

GOD PROVIDES

2 KINGS 7:1-17

(Prepared by Gene Thompson)

1. Can you name an unlikely hero in a movie or real-life story? (David and Goliath; Joe Namath in his first Super Bowl; etc.)

From the Personal Study Guide— “People are drawn to stories of unlikely heroes: the least known player on the team scoring the winning run, a child saving her family from a fire, and the smallest rescuer being able to reach a trapped person.”

My personal favorite is the true story of Desmond Doss. Desmond was a “conscientious objector” who served in the Army during WWII. He refused to carry a weapon, which Army regulations allowed, but he wanted to serve as a medic to save lives. He was criticized, ridiculed, and even beaten by his fellow soldiers, who labeled him a coward. Despite all this he completed his training and served on the Pacific front during the war. The battle at Hacksaw Ridge was fought in April 1945 on the island of Okinawa. Doss was a medic assigned to the unit trying to overrun the Japanese unit holding control of the ridge. After climbing to the top of the ridge Doss’s unit came under heavy attack and ultimately had to retreat. Doss stayed on the ridge and over the next several hours he alone rescued at least 75 wounded soldiers. He was awarded the “Medal of Honor” for his actions.

2. Why do we like to hear stories about heroes most would have considered to be the least likely to deliver?

Everyone loves an underdog story. Today we see how God used some unlikely heroes to bring hope to a hopeless situation.

Context: The army of Aram had surrounded the city of Samaria and cutoff any food or water supply and was just waiting for them to surrender. The food shortage was so bad the people had resorted to cannibalism. Jehoram was likely the king of Israel at the time. He blamed Elisha for their predicament and went to have him beheaded. The King’s right-hand man went ahead of the king to speak to Elisha. Elisha told the King’s representative what was going to happen the very next day.

DOUBTS! Read 2 Kings 7:1-2

1. How impossible does Elisha’s prediction sound? (Utterly ridiculous, absurd, even humorous if not such a dire situation.)

Notice from whom the message came, not Elisha but the LORD.

2. What would have been challenging to believe about Elisha’s proclamation? (It would be like us saying gas will be 25 cents a gallon tomorrow morning!!)

God’s provision is so much more than money coming through in a crisis, but is also a day-by-day process, and people helping people.

3. Why is it so easy for our current circumstances to affect our outlook on life? (We can’t see beyond the moment. Our focus is on the present situation and not on God. We listen to those around us rather than listen to what God is saying to us.)

Notice the contrast between the king’s right-hand man and Elisha: scarcity and abundance—insufficiency verses plenty—of food, belief, and ability.

Elisha proclaimed that the king’s right-hand man would see the abundant food with his own eyes, but he would not enjoy any of it.

4. What types of experiences might cause us to doubt God’s future blessings? (When we have witnessed or lived through a situation where God did not do what we asked for or expected.)

The captain’s doubt would lead him to miss the opportunity for God’s blessings.

DESPERATE! Read 2 Kings 7:3-8

1. What choices did these four, outcast men have? (Stay here and die. Go in the city and die. Surrender to the Arameans and perhaps live. The choice seemed clear.)

As the four men saw it, their only hope of survival was to surrender to the enemy, thinking maybe they would let them live.

2. What was the surprise of God's provision in verse 6? (The camp was completely deserted. Being twilight, it is possible the Arameans had prepared the evening meal and left it uneaten.)

God had scared the daylights out of the Arameans!

3. How can desperate times place us in a position to see God work? (Far too often we only turn to God when we have exhausted every other option.)
4. Why do you think these men were discussing their options at this particular day and time? (It was a "God thing".)
5. What are some ways God works in both ordinary and extraordinary fashion? (Miracles happen today but many times we attribute it to something else like medicine. God works in ordinary ways through His people ministering to each other.)
6. When have you dreaded a situation and realized later that the Lord had already taken care of it before you ever arrived?

The four men who were facing death suddenly found themselves with an abundance of supplies. Their surplus created a dilemma.

ANNOUNCED! Read 2 Kings 7:9-11

1. When these men entered the camp initially what was their first reaction? (Eat, drink, and collect treasure.)
2. How do we see their thinking shift from selfishness to generous sharing?
3. How did these men model integrity? (In the end they did what was right.)
4. How can we apply the action these men took to sharing the gospel?

D. T. Niles is credited with the following statement:

"Evangelism Is One Beggar Telling Another Beggar Where to Find Bread."

John 6:50-51 tells us that Jesus is the "living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever."

5. What are the dangers of failing to share with others about God's provisions? (Someone may never hear about Jesus if you don't tell them. Sharing with others honors and pleases God.)

It is our job to share; it is God's job to save!

Read Prov. 22:9.

These men who were social outcasts might have felt justified in keeping the food and supplies for themselves. Finding the Arameans' supplies literally saved their lives. But they made the sacrificial choice to share. Perhaps they realized there was far more than they could use by themselves.

SKEPTICS! Read 2 Kings 7:12-15

1. In what ways was the king's reluctance and the servant's encouragement like the story of Naaman's response to bathing in the Jordan River? ("What have you got to lose?" We are going to die if we do nothing!)
2. What would have convinced the king that the news was a trick? (The men he sent out were captured and/or killed.)
3. How does investigating the truth help us have godly responses? (It is wise to be cautious when we are told something by someone we haven't dealt with before. But when we know it is from God we should act immediately.)

In this case the king was wise using caution.

4. When have you seen God's grace in a day-to-day or surprising provision? (I see it all the time when 9/10ths. goes further than 10/10ths.)

PROPHECY FULFILLED! Read 2 Kings 7:16-17

The "rest of the story" is Elisha's prophecy fulfilled. The people of Samaria collected the soldiers' food and supplies. Everyone had food to eat, and it sold for the exact prices Elisha had foretold. Sadly, the king's captain was trampled to death at the city gate as the mob rushed out for the supplies.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE!

1. Samaria experienced famine because the Aramean army besieged the city. Are we in danger of a spiritual famine because we are surrounded by the enemy, Satan?

Read Amos 8:11

2. What opportunities have we missed because of doubts or fear?

Pray that we will have our spiritual eyes open and look for fresh ways to trust God and follow Him.