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2 Kings 7

"We Can't Keep it to Ourselves"

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Nuclear warfare is a horrific thing, and that's why many people in the world become concerned with mad men who govern countries like Iran and North Korea start developing nuclear weapons. In the hands of the wrong people, nuclear weapons can wipe out entire nations in a second. However, warfare in ancient times was much different. Today, the term "shock and awe" would be appropriate. In ancient times, an apt description would be "slow and calculating." Of all the forms of ancient warfare, the kind that was the most barbaric was known as siege warfare.

Ancient cities were typically built with impenetrable walls for protection. Ancient armies didn't have the necessary skills to demolish city walls or skills to scale them or tunnel under them effectively, so they simply positioned themselves outside the walls and basically caged in the city. Since siege warfare was a common practice, cities prepared in advance by stockpiling food that would supply the city for months or even years, as well as digging tunnels for fresh water.¹ While it's true there may have been times when there would be an exchange of arrows, by and large it was a game of wait and see, and the winner was whoever lasted the longest and wore down the opposition.

The people outside the city hoped that things would get so bad on the inside that they people would run out of food or water, and surrender. The people inside the city hoped that those on the outside would grow weary of waiting or experience a shortage of their own supplies of food and water, or hope that the attacking army would need to return home because their country was under attack. Again, it wasn't a battle of

¹ One example of a fresh water tunnel is the one King Hezekiah ordered to be dug from the Gihon Spring, which was outside of the city walls, to the Pool of Siloam inside the city of Jerusalem. This tunnel is an engineering marvel considering the fact that it is approximately 1,750 ft. long and it was dug out of solid bedrock. One other amazing fact about Hezekiah's tunnel is that it was started on both ends and they met in the middle! - [2 Chronicles 32:2-4](#) and [2 Kings 20:20](#)
<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/jerusalem/hezekiah-s-tunnel-reexamined/>

weaponry or skill, but a battle of the will to survive in the face of disease, the elements, or supplies of food and water.

Historical Background

1. Ben-Hadad was the king of Aram (Syria) who engaged in warfare against Samaria, which was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel.
2. Because the siege had lasted a long time, the people of the city of Samaria ran out of food and resorted to cannibalism! ²
3. The king grieved over their situation, but instead of crying out to God, he blamed the prophet Elisha for their troubles.

The Four Lepers

4. **2 Kings 7:3** says, *"... there were four men with leprosy at the entrance of the city gate."*
5. Leprosy not only separated them from the people of the city; it separated them from the Arameans who weren't threatened by them in the least.
6. The people of Samaria were okay with letting them stay outside the city walls because they didn't want them to be part of the drain on their supply of food and water.
7. Their conversation probably went something like this: "We're going to starve to death. There's no food inside the city and they've started to eat their babies! There's no way they are going to unlock the gates and let us in, so if we stay here we're going to die. On the other hand, if we go to the Arameans, they might kill us. So, what have we got to lose? We're going to die anyway, but maybe, just maybe, they will have pity on us and give us food and send us on our way."
8. **2 Kings 7:5-7** - *"At dusk they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans. When they reached the edge of the camp, not a man was there, for the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army, so that they said to one another, 'Look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!' So they got up and fled in the dusk and*

² **2 Kings 6:24-31** provides the account of two women who resorted to cannibalism.

abandoned their tents and their horses and donkeys. They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives.”

9. When they arrived at the camp of the Arameans, they would have seen a number of things, including penned up horses and donkeys, pots of food cooking over smoldering fires, and tents that gently moved back and forth with the breeze, but the one thing they didn't see was a solitary member of the Aramean army!
10. Pastor Gary said it's his opinion that the Lord sent an army of angels to rout the Aramean army, because that's what God did when he blinded the Arameans in an earlier time.
 - a. **2 Kings 6:16-17** - “ *‘Don't be afraid,’ the prophet [Elisha] answered [his servant]. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, ‘O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.’ Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*”
11. So here were the four lepers, who just the day before had nothing, and all of a sudden they had everything they could possibly want and more!

A Picture Of God's Grace

12. Pastor Gary said this story should be seen as a picture of the grace of God, because:
 - a. The four lepers, who were counted among the outcasts of society, and included in the forgotten and forsaken, suddenly came into a feast prepared for them by God.
 - b. The four lepers did nothing to earn God's blessing, they didn't have a thing to do with the preparation for it.
 - c. The four lepers didn't contribute a single thing to it; they just received it!
13. This is what God does for us when we come to him as broken, hungry, diseased, and empty people.
14. **Psalm 23:5-6** - “*Thou prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*” (KJV - King James Version)
15. The Bible speaks of a great wedding banquet that will take place in the future in which the saints of God will be the Bride, and Jesus will be the Groom.

- a. **Revelation 19:7-8** - *“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)”*
16. We will not have done anything to deserve being there, because it was God who defeated the enemy who opposed us by paying the price for the penalty for our sin and cancelling our debt, and will be God who invites to feast with him!

The Rest Of The Story

17. **2 Kings 7:8** - *“The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp and entered one of the tents. They [the four lepers] ate and drank, and carried away silver, gold and clothes, and went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent and took some things from it and hid them also.”*
18. As they went from tent to tent, they marveled at all the wonderful things God had miraculously made available to them and they began to hide and hoard their newfound treasures.
19. One of the men may have said something like this to his companions: “You know, this isn’t right. God has worked a great victory and we know all about it. We’re receiving it, but all the people in the city are dying for the lack of the things we are enjoying. What we’re doing is just plain wrong!”
20. **2 Kings 7:9** - *“Then they said to each other, ‘We’re not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let’s go at once and report this to the royal palace.’ ”*
21. Even though it’s dusk and darkness will soon be upon them, they determine to immediately go back to the city and share the good news so that no one would die in the night for the lack of all the bounty they had found.

The Four Heralds Of Good News

22. There is a morning coming when the trump of God will sound, the sky will burst forth, and God will roll up the clouds like a dirty tablecloth!
23. All Believers will defy gravity by rising to meet the Lord in the air!

24. But, there will be people who are going to die in the night between now and that wonderful day.
25. There are going to be people who, in a manner of speaking, will die under the siege of the Enemy.
26. But the fact is that God has worked a victory and we who believe know about it and have received it!
27. Pastor Gary warned that if we just come to church week after week and feast ourselves on the wonderful promises of God and not tell people who are still trapped in darkness and despair, we are not doing the right thing.
28. Night has fallen, but the Lord has won the victory, so go and share the good news!

The Four Lepers Came To Three Realizations

29. God has done a wonderful thing.
30. We can't hoard it for ourselves; we must share it with others.
31. There is urgency to this because people are dying.
32. Pastor Gary encouraged us to remember that we must also come to these same realizations when it comes to salvation and the eternal destiny of others.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Kings 7:3-11](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Read and discuss [Psalm 23:5-6](#).
4. Share examples of the ways the Lord has ministered his goodness and blessing in your life?

5. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's challenge for people to examine themselves to see if they are keeping good news to themselves. (See #28 above)
6. Allow the people in your group to share examples of ways the Lord has used them to tell the Good News and how his or her willingness to be a part of what God was doing made a difference in someone's life.
7. What keeps you from telling others about the Lord?
8. What would you need to do to be better prepared to tell a friend or neighbor about Jesus?
9. Do you have a sense of urgency when it comes to the salvation and spiritual well-being of others?
10. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).