

2016 New Year Camp Meeting

“Deliverance Hour” Message

By

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God and the Impious Imp in our Skulls!

It's a brittle little thing, but it presents itself as very wise and all knowing. So wise in its own eyes that it sometimes takes on no one else but the Creator Himself! It questions His spiritual principles and ways, and yet is itself notoriously finite. In the face of daunting crises and very tough situations when it's expected to prove its worth, it freezes and looks on quite helplessly.

I'm, of course, talking about the reasoning powers of the mind. It doesn't readily submit to God. Instead, Satan has blinded it to the light of the gospel (2 Cor. 4:3-4) and made it hostile to God:

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7).

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col. 1:21).

If the carnal mind is to follow God and accept His directions, it should be tamed by the Spirit; it should be brought under its control:

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor.2:12-16).

The Spirit-led man is judged by no carnal man because a superior wisdom is at work, and that wisdom is infallible because it comes from God. He evaluates things from the spiritual perspective of God’s Spirit and allows no carnal input. The insight of the Spirit is his frame of reference, and it is that which informs his worldview. He has the mind of Christ. He appreciates God’s ways and the logic of His principles which are above human understanding and the natural.

Short of this, we may occasionally find it proper and logical, even as followers of God, to disbelieve and question some of His ways, and we will be the poorer for it!

The Word of the Prophet versus the Word of the King’s Right-hand Man

Of course, the king’s high official thought himself too smart to fall for the prophet’s words. He was merely uttering prophetic hyperbole to save his neck. After all, had the king not just dispatched an executioner to take off his head?

The king was in a helpless state of despair. He was in great difficulty as was his nation. The nation was in the grip of a crippling famine brought on by the siege of the Syrian army against the city, but poor him, his people looked to him in vain! His mind was blank; he had no solution to the engulfing national catastrophe; he was at the end of his tether.

In fact, this morning as he strolled around the city centre, a distraught woman’s unusual complaint had thrown him off balance, deeply wounded his spirit and rudely disturbed him. This was what happened:

²⁵ *“And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.*

²⁶ *“And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.*

²⁷ *“And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?*

²⁸ *“And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow.*

²⁹ *“So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.*

³⁰ *“And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh” (2 Kings 6:25-30).*

The situation was that bad—the famine had reduced people to practising cannibalism of the most monstrous sort: mothers eating their own children!

And we pride ourselves on having a prophet in our midst—a prophet who recently captured a whole battalion of Syrian troops when he struck them with blindness and then handed them over to the king of Israel (2 Kings 6:8-23). But that was history. The king’s concern was the current crisis. What was he doing about it as a prophet to the nation?

“Since Prophet Elisha has failed to use his prophetic powers to alleviate the hardship, I will make sure he does not live”, the king swore under his breath.

³¹“Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

³²“But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?

³³“And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?”(2 Kings 6:31-33).

The prophet was not one to be overtaken by a disaster on his doorstep. He promptly linked with heaven and word came to avert the imminent personal and national disaster.

Yet when the prophet gave the word from the LORD, one smart alec, an officer who served as personal assistant to the king, impudently put him on the spot:

“ Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

“Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof” (2 Kings 7:1-2).

From this point on, it was the prophet’s word versus the sceptical official’s word.

The official was a realist: How could the severe famine be broken in a space of a day with food in such abundant supply that it would be cheaper than usual? Even if Yahweh will make windows in heaven and rain down grain in copious amounts, could this thing happen?

He didn’t sound like an atheist. He believed in God and even acknowledged Him by His personal name YHWH (“LORD”), but he doubted His ability to do as the prophet had said. The prophet’s prediction given in the name of the Lord was simply not realistic.

But the prophet countered that the prophetic word was sure and would be fulfilled at the set time but he, the sceptic, would not partake of the food.

Driven by Desperation; used by God to Shame & Save the High and Mighty

Meanwhile, in another part of town, far removed from the exchanges between the prophet and high official, a miracle was in the works.

The spotlight is on a group of four lepers living as outcasts outside the city walls. Like their compatriots in the city, they are starving. An interesting conversation ensues between them:

³ *“And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?”*

⁴ *“If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.”*

⁵ *“And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there” (2 Kings 7:3-5).*

The conversation was not without divine prompting:

⁶ *“For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.”*

⁷ *“Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.”*

⁸ *“And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.”*

⁹ *“Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.”*

¹⁰ *“So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.”*

¹¹ *“And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within” (2 Kings 7:6-11).*

The lepers, far removed from the palace and centre of influence in the city and considered quite useless, were the effective instruments used by God to make His word come true. In the eyes of man, they would seem unimpressive instruments, but God could use anything to bring to fulfilment the word of His mouthpiece, Elisha.

Even the king could not see the big picture of a miracle unfolding. He thought the Syrians were playing a trick on them to decoy them out of the city so they could swarm in behind them and capture them and their beloved city! The lepers did a more accurate assessment of the situation. The king's theory was proved wrong! The Syrians had, in fact, fled leaving behind all their stores of food and possessions:

¹² *“And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they 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, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.*

¹⁴ *“They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.*

¹⁵ *“And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king” (2 Kings 7:12-15).*

As soon as word got out that there was abundance of food in the Syrian camp, the gaunt starving people of Samaria made a mad rush for it, and food was truly sold below the market price as the prophet had predicted.

To bring order to the situation, the sceptical “lord on whose hand the king leaned” was appointed to oversee the distribution of the food, but in the melee he was crushed to death by the gate of Samaria ... “as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him. ¹⁸ And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria: ¹⁹ And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. ²⁰ And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died” (vv. 16-20).

Let's not be like the sceptic in the royal entourage. When it comes to the workings of God in your life, it's not a matter of making realistic judgments about it or looking for empirical evidence.

Believe and Live!

Miracles are God's way, and miracles are beyond explanation, beyond reason. It can't be subjected to human logic, since the carnal mind can't conceive of the things of the Spirit. As Mary replied the angel who announced to her her virgin birth of the Messiah and then assured her this unheard-of birth would be made possible by God's special miracle in her womb—the

same God who had blessed her cousin Elizabeth with a pregnancy in her old age—let's also say in our hearts of hearts to the Lord, "be it unto me according to Thy word". (See Luke 1:26-38). The miracle was Jesus' holy body the Father had prepared in Mary's womb (Heb. 1:5).

Let's approach divine promises this way—with uncritical acceptance, and "there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45).

In less than ten months, "those things told her from the Lord" were accomplished. And the child grew into the Rabbi and Miracle Worker Jesus. And Mary knew it all began with a word an angel spoke to her and which she believed. It was something that would impress itself on her soul for life. So she impressed on the attendants at the wedding in Cana "Whatsoever He [my son] saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5). So He commanded them to fill six waterpots with water and then draw out. And they drew out *good wine*. That was the first recorded miracle Jesus did on earth!

So just believe. God could use just anything to make His miracles happen. He used lepers; He used the wind; He used water. That's His domain. Our duty is not to find out how God performs His miracles. Ours is to believe. And there shall be a performance! Halleluiah!

But what if we don't believe?

God's Miracles are Unstoppable!

Any display of unbelief towards God's word will not annul the truth of His word:

"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Rom. 3:3-4).

Your unbelief will not nullify the promise of God, but you will be poorer for it. You will suffer for your lack of faith (see Heb. 11:6).

Beloved, whatever God has revealed or promised you, believe He will do it. Don't concern yourself with the *how*, and there will surely be a performance.

And He has promised us healing and deliverance tonight. He has promised us an outstretched arm of strength. Believe you are already healed and delivered by His accomplished salvation work on Calvary, and you will experience it live! Now, step forward in faith and receive your miracle which God has prepared for you. It's, as usual, miraculous. Only believe! "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Halleluiah!