

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

Elisha foretells abundant relief to the besieged inhabitants of Samaria, 2 Kings 7:1. One of the lords questions the possibility of it; and is assured that he shall see it on the morrow, but not taste of it, 2 Kings 7:2. Four lepers, perishing with hunger, go to the camp of the Syrians to seek relief and find it totally deserted, 2 Kings 7:3-5. How the Syrians were alarmed, and fled, 2 Kings 7:6, 2 Kings 7:7. The lepers begin to take the spoil, but at last resolve to carry the good news to the city, 2 Kings 7:8-11. The king, suspecting some treachery, sends some horsemen to scour the country, and see whether the Syrians are not somewhere concealed; they return, and confirm the report that the Syrians are totally fled, 2 Kings 7:12-15. The people go out and spoil the camp, in consequence of which provisions become as plentiful as Elisha had foretold, 2 Kings 7:16. The unbelieving lord, having the charge of the gate committed to him, is trodden to death by the crowd, 2 Kings 7:17-20.

Verse 1

To-morrow about this time - This was in reply to the desponding language of the king, and to vindicate himself from the charge of being author of this calamity. See the end of the preceding chapter, 2 Kings 6:33 (note).

A measure of fine flour - for a shekel - A seah of fine flour: the seah was about two gallons and a half; the shekel, two shillings and four-pence at the lowest computation. A wide difference between this and the price of the ass's head mentioned above.

Verse 2

Then a lord - **שָׁלִישׁ** (shalish). This word, as a name of office, occurs often, and seems to point out one of the highest offices in the state. So unlikely was this prediction to be fulfilled, that he thought God must pour out wheat and barley from heaven before it could have a literal accomplishment.

But shalt not eat thereof - This was a mere prediction of his death, but not as a judgment for his unbelief; any person in his circumstances might have spoken as he did. He stated in effect that nothing but a miracle could procure the plenty predicted, and by a miracle alone was it done; and any person in his place might have been trodden to death by the crowd in the gate of Samaria.

Verse 3

There were four leprous men - The Gemara in Sota, R. Sol. Jarchi, and others, say that these four lepers were Gehazi and his three sons.

At the entering in of the gate - They were not permitted to mingle in civil society.

Verse 5

The uttermost part of the camp - Where the Syrian advanced guards should have been.

Verse 6

The Lord had made the - Syrians to hear a noise - This threw them into confusion; they imagined that they were about to be attacked by powerful auxiliaries, which the king of Israel had hired against them.

Verse 12

The king arose in the night - This king had made a noble defense; he seems to have shared in all the sufferings of the besieged, and to have been ever at his post. Even in vile Ahab there were some good things!

They know that we be hungry - This was a very natural conclusion; the Syrians by the closest blockade could not induce them to give up the city, but knowing that they were in a starving condition, they might make use of such a stratagem as that imagined by the king, in order to get possession of the city.

Verse 13

And one of his servants answered - This is a very difficult verse, and the great variety of explanations given of it cast but little light on the subject. I am inclined to believe, with Dr. Kennicott, that there is an interpolation here which puzzles, if not destroys, the sense. Several instances, says he, have been given of words improperly repeated by Jewish transcribers, who have been careless enough to make such mistakes, and yet cautious not to alter or erase, for fear of discovery. This verse furnishes another instance in a careless repetition of seven Hebrew words, thus: -

וַיֵּלֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּצֵא אֶת הָעָם וַיֵּצֵא אֶת הָעָם וַיֵּצֵא אֶת הָעָם וַיֵּצֵא אֶת הָעָם וַיֵּצֵא אֶת הָעָם וַיֵּצֵא אֶת הָעָם וַיֵּצֵא אֶת הָעָם



sometimes impossible, to ascertain the exact chronology. The difficulty is increased by a custom common among these annalists, the giving the whole of a story at once, though several incidents took place at the distance of some years from the commencement of the story: as they seem unwilling to have to recur to the same history in the chronological order of its facts.