev.26.26 And WHEN I HAVE BROKEN THE STAFF OF YOUR BREAD, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.*

*2Sa 21:1 Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.*

*2Ki 8:1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for THE LORD HATH CALLED FOR A FAMINE; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.*

And it appears that the king of Syria thought this was an opportune time to attack the northern kingdom. This is how the enemy works, whether it is one nation against another nation, or a person against another person, or spiritual wickedness in high places against the children of God. The preferred time to war against others is when defenses are at their lowest.

Notice that there is not recorded anywhere in this episode that the king or the general populace in the city prayed for deliverance. As we can see by

the following account of two women, that they resorted to their own means of preservation.

The siege is said to have been about 3 yrs. (*A class-Book of Old Testament History*, G. F. Maclear, p. 414, Eerdmans Publishers, 8<sup>th</sup> Printing 1971)

The phrase *piece of silver*, when compared to the Septuagint (Greek OT Scriptures) at Ge.20.16 (διδραχμα), and 23.16 (διδραχμα αργυριου) would be equivalent to one shekel weight.

Ge.20.16, Hebrew, [*pieces*] of silver, כֶּסֶף.

Ge.23.16, Hebrew, *shekels of silver*, שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף.

Silver at today's valuation would put the value of a shekel at \$6.40. So, the head of a donkey would sell today for \$512.00.

The price for this head of a donkey is clearly outrageous. But it was equally outrageous that the children of Israel would eat this at all being that it is an unclean animal. Donkeys are unclean animals by the law of Moses because they do not have a cloven or split hoof. (i.e., Le.11.2-8)

**and the fourth part of a <sup>קב</sup>cab of <sup>דביון</sup>dove's dung for five pieces of silver.**  
quart (so ½ pint)

*dove's dung*, noun, only this once and in the plural form דביון, div-yōhn'

Again, silver at today's valuation would mean that a ½ pint of dove's dung would sell for about \$32.00

In desperate circumstances people will resort to extreme measures. The asses head as well as the dove's dung appears to be with reference to what is consumed for food. Josephus was of the mind that this meant that the dung was used in the place of salt.

'... the Hebrews bought a sextary of dove's dung, instead of salt, for five pieces of silver.' *The Works of Josephus*, Translated by William Whinston, ch. iv, p.199, Henrickson Publishers, Third Printing 1982

Gill refers to other Jewish sources which state that the dung was used as fuel for cooking, or as fertilizer to help the soils to be more productive, or that dove's dung was another term referring to lentils or chickpeas.

So, Edersheim writes, 'and a "cab of doves' dung" – used when dried as a material for firing – for five pieces of silver ...' *Old Testament Bible History*, Alfred Edersheim, p.472, Assoc. Publishers & Authors Inc.

Listen, as we read on into this text it will not be a stretch of the imagination to say that *dove's dung* was eaten for food. Not only was this a time of great famine but the city was also under siege of the Syrians. People eat and drink strange things under normal circumstances, and especially so in times of great wealth.

Some people drink coffee made from coffee berries that are gathered from the excrement of a civet, a racoon/cat looking mammal. This coffee is called Kopi Luwak, and it sells for up to \$35.00 per ounce (\$560.00 per lb.). Others will eat hog headcheese that sells for 6-10.00 per lb. It is to be expected that in times of need that there will be no waste of anything that might be edible. THE MAJOR POINT HERE IS THAT THE LORD FOREWARNED ISRAEL THAT HE WOULD JUDGE THEM SEVERELY FOR THEIR SINS, AND THAT THEY WOULD IN THAT FALL TO SOME OF THE MOST DEPRAVED ACTS IN HUMANITY AS THEY FORSOOK THE LORD AND BRAKE THEIR COVENANT WITH HIM.

In times of spiritual famine the children of God do as the world does. It's sad because this is something that they bring upon themselves. By choosing not to know the word of God, or for choosing to walk in disobedience to the things that they know, they reap a manifold harvest of trouble. The LORD is not mocked, ... *the way of transgressors is hard.* (Pr 13:15)

What the Israelites are suffering here is on account of their unfaithfulness to keep the covenant to which they bound themselves at the time of the giving of the Law at Sinai. There were consequences for disobedience.

*Deu.28.1 ¶ And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that THE LORD THY GOD WILL SET THEE ON HIGH ABOVE ALL NATIONS OF THE EARTH: (and you will receive blessing upon blessing upon blessing ...*

...

*15 ¶ BUT it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:*

...

*50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:*

*51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine (is the female of the bovine, cows, ox), or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.*

*52 And HE SHALL BESIEGE THEE IN ALL THY GATES, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and HE SHALL BESIEGE THEE IN ALL THY GATES THROUGHOUT ALL THY LAND, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.*

*53 And THOU SHALT EAT THE FRUIT OF THINE OWN BODY, THE FLESH OF THY SONS AND OF THY DAUGHTERS, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, IN THE SIEGE, AND IN THE STRAITNESS (מַצְרִיקָה, mah-tsook', noun, distress, anguish), WHEREWITH THINE ENEMIES SHALL DISTRESS (צָרָה, tsook, verb oppress, press) THEE: (see also Le.26.26-29, cited at v.29),*

*54 So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave ... (In this predicament they'll do what they never thought was possible.)*

So, judgments for sin from the LORD by famine and siege bring out the worst in men.

**26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall,**

‘... probably to encourage as well as to inspect the defenders of the city, and to observe the movements of the enemy, he was arrested by the cry for help of a frenzied woman.’ *ibid*, p.472

**there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.**

**27 And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of**

**the <sup>גֶרֶן</sup> barnfloor, or out of the <sup>יֵקֶב</sup> winepress?**  
threshingfloor                      wine vats

If the LORD does not help you how can I (even I have nothing in the barnfloor or winepress)? But he asks the woman what it is that is troubling her.

**28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered,**

... to the king as if it what concerned her would be understood as was normal.

**This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may <sup>אָכַל, Qal fut.</sup> eat**  
devour, consume, (cannibalism)  
**him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow.**

The woman that suggests eating their children has either of three things in mind. First, she will do as she says, and eat the other woman’s child first and then hers. Second, she plans for the other woman to allow her son to be killed and eaten, but then hide hers to keep alive. Or, third, she plans for the other woman to allow her son to be killed and eaten, and then save her son so that she might eat him by herself. Whatever the case, at the least, if the woman that conjured up this hideous plan had genuinely meant to do this, then she should have offered her child up first as a gesture of sincerity.

בָּשַׁל, Piel (intensive act.) fut.

**29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto**  
seethed

**her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she**  
day after

הִתְחַבֵּא, Hiphil fut.

**hath hid her son.**  
'secreted'

So, what the LORD said the children of Israel would do after breaking covenant with Him, came to pass, as we just read above in Deu.28.53. See this also in Lev.

*Le.26.26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.  
27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;  
28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.  
29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.*

Had these two women waited only two more days; just two days. But they didn't. And the joy that there should have been at the lifting of the famine and siege is marred by their tragic action. And there's no undoing this.

**30 And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman,**  
matter

**that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people**  
tore garments

**looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.**

Notice that king Jehoram wore sackcloth under his royal garments. My opinion is that he thinks that to wear sackcloth publicly would unduly trouble the people and perhaps cause a panic. But the truth is, this is exactly what the people needed to see. They needed to see a king that would humble himself before the LORD for his sin. But instead he chooses to wear the sackcloth *under* his royal garments, which, again in my opinion, is much like one having a talisman or good luck charm. Just in case, perhaps the LORD or some god will help us. But Jehoram doesn't perceive idolatry and disobedience to the law of God as sin. Had he, he would have publicly denounced the sins of his father, the late king Ahab, and his mother Jezebel.

יָסַף

**31 Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of**  
add

עָמַד, Qal fut.

**Shaphat shall stand on him this day.**

continue, endure

'... because he [Elijah] did not pray to God to provide them some exit and way to escape out of the miseries with which they were surrounded ...' *The Works of Josephus*, Translated by William Whiston, p. 200, Henrickson Publishers, Third Printing 1982

'King Joram connected the straits of Samaria with the prophet Elisha, – either they were due to his direct agency, or else to his failure to make intercession for Israel. Such ignorance of the spiritual aspect of God's dealings, even when they are recognised, together with an unhumiliated state of heart, unwillingness to return to God, and the ascription of the evils befalling us to the opposite of their true cause, are only too common in that sorrow which Holy Scripture characterises as "of the world," and working "death."

...

'A man experiences the bitter consequences of his sinful ways, and he makes sincere, though only outward, repentance of them. But the evils consequent upon his past do not cease; perhaps, on the contrary, almost seem to increase, and he turns not within himself, for humiliation, but

without, to what he supposes to be the causes of his misfortunes, perhaps often those very things which are intended ultimately to bring spiritual blessing to him." *Old Testament Bible History*, Alfred Edersheim, pp.472, 473, Assoc. Publishers & Authors Inc.

Jehoram, king of Israel, lays the blame for this famine and the siege on the prophet of the LORD, instead of stopping to consider that this might be his fault. Undoubtedly, he couldn't reconcile how the prophet of the LORD could cleanse a man, a prince of the Syrian army, of his leprosy, and also lead an entire army captive to his doorstep and then command the king to feed them and let them return home "scot-free." To him it must have looked like Elisha was a better prophet for Syrian than for Israel. But he never thought that it was his disobedience that moved the LORD to become his enemy.

*1Sa.28.16 Then said Samuel (to king Saul), Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and IS BECOME THINE ENEMY?*

All of this trouble could have been turned away by one simple, genuine act of repentance. Instead, the king thinks that the execution of Elisha is the answer.

For Jehoram to be able to reach out to Elisha so soon must mean that he was living in this city and suffering alongside of the Israelites during this time of famine and siege by Syria. It is true that many times, when trouble comes to an area and there are children of God there, they, more often than not, are called upon to endure the same things, but with the grace of God to help them to endure through it. (Mt.10.22)

Think of the famine in the days of Abraham; again in the days Jacob and his sons; of the suffering of Naomi when the famine hit in Ammon; of the Babylonian invasion into Israel, of Jeremiah's suffering during this time, and of what Daniel and his close friends suffered after being captured and led off to Babylon for seventy years; of the suffering of the saints of the churches by a long famine in the Acts

account; again, of the saints suffering at the hand of the man of Sin when he comes; etc., etc., etc.

יָשַׁב, Qal part.

**32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him;**  
dwelt remained, tarried

What were they doing in light of this long famine and siege? They were doing the only thing, and the best thing that they could do in these circumstances – waiting on the LORD. (See *Gleanings from Elisha, His Life & Miracles*, A. W. Pink, p.191, Moody Press)

*Ps.27.7 ¶ Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.*

*8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.*

*9 Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.*

*10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.*

*11 Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*

*12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

*13 I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*

*14 WAIT ON THE LORD: BE OF GOOD COURAGE, AND HE SHALL STRENGTHEN THINE HEART: WAIT, I SAY, ON THE LORD.*

**and the king sent a man from before** מִלְּפָנָיו **him: but ere**  
his face or presence before, not yet

*from before him* מִלְּפָנָיו, the pl. noun, פָּנִים, pah-neem', with the prefixed מ, from, and ל, for, to, before.

before, בְּטָרֵם, טָרֵם, a part. with or without the prefixed ב, is tss.  
before, ere, not yet.

**the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a**

**murderer**

manslayer (referring to Ahab, who was complicit  
in the death of Naboth, 1Ki.21.19)

סִוֵּר, Hiphil infin.

**hath sent to take away mine**

*son of a murderer*, Piel (intensive act.) part. of the verb רָצַח, rah-  
tzach', tss. slayer, manslayer, etc.

**head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast**  
close thrust, force him

*hold ... fast*, Qal pret. of the verb לָחַץ, lah-chats', tss. to oppress 13,  
afflict 1, crushed 1, fast 1, forced 1, oppressors 1, thrust 1; 19.

**at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?**  
(king Jehoram) after

It is true that the king acted rashly to set out to execute Elisha, but that he follows after the messenger is thought by some that he had a change of heart to prevent his messenger from slaying Elisha. I can't say either way, but it seems to me that when the king says in the next verse *what should I wait for the LORD any longer?* that the implication is that Elisha might have prophesied saying to hold fast, the LORD shall deliver Israel.

**33 And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down**  
(Elisha) (elders)

**unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD;**  
bad (famine & siege) from

**what should I wait for the LORD any longer?**

Either this is the messenger delivering the words of the king's sentiment, or the king has since arrived and so speaks for himself. '... I am tired of waiting for the LORD to lift this famine.' Matthew Poole at this verse writes:

*'This evil; this dreadful famine, which is now so extreme that women are forced to eat their own children. Is of the Lord; he hath inflicted it, and (for aught that I see) he will not remove it. [Poole states ...] Thus he lays all the blame upon God, not, as he ought, upon his own and his mother's wickedness, which provoked God, who doth not willingly afflict, to send this heavy judgment upon him. What should I wait for the Lord any longer? thou biddest me wait upon God for help; but I perceive I may wait long enough before deliverance comes; I am weary with waiting, I can wait no longer.'* Matthew Poole *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1, p.730, MacDonald Publishing Co.

## Chapter 7

**1 ¶ Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel,**

*measure, מֶאָסָה, seh-ah', noun tss. measure 9.*

If a measure equals a 1/3 of an ephah it would equal about 2 gals. dry weight of flour, or two standard 5# bags of flour, plus a few extra cups. And that would sell for a shekel, or in today's valuation, \$6.40 today. A little perspective, today ten pounds of all-purpose flour costs about \$7-10.00 in a time of plenty and peace.

**and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.**

And so, better than 20# of barley would be priced at \$6.40 by this time tomorrow. Today that amount of barley grain costs about \$25.00+.

Obviously, this flour and grain will be the spoils of the Syrian camp.



*21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?*

*22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, IF THE THING FOLLOW NOT, NOR COME TO PASS, THAT IS THE THING WHICH THE LORD HATH NOT SPOKEN, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*

Also consider that ...

*Deu.13.1 ¶ If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,*

*2 And THE SIGN OR THE WONDER COME TO PASS, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;*

*3 THOU SHALT NOT HEARKEN UNTO THE WORDS OF THAT PROPHET, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

**3 ¶ And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate:**

These four leprous were not allowed to come into the city.

*Le.14.45 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.*

*46 All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.*

The same is said of the lepers in Nu.5.1-4. See the separation of king Uzziah after he was smitten of the LORD with leprosy in 2Ki.15.15.5; 2Chr.26.21. In the NT, there are the ten lepers that stood afar off from the village to which the Lord Jesus came begging Him to have mercy on Him and cleanse them of their disease. (Lk.17.12)

They were at the entrance to the city probably every day, begging for food from everyone they could as they went into the city.





**they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence**  
took, bare from there

**silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and**  
returned

**entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.**

**9 Then they said one to another, We do not well:**  
each man to his neighbor are not doing right

**this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace:**  
are keeping silent

*tidings*, בְּשׂוּרָה, noun tss. *tidings, reward for tidings, good tidings*; see the verb form, בָּשַׂר, tss. *to give tidings, to show forth, to publish, to be a messenger, to preach*.

*hold our peace*, Hiphil (causative act.) part. of the verb חָשַׁח, *chah-shah'*, tss. *to hold ... peace 9, still 4, silence 2, silent 1; 16*.

**if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us:**  
wait light of morning fault, sin find

*tarry*, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the verb חָכַח, *chah-kah'*, tss. *to wait 11, tarry 2, long 1; 14*.

*mischief*, עֲוֹן, noun, tss. *iniquity 220, punishment 5, fault 2, Iniquities + דָּבָר 1, mischief 1, sin 1; 230*.

**now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.**  
declare, report Hiphil fut. בית house

**10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city:**  
(the four lepers) doorkeeper  
(i.e., gate-keeper)

*porter, שוֹעֵר, shoh-[g]ehr', tss. porter 35, doorkeeper 2; 37.*

נָגַד, Hiphil fut.

**and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the**  
declared, reported droves, company

**and they told them** – ‘Them’ refers back to ‘they’. In other words, they told for themselves, saying (to the gatekeeper) ...

**Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man,**  
sound

**but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.**

**11 And he called the porters; and they**  
(gatekeeper) (of the king’s house)

**told it to the king’s house within.**  
declared, reported inside (the walls to his palace)

**12 ¶ And the king arose in the night,**

... suspicious of the report that he heard, and thought it was instead a ploy to draw them out of the city in order to take them captive.

**and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have**  
declare (to) (are)

**done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are**  
(doing, in English idiom) are hungerbitten

**they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When**  
departed from

**they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get**  
depart from (over) take enter

**into the city.**

*shall catch*, Qal fut. of the verb שָׁפַח, tah-phas', tss. to take 27, taken 12, handle 8, hold 8, catch 4, surprised 2, misc 4; 65.

This shows how the king of Israel so lightly regarded the words of the LORD through His servant Elisha. He should have known this was not a Syrian ploy to capture him and the people of the city. Rather, this was the fulfillment of the word of God.

**13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it:**

In other words, the horses available to them are as the multitudes of Israel that have dwindled down to only a few because of the famine (they have died).

**behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the**  
(the horses which have died)

**Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.**

In other words, let us take the last few horses we have left to verify the report which these four lepers have made. As the lepers reason at the beginning, 'What's the worst that can happen? As things are presently, if we remain here we die, and if we go to the camp of the Syrians we might die, but we might live too.

**14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after**  
(and not five)  
**the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.**

In practical terms, of the five horses the king allows for two to be used to verify the account given by the four lepers. If the account is not true then at the least they have 3 horses remaining that they could eat for food.

**15 And they went after them unto <sup>יְרֵד</sup> Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of**  
(the plain of)

<sup>בְּגָד</sup> <sup>כְּלֵי</sup>, noun <sup>הָפִיז</sup>, Qal infin.  
**garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste.**  
apparel instruments, off hasting  
weapons

This sounds like the two, which the king sent out to verify the report of the lepers, came upon the camp and followed a trail of the things that the Syrians cast off as they fled for their lives, which trail led to the plain of Jordan.

**And the messengers returned, and <sup>אָמַר</sup> told the king.**  
declared, reported

**16 And the people went out, and <sup>אָסְפוּ</sup> spoiled the tents of the Syrians.**  
gathered, robbed

*spoiled*, Qal fut. of the verb <sup>אָסַף</sup>, bah-zaz', tss. to spoil 9, prey 9, spoiled 6, rob 6, take 6, take away 2, caught 1, gathering 1, robbers 1, took 1, utterly 1; 43

<sup>שֶׁאָוָה</sup>, she-aw', noun  
**So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.**

<sup>פָּקַד</sup>, pah-qad', Hiphil pret.  
**17 And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he**  
committed, counted captain

**leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people**  
stayed, relied, rested – be over –

***trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said,***  
tread him under foot (Elisha)

***who spake when the king came down to him.***

***18 And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, 'Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria:'***

***19 And that lord answered the man of God, and said, 'Now, behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be?'***

(open)

***And he said, 'Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.'***

***20 And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate,***

—was—

***and he died.***

In this the LORD has shown Himself faithful to His people, whether they are faithful or not. Now, this of course concerns the natural, chosen people of God. God is not at all dealing with the Gentiles like this. But He is with the nation as a whole. He is faithful to judge the nation when it sins against Him, and He is faithful to bless it when it does right. This is the history of national Israel. The nation in either state has proved that the LORD is faithful! He said from the beginning that He would judge them for apostacy and idolatrous practices, and He is. That's what we see. And He said He would bless and deliver them from their enemies for obedience, and He is.

*'No words of God's shall fall to the ground; His threatenings, equally with His promises, are infallibly certain of fulfillment!' Gleanings from Elisha, His Life & Miracles, Arthur W. Pink, p.196. Moody Press*

In this instance with the Syrians waging war against Israel, there must have been a few in the nation that acknowledged their sin, repented, and in turn cried out to God. They are what is called the remnant, which is a small number of the true and spiritual seed of Abraham. He heard THEIR cry, and for the remnant He turned to deliver them from a lengthy famine and Syrian siege.