

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday September 21, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



FINAL EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF ELISHA – PART 2 “God is Salvation” *2 Kings 7:3-20*

Highlights from Elisha: A Persevering Faith:

- (1) Our study began with an introduction to Elisha and his call to the ministry... remember he was known at the “miracle” prophet.
- (2) We have focused some of our study on the passing of the “mantle” of prophetic ministry to the northern kingdom of Israel from Elijah, the very powerful prophet, to Elisha... remember that dramatic scene as God carried Elijah (who never tasted death) in that whirlwind to heaven and literally Elijah’s mantle fell to Elisha, he picked up the mantle and carried on Elijah’s ministry in Elisha’s way.
- (3) We have followed Elisha now as he has begun to retrace Elijah’s steps of prophetic ministry to the rebellions and wayward people of God, Israel, who had rejected their God and begun to worship the pagan God, Baal.
- (4) We have tracked with Elisha to Jericho where we’ve seen God protect Him through two female bears, we have seen him heal the water at Jericho... we have seen God defeat the King of Moab and provide water in the desert for the dying troops of Israel and her unlikely allies through Elisha, we’ve seen Elijah minister to the poor widowed whom (the widowed wife of a another prophet) and her son who were about to die in poverty... there he multiplied the widow’s oil. We’ve seen Elisha heal a lepers spots, miraculously make a pot of poison stew edible, cause an iron axe head float, and blind an entire army of Syrian taken them captive and then miraculously restore their eye-site and set them free, all as a powerful message of God’s salvation.
- (5) As the “miracle” prophet Elisha performed more than 20 miracle... more than anyone in scripture with the exception of Moses.
- (6) We’ve now tracked with Elisha through some powerful moments in his life and ministry... and his message couldn’t be clearer. And now we move to what are some of the final episodes of his life and ministry.

Here are some of the important background facts that may help us get our head's around just who this powerful prophet of God was. These are just some quick background reminders we been have looking at throughout our study.

Some Background Reminders For Elisha:

1. The name Elisha means **God is Salvation**
2. The prophet Elisha was from a farming community located in the northern kingdom of Israel called **Abel-Meholah**
3. Elisha was the son of a farmer named **Shaphat**, and was a farmer himself prior to God's call
4. When God called Elisha he became a devoted companion and disciple of the **Prophet Elijah**
5. Elisha carried on Elijah's work in the same **spirit** and **power** following Elijah's ascension to heaven in a chariot of fire
6. Elisha's ministry centered on the northern kingdom of Israel during a time of turning away from **Jehovah God** and the worship of the pagan god **Baal**
7. Elisha was primarily known as the **miracle prophet** credited with at least **32 recorded miracles** – These consisted of 3 healings, 2 raising of the dead, 12 wondrous miracles, and 12 prophecies. This make double the amount of wondrous acts than the prophet Elijah did with 16 miracles. Remember that Elisha asked for double-portion of the works of Elijah as confirmation of his ministry.



This is the second of our studies focused on final episodes of Elisha's life and ministry – **Final Episodes in the Life of Elisha (Part 2)**. Last week we looked at the first part of the story we are going to conclude this evening. When we left our story last week, the capital city of Israel, Samaria, was under siege from the enemy Syrians (Arameans). God's people were shut up inside the city of Samaria starving to death (remember the very graphic picture of them eat a donkey's head, dove's dung, and even their own children). We let the story with these words in **2 Kings 7:1-2** (look at it), *"Then Elisha said, 'Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: 'Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.' "*² *So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, 'Look, if the LORD 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.'"* Elisha's words is that God is salvation... God is their salvation and will save them, providing all that they needs for their salvation. Notice that the king of Israel's servant, didn't believe Elisha's word and Elisha said to him, "You'll see it but you won't get to enjoy it and eat of it!"

Okay if you have your Bible, look with me at 2 Kings 7:3 and we are going to read down to the end of the chapter. Follow along with me as I read **(READ: 2 Kings 7:3-20)**

MAN'S PROBLEM

³ *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? ' ⁴ *If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And 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. ' ⁵ *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. -2 Kings 7:3-5***

What is man's greatest problem? We many be tempted to label "man's greatest problem" as any of the hundreds of issues pressing in on our lives today...

- **disease and health issues** (COVID, Cancer, Heart Disease, Alzheimers, Parkinsons, or any number of other illnesses and diseases that plague us today)
- **financial trouble and the economy today** (gas prices, grocery prices, empty shelves, sky-rocketing utilities and mortgages, inflation, recession, etc.)
- **rising crime in our cities, cultural issues** (racial problems, LGBTQ issues, socialist and marxist ideologies)
- **attacks on the home and family and especially marriage, our failing country, politics and political corruption**

We may be tempted to think that man's greatest problem may center in one or all of these areas but the truth is all of these simply point to the bigger problem... SIN

Man has a sin problem....

- Our sins separate us from God... *Isaiah 59:2, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear".* It is our sins that have caused the separation.
- In *Romans 3:23*, we are told, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".* There is not an accountable person living or who has ever lived (except our Lord), who can say that he has never sinned.
- We are all in need of salvation. *I John 1:8* says, *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us".* The easiest person to deceive is ourselves. When we rationalize away what God says, this is what we are doing. God says that man has a sin problem, but man says that he does not. Who is right and what are we doing to God when we say that we have no sin? Continuing our reading in *I John 1:10*, *"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."* God is always right when he tells us that we have all sinned.
- In *Romans 6:23* we read, *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord".* Death is a separation. When we die physically, our body is placed into the grave, but our spirit is separated from our dead body and goes back to God, who gave it.
- We are told in *Ecclesiastes 12:7*, *"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it".* In physical death, there is a separation between our body and our soul.
- In *Romans 6:23*, we saw that, *"For the wages of sin is death".* This is a spiritual death, which is a separation from God in eternity for those who are lost. Since God is in heaven, and those who experience this spiritual death are separated from God, they cannot go to heaven. This leaves only one place for them to go, hell. We see hell spoken of as the second death in *Revelation 21:8*, *"The lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death".*

Remember in Scripture, leprosy is a portrait of sin and man's true spiritual condition without the saving grace (spiritual healing) of God's salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Regardless of how men may see us or we may see ourselves, in God's Holy eyes, we are leprous without the righteousness of Christ imputed to us through faith in the person and work of the Savior... that our problem. *This one word gives us God's perspective of the true condition of this man regardless of how he was seen and thought of by man. Here we see a holy God's perspective of man without Jesus Christ and the ravages of sin.* Leprosy is a life-threatening infection mentioned in the Bible over 45 times. Leprosy was used as a powerful illustration of the devastating effects of sin in our lives. Leprosy was common in Biblical times, and the many references to it were well understood by those who lived in unsanitary conditions. The main reason why leprosy is talked about so much in the Bible is that it is a graphic illustration of sins' destructive power. In ancient Israel leprosy was a powerful lesson on the debilitating influence of sin in a person's life.

10 Statements of Significance Comparing Leprosy to Sin in the Bible:

- (1) **The leper was considered unclean and had to be isolated from society to a certain degree** - Wherever he went he was to cry out, “unclean, unclean,” and he had to wear black with a hood covering his face and live outside the city walls. In much the same way, remember sin separates us from a Holy God.
- (2) **Whenever the Lord Jesus healed a leper he always pronounced the person, not healed, but cleansed – *Why do you think this might be? What might this be pointing to? (just your thoughts)*** Only Jesus can heal us, cleanse us, wash us clean from our sin. On he can forgive sin.
- (3) **True leprosy was incurable by man in Bible times just as sin is incurable for man –**
 - Jeremiah 17:9, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*” “desperately sick” “beyond cure” or “incurably sick”
 - Isaiah 1:5-6, “*Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints.⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment.*” There is nothing man himself can do to deal with his sin problem. Further, his sin separates him from God and even from intimate fellowship with people (see 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).
 - When the Lord healed a leper, therefore, the picture should have been obvious. His power to cleanse a leper demonstrated He was the solution to man’s sin and defilement; He alone was and is the means of reconciliation, peace with God and man.
- (4) **The rite of purification in the Old Testament did not cure, it only recognized the fact a leper was cured, he was clean of the disease** - He could then be reconciled to society. *Why is this significant, do you think? What is this pointing to? (think priest and old sacrificial system vs. our great high priest and the cross)*
- (5) **Leprosy, like sin, begins within (with what we are) and then erupts on the outside of the skin (on the surface)** - As such, it clearly reminds us of the principle that men are, by an inherited nature, sinners and that it’s not just what we do that is so bad, but what we are. The point is the mouth speaks and hands do as a result of what the heart is and thinks (Luke 6:43-45; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Matt. 12:33-34; Eph. 2:1f). With this in mind, compare Leviticus 13:1-4. Even the slightest blemish in the skin, a swelling (a boil), a scab (a small tumor), or a bright spot (a red or scaly place) was to be carefully observed to see if it was the product of something deeper, i.e., some form of true leprosy.
- (6) **The pain of leprosy (at least in certain forms) was often not severe or acute because it also killed the nerves in the affected area** – Just like we can be desensitized to our sin, where it doesn’t bother us anymore. Often lepers saw portions of their bodies become numb, muscles atrophy (waste away), tendons contract making the hands like claws, and then the ulceration of the fingers and toes and hands and feet resulting in their loss bit by bit until the whole hand or foot was gone. We must not miss the picture God wants us to

see from this emphasis in Scripture. Sin is lie this. Because of man's separation from God, because of his spiritually dead condition and the hardness of his soul, he becomes insensitive, callused, restless and never satisfied. He often does not experience severe pain from his sin and waywardness, only insensitivity, restless misery, and futility, ever seeking some means of fulfillment running from one thing to another (cf. Isa. 57:20-21; Eph. 4:16-19). Even in apparent prosperity and happiness, not only is there a certain amount of inner peace and true happiness missing, but their ultimate plight is death, loss, and the judgment of separation (Ps. 1:4-5; 73:1-28).

- (7) **Because of the nature of the disease, the leper was often considered as dead (it was a kind of living death though physically alive)** - So men without Christ are nothing more than the living dead; though walking about they are spiritual zombies (Eph. 2:1).
- (8) **Regardless of one's position, power, popularity, or prosperity, leprosy, like sin, didn't discriminate** – Leprosy like sin affects every man, woman, boy and girl regardless. We all sin. The disease of leprosy, likewise, was not respecter of persons.
- (9) **According to Old Testament law, lepers were excluded from society as sin separates (excludes) and affects our relationships (both with God and others)** - God used this to remind Israel of His holiness. Cleansing a leper meant being restored back to a normal life. This provides us with a fitting picture of our reconciliation to God and to one another (cf. Isa. 59:2 with 2 Cor. 5:18-21).
- (10) **The leprosy of sin destroys our relationship with God, and His created purpose for mankind in His creation** - Sin deforms us, perverts our relationship with God and others, and corrupts His created purpose in our lives, but in Christ we are made new creations and can be transformed into His glorious likeness. Remember Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* And in Romans 12:1-2 these familiar words say it this way, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

Now notice our passage again in verses 3-5... this pictures for us man's problem:

³ 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?"* ⁴ If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And 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. ⁵ 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. -2 Kings 7:3-5

Now there were four leprous men... These men stayed at the **entrance of the gate** because they were not welcome in the city. Their leprous condition made them outcasts and untouchables.

➡ Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, “If you were to take out of the Scriptures all the stories that have to do with poor, afflicted men and women, what a very small book the Bible would become, especially if together with the stories you removed all the psalms of the sorrowful, all the promises for the distressed, and all the passages which belong to the children of grief! This Book, indeed, for the most part is made up of the annals of the poor and despised.”

Why is what he is saying about Scripture so important do you think? I think what Spurgeon is reminding us that the Bible is relevant, that it relates to us as sinners, outcasts, poor and afflicted – that the Bible deals with our plight and our problem, SIN.

Now let’s think about our text for a minute. Who were these lepers? Well, Scripture doesn’t tell us specifically. You might find this interesting (I did), unfounded Jewish traditions say these four were actually Gehazi and his three sons. Gehazi, remember, was the servant of Elishas afflicted with leprosy because of his greed toward Naaman (2 Kings 5:27). And that curse of leprosy was to be passed on to future generations.

Notice that phrase in **verse 3**, “*Why are we sitting here until we die?*” Their logic was perfect. They would soon die from the famine if they stayed by the city. If any food became available, they would certainly be the last to receive it. So they decided that their chances were better if they surrendered to the Syrians.

3 things this statement may speak to concerning salvation...

3 Important Truths About Salvation:

- (1) **Salvation requires a personal choice** – Joshua 24:15 bids us “*Choose you this day whom you will serve...*”
- (2) **Salvation may be a fleeting option** – Don’t get me wrong? God’s offer of salvation isn’t fleeting, but your opportunity to respond to His offer is fleeting. James said in James 4:14, “*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*”
- (3) **Salvation is urgent** - 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, “*Behold, now is the accept time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*”

So the Psalmist says in Psalm 95:7-8, “*Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart*” Why sit there till you die?

➡ Here is another quotes from Spurgeon. Charles Spurgeon said, “Now you perceive that there are just two courses open to you; you can sit still, but then you know that you must perish; or you can go to Christ, and your fear is that you will perish then. Yet you can but die (that’s

all that can happen to you) if you go to him, and he rejects you; whereas, if you do not go to him, you must surely perish.” You get what he is saying... it’s the same question you must ask concerning salvation

➡ Think about his from the late Dr. Adrian Rogers, “What if the Gospel isn’t true? Let’s suppose what I believe is wrong, the Bible is fiction, there’s no God, and Christ never died for our sins. You come and put your faith in a fictitious Christ. You and I are going to die anyway, so we’re no worse off. But suppose I’m right: there is a God, the Bible is His Word, and Jesus is His Son. By coming to Jesus, you’ve got everything to gain and nothing to lose. If I’m right but you reject Him, you’ve lost everything.”

When they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there... This huge army surrounded the city of Samaria for many months, and the camp was the home and supply center for thousands of men. When the lepers came upon it that morning, they discovered an empty army camp — fully supplied, but empty of men.

The words **to the outskirts of the Syrian camp** imply that they came not only to the edge of the camp, but that they walked around to the *furthestmost part* of the **Syrian camp**, the part *away* from the city. They came to the camp as someone from afar would approach, not as someone from Syria. They figured that this was their best chance, coming as if they were not from the besieged city and to the least fortified positions of the camp.

This approach of the lepers to the camp “... may provide the occasion for the miracle itself; perhaps the Lord had in some way magnified the stumbling footsteps of the men as they made their way around the camp’s opposite end.” (Patterson and Austel)

GOD’S PROVISION

⁶ For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, “Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!” ⁷ Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives.

This is an important story... notice in in those verses: ***Who provided the salvation for God’s people in these verses? The Lord (had caused) What does this say to us as our hope for our salvation?***

Notice verse 6, “*For the LORD had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots... the noise of a great army...*” Israel was powerless against this besieging army, but God wasn’t powerless. In the same way we are “powerless” in saving ourselves. But God isn’t powerless in saving us. He attacked the Syrian army simply by causing them to hear the noise of an army. It was that easy

- Perhaps God did this by putting the noise into the air
- Perhaps He simply created the perception of the noise in the minds of the Syrian soldiers.
- However God did it, it happened.
- The same God who struck one Syrian army so they could not see what *was* there now struck another Syrian army so that they heard things that *were not* there.
- Notice that everything was left behind, leaving the unlikely lepers to spoil the camp.
- As a result, *the siege for Samaria was over* — even though no one in the city *knew* it or *enjoyed* it.
- ***How is this similar to salvation today? What does this say to us about our responsibility as believers/Christians and the church?***

Salvation is impossible without the Lord...

- Peter said in Acts 4:12, “*There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*”
- Jesus said that He is “*the way*” and that “*no one comes to the Father but through [Him]*” (John 14:6).

What has God done to make salvation *ready* ... to provide salvation for us?

2 Ways We See God’s Provision for Salvation:

- (1) **He sent His only son, Jesus** - From before “*the foundation of the world*,” God “*chose*” to save us (Ephesians 1:4). This “*eternal purpose* [has been] *carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Ephesians 3:11). Jesus said, “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life*” (John 3:16). By sending Jesus to the earth, we can be “*reconciled to God through [His] death*” and “*be saved by His life*” (Romans 5:10). We cannot earn salvation (cf. Luke 17:10). The reason is because “*all have sinned*” (Romans 3:23) and “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23). Therefore, it was necessary for God to provide a plan by which we could be saved.
- (2) **He has given us His Word, the Bible** – His word is a road map to God, to salvation, to tell us how to be saved and made right with God. In His word, we can read about the plan the Lord has given for us to follow in order to be saved – hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized, and be faithful. In each of these steps, God has provided what is necessary for us to do what He requires of us. In this article, we are going to discuss these provisions that He has given in relation to the plan of salvation. His word reveal show Jesus is, and why He came and how we can be saved through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Salvation is only possible because of God. We can meet His conditions for salvation only because He has made it possible for us to do that. God has made everything ready so that those who *choose* to obey Him can do so.

MAN'S RESPONSE

⁸ And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it.⁹ Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. 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, come, let us go and tell the king's household."¹⁰ 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."¹¹ And the gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king's household inside.¹² 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, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.'"¹³ And one of his servants answered and said, "Please, let 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."¹⁴ Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see."¹⁵ 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.

They went into one tent and ate and drank... Of course they did. After the long period of famine, this was the answer to every hope and prayer they had.

And went and hid it... They knew that their discovery of the camp could not remain secret forever. They hid some of the valuables so they could profit by them even when the camp was discovered by others.

We are not doing right... come, let us go and tell... The lepers rightly enjoyed the miracle God provided. But they also realized that the gift gave them a responsibility to share it with others. They understood that to **remain silent** and to selfishly enjoy their blessings would be sin. They had a responsibility to share the **good news**. *Has it ever dawned on us that we are not doing right when we have reaped the benefits of God's salvation, but failed to share it with others?*

➡ Spurgeon said, "If the only result of our religion is the comfort of our poor little souls, if the beginning and the end of piety is contained within one's self, why, it is a strange thing to be in connection with the unselfish Jesus, and to be the fruit of his gracious Spirit. Surely, Jesus did not come to save us that we might live unto ourselves. He came to save us from selfishness." *What do you think he is saying? Do you agree or disagree with his*

statement? What might be the implications of this statement for us as believers and our responsibility?

3 Observations Concerning Sharing the Good News:

Observation 1: You can really only share the good news if you have first experienced it - Do make note that *they enjoyed the feast first* before they told others about it. We cannot properly share the good news of Jesus Christ unless we ourselves are enjoying it.

Observation 2: We should be faithful to share the good news with the ones we can (and not feel guilty about the ones we can't or those who won't hear) - They went and called to the gatekeepers of the city... Since the lepers were not welcome in the city, they could only communicate with the gatekeepers. There were many people they could *not* speak to, but they were faithful to speak to the ones they *could* speak to.

Observation 3: The gospel/good news spreads one person at a time - And the gatekeepers called out, and they told it... The good news from the lepers was communicated in the simplest way possible. It went from one person to another, until the news reached the king himself.

GOD'S SALVATION

¹⁶ Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD. ¹⁷ Now the king had appointed the officer on whose 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. ¹⁸ So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria." ¹⁹ Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, if the LORD 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." ²⁰ And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died. -2 Kings 7:3-20 (NKJV)

Notice **verse 16, "Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians..."** When the good news that started with the report of the lepers was found to be true, there was no stopping the people. Because they knew their need, they were happy to receive God's provision to meet that need.

The king's officer "derided the possibility of the prophet's prediction; and no doubt had plenty of adherents. But the leper's report swept away all his words to the winds. They had known, tasted, and handled." Through Elisha, God announced the exact prices in the Samaritan markets, and the prophecy was proven to be precisely true.

CONCLUSION

Some Important Takeaways:

- (1) God uses many avenues to bring us to the end of ourselves and to a recognition of our need for Him - We need to understand that God often uses the personal failures, sicknesses, and problems of men as a means so bring them to the end of themselves and to a knowledge of the Lord and His salvation. *How might God be using this very method in what has gone on around us in the past few years... in our nation, in our cities, in our churches, in individual lives? Do you think God might be trying to get our attention?*

Listen to these verses from Psalm 119 and think about what they might be saying to us in this regard...

- Psalm 119:67 – *“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word.”*
- Psalm 119:71 – *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes.”*
- Psalm 119:73 – *“Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.”*

According to the Psalmist why is it good to be afflicted? What does affliction potentially do for us?

How do these verses apply to this situation in our story?

*What do we observe in our world today that may give us hope that is communicated in these verses? **When we see bad things happening, it is likely that God will use that to bring men to the end of themselves and bring a seeking of God.***

- (2) God desires for us to come to realize the deeper problem in our life and His solution - *What is man’s “deeper problem?”* God uses problems in life to force us to face our deeper problem, the problem of sin, and the need of God’s forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ. This chapter and story illustrates this truth. God’s people went from their problem to God’s solution... His salvation for them.
- (3) God wants us to know that He alone is our hope and salvation and to come to Him- As we see, the people came to know the true God. In these verses we have portraits of how God saves. He alone is our hope for salvation. Remember Elisha’s name means, “God is salvation”... the clear message of his ministry, a message he is now proclaiming outside the border of Israel and clear into Aram/Syria. This is the message of hope that we must make known throughout our world today.