

2Kings 6:24–7:20

The King, the Word, and God's Astonishing Power and Mercy

**Wednesday, November 23, 2022 • Read 2Kings 6:24–7:20**

Questions from the Scripture text: Who gathered whom in v24? How many of them? Where did he go to do what? What did this cause in the city of Samaria (v25)? What was sold for how much money? What else for how much? Where was the king of Israel in v26? Who cries to him for what? Whom does he say isn't helping (v27)? What question does he ask in such a case? What two places will give no help without the Lord? What follow-up question does he ask in v28? What situation does she describe in v29? How does the king respond to this in v30? What do the people see there under his clothes? What does this mean he had been doing? Now what does he swear to do (v31)? Where was Elisha (v32)? Who was with him? What does he ask the elders? When? What does he say to do when the messenger does arrive? Who arrives in v33? Where does the king say the calamity is from? What does he ask? What does Elisha tell him to do at the beginning of 7:1? What does Yahweh say? Whose trusty officer answer in v2? What does he ask? What does Elisha say to that officer? To whom does v3 introduce us now? Where were they? What do they ask each other? What would happen to them in the city (v4)? What would happen to them in the gate? Where do they decide to go instead? When do they go (v5)? What surprise do they find? What had happened (v6)? What had the Syrian's said to one another? Why was their situation even more dire? What had they done in v7? In what condition did they leave their camp? What do the lepers now do in a tent in v8? Then what do they do? And what do they do with another tent? Then what do they say in v9? What sort of day was it? What do they feel obligated to do? Whom do they decide to tell? To whom do they speak in v10? What do they report? Whom do the gatekeepers call out in v11? What does the king do and say in v12, despite the prophet's word the previous day? How does one of his servants suggest that it is worth the risk (v13)? What do they do in v14? How far do they go in v15? What do they find? Where then do they go? Whom do they tell? What do the people do in v16? For how much are fine flour and barley now sold? According to what? Whom had the king appointed to do what (v17)? What happened to him? According to what? What do v18–20 recount as a summary of what controlled this entire event?

**What controls the rise and fall of nations and fates of sinful individuals?** 2Kings 6:24–7:20 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these thirty verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the rising and falling of nations, together with the fates of sinful individuals, is controlled by the Word of God.**

**Who is really in control?** Presently, the author lives in a sad and foolish age, where people look to civil government to cure health and provide economically. But one of the great tensions in 2Kings is that between the Word of God and the king of men for power in the land, and one of the important datapoints in resolving that tension is the king's impotence in health and economics. In 5:7, the king says, "Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy?" Now in 6:27 he sarcastically says, "If Yahweh does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?"

Sadly, while the king seems to know that only the Lord and the power of His Word can resolve the situation, the king still doesn't have enough respect for the Lord and the power of His Word. He blames the Word and now he threatens the Word (v31).

He ought to have blamed himself and his people! We know from Lev 26 and Deut 28 that military and economic suffering in the land was an indicator of breaking of God's law and a call to repentance. And indeed, what has the present distress revealed about them? That they're the sort of people who resort to cannibalism in their repentance, rather than repentance (v28–29). Why, indeed, would the woman think that someone who had proposed cannibalism of children wouldn't be beneath lying?

**How should lesser authorities recognize this and respond?** Rather than taking the lead in public repentance, the king has hidden his own sackcloth of repentance. Perhaps he wished to appear strong, or perhaps he thought the people themselves beyond repentance. But he who had recently called the prophet "my father" (v21) now aligns himself with the attitude toward the prophet that recently resulted in forty-two shredded children (cf. 2:24).

The king has threatened Yahweh's man (Elisha), so Yahweh takes his "officer on whose hand the king leaned" (v2). The Lord's great power is displayed both upon vessels of wrath and upon vessels of mercy. As in the flood, and at Sodom, both His righteous destroying and His gracious redeeming are glorious displays of His power (cf. Rom 9:22–24, 2Pet 2:4–9).

But it was "Yahweh's help" (v27) that was needed both for the famine of threshing floor and for the famine of righteousness. The latter famine was worse. We must have earthly kings who realize that they cannot give their people what the Lord has not appointed for earthly rulers to give. We must have earthly kings who realize that even what they can give still depends upon Yahweh's help. We must have earthly kings who realize that their nation's greatest need is righteousness before God, the favor of God, the blessing of God.

**What should we look for from our king(s)?** But we must have more than just earthly kings. We must have that King Whose people fear God throughout all generations (cf. Ps 72:5), that King Whose days outlast the moon, days in which the righteous flourish (cf. Ps 72:7).

King Jesus even hints at His being the King to Whom this passage points by His own mercy to and healing of lepers among the earthly signs of His Messiahship. It is an added layer of the power of God to redeem that He shows special favor upon "the least of these" in suffering Samaria. The use of the four lepers, and the special supply for them before the rest of Israel plunders, is itself a display of the King Who has mercy on the poor and needy (cf. Ps 72:4, 12–14).

God's power and mercy are both greater than man can imagine. The now-trampled officer couldn't imagine it (v17). But indeed it came true, just as God's Word has said. And this fulfillment of the Word is the final and main point, repeatedly and verbosely made in the long summary of the passage from v16–20. The Syrians were in much greater trouble than even they thought in v6. It was not "merely" the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians, but the King of kings who was against them.

Nations rise and fall according to His will, and they do so not merely so that Hebrews can have grain, but so that all of God's elect may be brought to the faith by which they have the Bread of Life in Jesus Christ. This is what determines the entire course of the history of the creation (cf. Rom 8:18–23; Rev 6:10–11).

**How is it evident that you know King Jesus as all your help for believing and righteousness? How is it evident that King Jesus is also all your hope for health and bread? What does your nation need?**

*Sample prayer: Lord, the price of bread and meat is in Your hand. The fates of government officials and ignored lepers is in Your hand. We depend entirely upon Your grace, and our greatest need is repentance and righteousness, which You alone can give. Forgive us for trusting in ourselves. Forgive us for trusting in government, or for fearing governments. Forgive us for resorting to managing situations rather than first crying out to You in repentance and faith. Make us to remember that You know how to deliver the godly out of trials and to reserve the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment. Grant that we would not walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness or despise authority. Thank You for making Your Son, our Lord and Savior, to be the King over all kings and the Lord over all lords. For His sake, hear us as we pray in His Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP46 "God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength" or TPH256 "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"**

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Second Kings chapter 6, beginning in verse 24 and going through verse 20, Of chapter 7. These are God's words. And it happened after this, that Ben Haddad king of Syria gathered, all his army and went up and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria and indeed they beseged it until a donkeys.

Head was sold for 80 shekels of silver and 1/4 of a cab 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 saying, help my Lord O King. And he said, if you always does not help you work and I find help for you.

From the first threshing, floor from the winepress. Than the king said to her, what a struggling you. And she answered This woman said, to me, give me 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 hate him, but she is hidden her son. Now, it happened. When the king heard the words of the woman that he tore his clothes, And as he passed by on the wall, The people looked and they're underneath.

He had sackcloth on his body. Then he said, God do so to me and more also if the head of a license of fat remains on him today, A live show is sitting in his house on the elders were sitting with him. And the king sentiment ahead of him.

But before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, 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 sand of his master's feet behind him.

And while he was still talking with them, There was the messenger coming down to him and the king. And then the king said, Surely. This calamity is from your way. Why should I wait for you all by any longer? I know I said here the Word of Yahweh thus says Yahweh Tomorrow about this time, I say a fine flower shall be sold for a shekel.

And two says of barley for a shuckle. At the gate of Samaria. So an officer on whose hand the king leaned to answer the man of God and said, look, if y'all it would make windows in heaven, could this thing be And he said, In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.

Now, there were four Leprous men at the entrance of the gate and they said to one another, why are we sitting here until we die? If we say, we will enter the city, famine is in the city, We shall die there. If we sit here, we die. Also Now therefore come let us surrender to the army of the Syrians if they keep us alive, we shall live.

And if they kill us, we shall only die. 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 the Lord, had caused, the army of the Syrians to hear.

He knows it. Chariots noise of horses, The noise of a great armies. So that they said to one another, fuck the king of Israel is hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us. Therefore, they arose. And flood at twilight left the camp intact.

Their tents, their horses, their donkeys, they fled for their lives. And when these lepers came to, the outskirts of the camp, they went into 110 and ate and drank and carried from it, silver and gold, and clothing and went and hid them. And they came back and entered, another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hit it.

Then they said to one another, we are not doing right? This is a day of good news. 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 comm, let us go and tell the kings household.

So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city and told them saying 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. And the gatekeepers called out and they told it to the king's household inside.

So, the king arose in the night and said, to his servants. 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. Say, when they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive and get into the city.

And one of his servants answered and said, please Not several men. Take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they may either become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it. Or indeed. I say they may become Like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed.

So let us send them and see. Therefore, they took two chairs with horses and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army saying, go and see 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. And the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So say, oh fine flower was sold for a shekel And to say as a barley for a shekel, According to the Word of Yahweh. Now, the king had appointed the officer on his hand, he leaned to have charge of the gate.

But the people trampled him in the gate and he died. Just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. So it happened, just as the man of God had spoken of the king. Saying to say as a barley for a shuckle and to say a fine flower for a shekel shall be sold tomorrow at this time in the gate of Samaria, then that officer had answered the man of God.

And said no look if y'all I 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. So far the reading of God's inspired. And then aren't worth.

Who is really in control? Of all things the rising and falling of nations. The fates Of individuals kings wicked women lepers. Syrians. It's the Lord who is in control of all of these things. A couple of the things that he's Really put beyond the reach of government and Is the ability to cure health and provide economically.

One of the great tensions and second Kings has been, who is going to be in control? Is it going to be the Word of God and the mouth of the prophet? Or is it going to be the king? In fact, that was one of the great tensions going back into first Kings, You remember between Elisha and Ahab.

And so forth. But we've already seen in Chapter 5 and verse 7 of this book. When The Syrian king sent name and to be healed. And the king said, am I God to kill and make alive that? This man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy.

The governments can't. Heal people governments can't preserve people's health. And then here, He says to the woman and verse 27 of our bastards. Say if you all way, does not help help you. Where can I find help for you from the threshing floor from the winepress? Now, governments can't produce.

Economic productivity. Are not sources of wealth. And yet we live in such a foolish age that Not only does our government arrogate to itself, the ability to do these things, but our nation is full of people who trust in the government. To do these things. They make themselves worse than the king of Syria.

Or the king of Israel rather. And in this passage, They make themselves worse than this, man, who's trampling turns out to be the point of the whole passage because he doubted that the Lord was in control enough. To bring about what the What the Word of God had said, at least he knew that government was not in control.

So, he's better. Then many in our own age. But the Lord is the one who's in control now, sadly? While the king seems to know, That only the Lord and the power of his word can resolve the situation. The king still doesn't have enough respect for the Lord, and the power of his word, The fact that he had sackcloth on probably implies in the way that he responded.

When the people saw his sackcloth Probably implies that he had talked to Elijah and Elisha had told him, You need to repent, and the people need to repent. And so he was Fasting and praying not hard to fast when there's no food, But he was wearing the sackcloth morning before God.

In repentance and so forth, And then When he had had enough. He decided that's enough with trying to follow the word. Of the Lord in the mouth of this prophet, I'm just going to remove mouth and head and all of it from the profit and And have done with it.

We've tried God's way. What a dreadful thing for those who having at some point been convinced that the Lord is the ruler overall, and our lives are in his hand. To. Coordinate think they've quote unquote, tried god's way and then come to the depths of distress and just give up altogether and turn on the Lord and yet it happens with many people.

Many of these people who used to be famous Christian teachers, but they become an atheist. You find out. The. Problem was, you know, one of their daughters had cancer and died of Enter, You know, some dreadful thing happened and they turned on the Lord. They knew things about him intellectually they had.

They had commitments to arguments and ideas. But they did not know the Lord. They did not have life from the spirit and faith in Jesus Christ. And when push came to shove, They? Did not trust the Lord. In their despair. The king shouldn't have blamed Elijah, if Elisha told and that.

That he and the people needed a repent. He should have blamed himself and the people After all, that's a big part of what repentance is. It's not really any good if you wears the sackcloth and then and then he decides he's gonna decapitate the preacher. And yet there are many who think that they are repenting and believing but when push comes to shove, they want to blame the Word of God.

Instead of blaming themselves. This is a man who should have blamed himself and his sackcloth shouldn't have been hidden under his clothes trying to may maintain the image of Of strength and perhaps even goodness, as if it was, okay, to let God know that he needed to repent. But it was embarrassed to let the he should have been leading the people in repentance.

He should have been repent to her in chief and sat gloth and chief Not still trying. To give the assemblance of strength. And to be, King. In fact, he should have been able to do this. Even if Elisha Had not given him specific instruction, which it doesn't say that he did.

But you remember from Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, as we are Considering even in the Biblical theology of the deaconate class the last week, and that's coming week. That the agricultural. An economic. Strength and productivity of the land was directly tined. To whether they were walking faithfully with the Lord and the Lord, Would bless them, bring the reins in their seasons, give them victory over their enemies.

And, If they needed to repent, if they were sending against him not walking faithfully, especially breaking his Sabbath. Than the Lord would not give them the rain, the fields are dry up and he would not give them victory backyard. Bring their enemies. Against him. And, Just in case. We were wondering what the spiritual condition of the people.

Or we have these two women. Some more. To the two women in the time of Solomon, Remember Those two are prostitutes. This doesn't say that they're prostitutes but they were willing to be cannibals. Now, when you lose the law of God and And you descend into wickedness, any sort of righteousness is impossible.

You know, the Lord may Give that providential restraining grace, that we were talking about the difference between restraining grace and renewing grace that the men's breakfast last week. But you should not expect. For instance, a woman who is willing to resort to cannibalism to keep her into the bargain the next day.

If she's not above cannibalism, what makes you think she's gonna be above lying about cannibalism or about the deal for, whose kid? We're gonna eat first and that she's gonna A give her kid to be. Eaten the next day. Especially since With her belly full of human flesh. She probably changed her mind.

Disgusting and wicked. But all wickedness comes from the same place. This is why we must never permit ourselves, one sin thinking. It's a small sin, and I'm following God, and all of these other ways. There's no such thing as a small sin. Every sin is treason. Against the most high God.

And as soon as we walk out of the path of repentance, The path of. Loving the Lord and submitting to him and hating our sin. We have opened ourselves to the ability to do anything. And just remember how not going out when it was his responsibility to do so with the armies.

Led David to adultery and murder. To cover up. Adultery. And that was a converted man. It is dreadful, the sort of backsliding. That unrepentance can lead even a believer into and how much worse For those who are not. Believers. But rather than taking the lead in public repentance, The king has hidden his repentance.

And now he aligns himself with the attitude towards the prophet that recent resulted in 42 shredded children, In chapter two. Does he expect that things are going to get better with this with the Syrians and with the famines? By seeking the beheading of the prophet. And this is actually one of the marvelous things in this passage, when we have seen the way God responds, when his prophet, when his preacher is under attack.

And the king says, you know what, we're gonna behead Elisha today, And swears by the Lord's name, that he's going to do it. We are expecting a beheaded king and probably Much worse and for the whole nation. And yet behold the mercy of God, that really the only one who takes the brunt of it is the the trampled.

Royal Advisor. The king lives. The people are delivered. The. The food is restored in their safe from their enemies by the end of the passage. It's truly marvelous. What

the what the Lord does. Over against. What we expected? Would have expected when the king takes us oath to behead the preacher, how great is the mercy?

The mercy of our God. So the Lord displays his great mercy. By great power. Behold the greatness of his power. Against the Syrians he makes them hero rumor. Or hear the noise of the chariots. And And horses, and they start a rumor that the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians are against them.

It's actually If they knew what they were actually up against, they should have been much more terrified. But behold the power with which God wrote it. The enemies of his people When the enemies of believers. Seem to be in a season of success and when they're gloating and boasting, It's only because God is intentionally permitting it for the good that he has planned to do.

He could so easily route them entirely. And hold also the power by which he provides for his people. He makes these twin displays a power, power and destroying vessels prepared, for wrath power and preserving. Vessels prepared for mercy. He does it with Noah and the flood, the power that destroys the world.

The power also by, which he spares? No, he does it with Sodom. And lot power by which he destroys Sodom as Matched by the power in which he sends angels to To lead Sodom and His family out Bears. As fares in that way. And then, second Peter 2, Versus four through nine.

The Lord tells us that this is an example that continues until the end, The Lord knows. How? To. Spare his people while reserving. The wicked for destruction. And so, we know that that is continuing in our day That the power of God and the mercy of God are in this agreement to do everything that is good for us.

And bring us at last, Into that, of which, the Lord, Jesus is worthy, that which the Lord Jesus. Has earned. In our behalf. And so, We need earthly kings who realize that they cannot give their people. What the Lord has not appointed to give through government and we need earthly kings.

Who realize? That even what they are appointed to do, still depends. Upon the Lord to provide it. We need earthly kings, He realized that their nation's greatest need is righteousness. Before, God, And the favor of God and the blessing of God. Hmm, the kinds of kings. Who would declare days of humiliation and Thanksgiving.

The humiliation part has been replaced by Turkey, football and shopping. But days of humiliation and thanksgiving humbling ourselves before God committing ourselves to repentance. And yet, overflowing with thankfulness and joy, the God who has shown us some mercy in direct opposite of what our nation deserves from him. We need such kings.

But more than that, we need the king of kings. We need the king whose people fear God throughout all generations. Like we just saying, Or saying last week in Psalm 72, verse 5. The king, whose days outlast the moon. And in whose days, the righteous will flourish. Psalm 72 verse 7.

You know, the Lord Jesus. Actually gives us echoes of this passage. In a couple of places by healing lepers, doesn't he? Reminding us that he is that King of Kings. That was there and second same or something. Second Kings, 7 showing special mercy to lepers. Even in the midst of the great salvation.

That he was bringing. It is an added layer. Of the power of God to. Redeem. The. To the, there's an added layer of the power of God to redeem. That he shows, special favor upon the least of these Who are suffering in Samaria. And that he has throughout the ages in the application of the redemption of Christ Focused, especially upon the poor saving.

Those who are not noble, not wealthy, not honorable Indeed, such a sorry lot, where the church in Corinth that Paul wrote to them and said, You just look around. See among you, how very few would have been esteemed among the world. The Lord has The Lord redeems and has a special pity a special, mercy for the poor and for the needy, which too is characteristic of King, Jesus and Psalm 72.

In verse 4 and verses 12 through 14. Of that song. God's power and mercy, then are both greater than we can imagine. The now trampled officer couldn't imagine it. So, it Elisha said it, he's if God, if you always were open windows in heaven, Could it be? And that what you couldn't imagine.

Oh, I should told him you'll see with your eyes. But you won't get taste of it. And that's Ultimately the point of the passage. Yes, this display of God's great power. Yes, this display of God's, Great Mercy, but especially this reminder that God has told us About his power and his mercy.

And we need by the grace of His Spirit to believe what he has told us. About the salvation of Christ. About the history of this world about how he works. All things together for good in our lives. Lest we end up like the trampled officer? Having heard the Word of God.

But trusted our eyes or our minds more. What we think would be possible. We can't think or see What is not just possible but what God has decided to do? I cannot see your ear here or the heart of man. Imagine What the Lord has planned that the Lord of glory would be crucified for us.

And that we would become joint heirs with Christ. United to him. And having his joy and his blessedness in his inheritance. Forever. And ever. But his word has said it. And therefore, we must believe it. And look forward to see how the Lord finally brings it. To fulfillment nations rise and fall.

According to his will. Not merely so that Hebrews can have grain in the capital city of the northern kingdom. Nations rise and fall. So that all of God's elect may be brought to the faith. By which we have Christ Himself. And that's what's determining the entire course of history.

And the entire course of the creation. Is God's determination to save, sinners. In Jesus. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this portion of your word. We thank you for how it thrills, our hearts. To know that what you have said is true and to think about some of these wonderful things, you have said, forgive us.

For we have often. Allowed ourselves to be discouraged or to despair. By trusting what we see or what we think is possible. Rather than receiving your word is absolutely certain. And so we bless your name. We bless your infinite power. We bless. Your infinite mercy. We bless your perfectly.

True and faithful word. We bless you. For giving Christ for your eternal plan of redemption in him. And for how perfectly. You are carrying that out and will have carried it out. When you bring it to completion of the day of Christ, Jesus. Grant that we would live out of that joy and Thanksgiving and faith.

We ask in Jesus name. Amen.