

## THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN ARE OPEN

**TEXT: II KINGS 7:1-20**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. We often sing,  
*The windows of heaven are open,  
The blessings are falling tonight;  
There's joy, joy, joy in my heart,  
Since Jesus made everything right...*
2. The words are Scriptural. Genesis 7:11 says that the LORD opened the windows of heaven back in Noah's day – “all the fountains of the great deep (were) broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”
3. Malachi 3:10 says, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”
4. And here in II Kings 7:2, the haughty unbelieving lord said to Elisha the prophet, “Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?” (cf. II Kings 7:19).
5. Before we see how the LORD opened the windows of heaven, let us first consider the background to the story. Benhadad, the king of Syria, had besieged Samaria, the capital city of Israel (6:24), and this resulted in a great famine, and some Israelites were even resorting to cannibalism (6:25-29).
6. King Jehoram, the king of Israel, was a wicked man. Elisha referred to him as, “this son of a murderer” (6:32), that is, he was the son of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.
7. Just as his parents had done, the king placed all the blame for the crisis on Elisha the prophet (6:30, 31).
8. Then the king sent a messenger to Elisha (6:32), and followed on after him – “is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?” (6:32b).
9. It is not clear who said, “Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?” (6:33). It may have been the messenger, but it sounds like it may have been the king himself.

- I. THE PROMISE FROM GOD (7:1)
- II. THE HAUGHTY LORD'S RESPONSE (7:2)
- III. THE FOUR DESPERATE LEPERS (7:3-5)
- IV. THEIR WONDROUS DISCOVERY (7:6-8)

- V. THE DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS (7:9-15)
- VI. THE PROMISE FULFILLED (7:16-18)
- VII. THE DEATH OF THE HAUGHTY LORD (7:19, 20)

## I. THE PROMISE FROM GOD (7:1)

1. Elisha the prophet promised that within 24 hours, the famine would be over, and a whole measure of fine flour would be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria (7:1).
2. That is an amazing prediction when you consider that the famine was so severe that people were paying eighty pieces of silver for an ass's head (6:25).
3. Things were so bad that people were eating dove's dung (6:25).
4. Things were so bad that people were starving to death.
5. Things were so bad that people were boiling one another's children, and resorting to cannibalism.
6. So terrible was the famine that when Elisha made his prediction, it was greeted with open ridicule by the king's unbelieving officer (7:2).

## II. THE HAUGHTY LORD'S RESPONSE (7:2)

1. This haughty lord ("on whose hand the king leaned") did not believe Elisha (7:2). He did not believe the LORD because the message was not Elisha's message. Elisha said, "Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD..." (7:1).
2. People often disagree with preachers, but their real problem is that they do not believe God! We are just preaching the Bible.
3. The LORD has many different ways to open the windows of heaven (7:2). Many times, God wants to open up the windows of heaven but we miss out because of our unbelief.
4. Matthew 13:58 says, "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."
5. Psalm 78:41 says, "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel."
6. Referring to our text, F.B. Meyer said, "Unbelief will shut us out of the enjoyment of the blessings of the Gospel. They may be all around us, so that we can see them with our eyes, and yet not eat thereof."

7. The haughty lord did not believe the promise of God (7:2), and Elisha told him, “Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof” (7:2b).
8. He would see the promise fulfilled, but he would not enjoy it.

### **III. THE FOUR DESPERATE LEPERS (7:3-5)**

1. After Elisha’s prophecy, the scene moves to four leprous men at the entering in of the gate of the city (7:3). According to the law of Moses, they had to stay outside the gates.
2. According to Leviticus 13:46, lepers were defiled and unclean, and had to be isolated and dwell “outside the camp.”
3. Nobody told these lepers about Elisha’s incredible promise of food. They were discussing their desperate situation and trying to decide what to do.
4. If they went into the city, “the famine is in the city,” and they would die there (7:3, 4).
5. On the other hand, if they continued to sit by the gate, they would die there.
6. So, they decided: “Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die” (7:4).
7. They were thinking it would probably be better to die quickly by the sword than to slowly starve to death.
8. “And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians...” (7:5).

### **IV. THEIR WONDROUS DISCOVERY (7:6-8)**

1. The four lepers waited until twilight to go unto the camp of the Syrians, and when they got there they were surprised to discover that “there was no man there” (7:5).
2. The Syrian soldiers must have just recently left because verse 7 says, “they arose and fled in the twilight.” The Lord had miraculously intervened, though the lepers knew nothing about it (7:6, 7).
3. Verse 7 says the Syrians panicked and fled quickly. Proverbs 28:1 says, “The wicked flee when no man pursueth.”
4. The Syrian soldiers imagined that the Israelites had hired Hittite and Egyptian mercenaries (7:6, 7). Hiring mercenaries was not unusual in those days. Second Samuel 10:6 says that when the Ammonites saw that “they

stank before David,” the Ammonites hired Syrian mercenaries, “twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men.”

5. That is a total of 33,000 Syrian mercenaries.
6. When the Syrian soldiers ran, they left everything behind (7:6, 7).
7. Therefore, when the lepers walked through the camp, they found plenty of food, as well as silver, and gold, and raiment (7:8).
8. Verse 15 says that the Syrians ran all the way to the Jordan River, which was about 25 miles away. And as they ran, they dropped their garments and vessels along the way.

#### **V. THE DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS (7:9-15)**

1. The hungry lepers did eat and drink, and then they carried away the Syrian silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it. Then they came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it (7:8).
2. Then they said one to another, “We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace (we are silent) ...” (7:9).
3. They realized that they had a responsibility to go and tell others about the “good tidings” (7:9). This is a very important lesson for us. The word “gospel” literally means, “good tidings.”
4. The interpretation is simple enough – these lepers realized that they had a responsibility to go and tell others about the “good tidings” (7:9).
5. The application is also simple enough – those of us who have been saved by the grace of God have a responsibility to go and tell others about the “good tidings” (7:9), the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.
6. Jesus has commanded us – “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15, 16).
7. We need to put the **GO** in the **GOSPEL**.
8. If we keep it to ourselves, and if we don’t share the Gospel with others, then “we do not well,” and “some mischief will come upon us” (II Kings 7:9).
9. The haughty lord who rejected the good news and refused to believe it represents those who reject the gospel. “But he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16; cf. II Kings 7:17-20).
10. A.C. Gaebelien wrote, “The repetition at the close of this chapter of the words of the unbeliever recorded in the beginning of this story, is of solemn meaning. God is true to His Word, the Word which promises life to all who believe and which threatens eternal punishment to all who believe not. ‘He that believeth on the Son

hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”” (*Gaebelein's Annotated Bible*).

10. Not only was the haughty lord an unbeliever, but so was King Jehoram. The Bible says that he wasn't as wicked as his father King Ahab or his mother Queen Jezebel, but nevertheless he was an unbeliever.
11. When the lepers brought their report, the king never considered that this could be the way Elisha's prophecy would be fulfilled (7:10-12).
12. "So they came and called unto the porter (gatekeeper, guard) of the city..." (7:10).
13. One of the king's servants had a good idea. He suggested that they let several men take five of the remaining horses that were left in the city, and go check out the surrounding area (7:13).
14. If it were indeed a trick, and they were to get killed by the Syrians, it really didn't matter since everyone in Samaria was starving to death anyway.
15. "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."
16. Instead of five horses, the king let him have only two chariots with horses, telling him, "Go and see" (7:14).
17. The Syrians had fled 25 miles, from Samaria toward the Jordan River, scattering their garments and vessels along the way. "And the messengers returned, and told the king" (7:15).

## **VI. THE PROMISE FULFILLED (7:16-18)**

1. "According to the word of the Lord" (7:16). It can be very dangerous to question the Word of God (7:16, 17).
2. The haughty lord didn't believe Elisha, but he was really doubting God (7:1, 2; cf. 16-18).
3. Warren Wiersbe said, "Jesus has promised to come again, but in these last days, people are questioning and even denying that promise. Fulfilling what Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3, the scoffers *have* now come and are asking, 'Where is the *promise* of his coming?' The church is like those four lepers: We have the good news of salvation and we must not keep it to ourselves. If people don't believe the Word of the Lord, they won't be ready for His coming; but if we don't give them the message, they can't be ready for His coming. What will *we* say when *we* meet the Lord?" (*The Bible Exposition Commentary*).
4. The promise was fulfilled exactly as Elisha said – the windows of heaven were opened, and the haughty lord saw it but did not live long enough to enjoy it (7:2, 19, 20).

## VIII. THE DEATH OF THE HAUGHTY LORD (7:19, 20)

1. It happened according to the word of the Lord. Elisha said, “Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof” (7:2; cf. 7:17-20).
2. As the hungry and excited mob rushed out the gate to get the food and other valuables, they trampled the haughty lord to death (7:20).
3. The repetition at the close of this chapter of the words of the haughty lord recorded in the beginning of the chapter story, is very significant. Repetition is often used in Scripture for emphasis, or to drive home a point.
4. Jesus said in John 8:24, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”
5. The haughty lord did not believe, and so he died in his sins.
6. God is true to His Word. The Word of God promises life to all who believe. And the Word of God warns of eternal punishment to all who refuse to believe.
7. The haughty unbelieving lord perished, a warning that he that believeth not must die in his sins.
8. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

### CONCLUSION:

1. Alexander Maclaren was a 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist pastor. For many years, he pastored a church in Manchester, England. While preaching this text to his congregation, he said this: “I take this congregation as a fair average representative of the ordinary habitudes of professing Christians of this generation. How many men and women there are sitting in these pews, who, if I asked them the question, would say that they were Christians? and what proportion of these, if I asked them the further question, ‘Did you ever tell anybody anything about Jesus Christ?’ would say, ‘No’?”
2. Allow me to say something similar. I take this congregation as a fair average (or perhaps even better than average) representative of professing Christians of our generation. How many men and women sitting here now, who, if I asked them the question, would say that they were Christians? and what proportion of these, if I asked them the further question, ‘Did you ever tell anybody anything about Jesus Christ?’ would say, ‘No’?”
3. My invitation is twofold: sinners need to be saved. And Christians need to proclaim the Gospel to others.