

The Sanctified Vision of the Kingdom

(2 Ki 6.24 - 7.20)

Tim's notes are in italics. Type [bit/ly.nlnemu](https://bit.ly/nlnemu) into any browser for a series overview.

Welcome!

Background & Context:

A brief summary of enough of last week's text to lead to 2 Kings 7.3, where today's starts.

Briefly summarize the story 2 Kings 6.24-33, then read 7.1-2 (from last week). For this to make sense, you need to summarize it in less than half the time it takes to read it.

Unpacking the scripture: 2 Kings 7.3 - 20

V3-11

What time of day did the lepers head out? Why might that have been strategic?

Twilight. Perhaps because they figured it would make it harder for the enemy to notice that they were lepers.

What do you think the people on the city wall thought when they saw the lepers head out?

I suspect something like, "What in the world are those crazy lepers thinking!?" (Reminds me of Jim Cypert, a very ordinary working-class guy who served with me on a church board years ago. Our collective assessment of Jim was, "He's dumb, like a fox." Never underestimate outcasts and ordinary people!)

In v6, God fools the Aramean army to think they hear a great army approaching, so they flee the camp immediately. Can you remember another time when God fooled the entire Aramean army?

In chapter 3, it looked like Israel was about to fall to Aram. Elisha prayed and God provided the miracle of pools of water to quench the Israelite army's thirst AND to look red like blood to the Aramean army, who misunderstood what it meant and that led them into a trap.

In chapter 6, when it again looked like the end of Israel, Elisha prayed and God blinded the Aramean army so that Elisha could lead them into another trap.

So this was the third time!!! You'd think the King would have learned by now!

v12-20

The lepers left the city gate at dusk, when did they return to the city with the good news?

The middle of the night.

Have we seen the logic in v13 used before in this story?

Yep. It the lepers' logic which caused them to go to the enemy camp.

In v17 a man gets trampled to death by the crowd as they rush for the plunder. Who was this guy?

He's the officer mentioned in v2.

Connecting to life

In today's story, God arranged for outsiders, outcasts, to deliver the good news. Can you think of other biblical examples of this?

Moses, David, [Isaiah 11.6](#) - "a child shall lead them" which turns out to a prophecy that a low-born baby Jesus and rise to leadership, many of Jesus' disciples, women at the cross.

Do you think God still works this way? Why?

Yes. It's a way God shows his power. Saint Paul teaches that God shows his power by performing great works through the weakness of people.

Can you think of any times where revival starts among wealthy people? – nope. Seasons of spiritual awakening don't seem to start among the rich and powerful, or from within the establishment. Awakening generally starts lower down in society's hierarchy.

The key is to look for people with a sanctified vision, aware they are likely to be ordinary people or outsiders. Sanctified vision holds together 3 things:

- 1. A deep intimacy with God such that he transforms your heart to beat like Jesus'. This generally comes from a deep prayer life.*
- 2. An understanding of God's story at the macro level, and also at the micro level.*
- 3. An unyielding humility that allows us to listen to people different from us, and even less mature Christians than us.*

What advice does today's story offer us about sharing the good news of God?

It's unwise to keep it to ourselves! If we do, something bad may happen to us.

At a deeper level, the news is at least three dimensional. It is good, it is true, and it is beautiful/elegant.¹ And it is the only hope of every person - even those who have never heard the name "Jesus."

¹ [The Three Transcendentals](#)

Series wrapup

Political Theology²

For some, the end of politics is power of the few over the many, for others it is justice for all, for others it is tolerance that protects everyone's' individual rights. Tolerance envisions a collection of individuals who don't need to have much to do with one another, so long as they respect one another's space and rights.

The world of God's Kingdom is different, the end goal reconciliation. This cannot happen fully until sometime after Jesus returns. Revelation teaches that, eventually all people and nations will live in reconciliation.

So what exactly are we supposed to do in the meantime?

Saint Paul says Christians are to live as reconciling agents of a reconciling Lord³. This begins with being personally reconciled to God and allowing his Spirit to help us reconcile with other Christ followers. It continues as we encourage others to reconcile with God and each other. God's intention is for Christians to live each day as citizens of God's Kingdom while residing in this fallen world. And, all the while, trusting God for the eventual restoration of creation.

So, we gather with other believers, empty ourselves, lovingly deliberate, humbly discern, and live reconciled lives. Then we engage the world according to the ways of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, taking our vision from the ancient stories of our faith.

Series summary chart

On the following page, you will find the full chart that lists the characteristics we see at play in the world of the kings of this world, alongside a list of the characteristics we see at play in the world of God's Kingdom. The last two rows in the table contain the two characteristics discussed in this seventh session.

² For a similar view, read *Kings & Presidents: Politics and the Kingdom of God*, by Timothy R. and Shawna Songer Gaines. See especially the last half of chapter 8, "The Sanctified Vision of the Kingdom."

³ [2 Corinthians 5.18-21](#)

Summary boxes

Each session included a summary box. The box below distills all seven of these into one box.

	The World of the kings	The world of God's Kingdom
1	Makes plans first, consults god later (maybe).	Makes plans under and with the Lord God
1	Fears death and change	Trusts God's faithfulness from generation to generation
2	Not always at odds with purposes of God, but often forgets they are not the ultimate authority	Primarily concerned with justice enacted according to God's redemptive purposes
3	Finds hope in associations with politically connected and powerful people	Finds hope in God's long history of faithfulness to his people
3	Operates according to a limited set of opposing political options	Operates according to political options that the world of kings often cannot see
3	Perpetuates an oppositional political life marked by winners and losers	Makes possible a collaborative politic
4	Tries to eradicate evil as a first priority	Inserts good as a first priority; trusts God to deal with evil in his time
4	Fights power & control with power & control	Responds to power & control humbly, with wisdom & persistence
5	Ignores the advice of the powerless & meek	Listens to the powerless and meek
5	Practices trickle-down economics.	Anticipates bubble-up economics
6	Provisions are meant for my consumption	Provisions are meant for God's redemption
6	I must compete for provisions	I receive provisions as a responsibility
6	I'll never have enough	God will provide all I need for salvation
6	Sees lack	Sees plentitude.
7	Trusts in narrow news sources; has trouble hearing good news from untrusted sources	Willing to receive good news from those who may be considered outsiders
7	Best we know is a politic of tolerance	Kingdom life is a politic of reconciliation

Prayer

2 Kings 7.3 - 20 New Living Translation (NLT)

Outcasts Visit the Enemy Camp

3 Now there were four men with leprosy sitting at the entrance of the city gates. "Why should we sit here waiting to die?" they asked each other. 4 "We will starve if we stay here, but with the famine in the city, we will starve if we go back there. So we might as well go out and surrender to the Aramean army. If they let us live, so much the better. But if they kill us, we would have died anyway."

5 So at twilight they set out for the camp of the Arameans. But when they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there! 6 For the Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the clatter of speeding chariots and the galloping of horses and the sounds of a great army approaching. "The king of Israel has hired the Hittites and Egyptians to attack us!" they cried to one another. 7 So they panicked and ran into the night, abandoning their tents, horses, donkeys, and everything else, as they fled for their lives.

8 When the men with leprosy arrived at the edge of the camp, they went into one tent after another, eating and drinking wine; and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and hid it. 9 Finally, they said to each other, "This is not right. This is a day of good news, and we aren't sharing it with anyone! If we wait until morning, some calamity will certainly fall upon us. Come on, let's go back and tell the people at the palace."

10 So they went back to the city and told the gatekeepers what had happened. "We went out to the Aramean camp," they said, "and no one was there! The horses and donkeys were tethered and the tents were all in order, but there wasn't a single person around!" 11 Then the gatekeepers shouted the news to the people in the palace.

Israel Plunders the Camp

12 The king got out of bed in the middle of the night and told his officers, "I know what has happened. The Arameans know we are starving, so they have left their camp and have hidden in the fields. They are expecting us to leave the city, and then they will take us alive and capture the city."

13 One of his officers replied, "We had better send out scouts to check into this. Let them take five of the remaining horses. If something happens to them, it will be no worse than if they stay here and die with the rest of us."

14 So two chariots with horses were prepared, and the king sent scouts to see what had happened to the Aramean army. 15 They went all the way to the Jordan River, following a trail of clothing and equipment that the Arameans had thrown away in their mad rush to escape. The scouts returned and told the king about it. 16 Then the people of Samaria rushed out and plundered the Aramean camp. So it was true that six quarts of choice flour were sold that day for one piece of silver [~\$6], and twelve quarts of barley grain were sold for one piece of silver, just as the Lord had promised. 17 The king appointed his officer to control the traffic at the gate, but he was knocked down and trampled to death as the people rushed out.

So everything happened exactly as the man of God had predicted when the king came to his house. 18 The man of God had said to the king, "By this time tomorrow in the markets of Samaria, six quarts of choice flour will cost one piece of silver, and twelve quarts of barley grain will cost one piece of silver."

19 The king's officer had replied, "That couldn't happen even if the Lord opened the windows of heaven!" And the man of God had said, "You will see it happen with your own eyes, but you won't be able to eat any of it!" 20 And so it was, for the people trampled him to death at the gate!

The Sanctified Vision of the Kingdom - handout

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