

A Night in a Camp — Appropriation.

2 Kings 6: 24-33, 2 Kings 7.

Night Scenes of Scripture

Seventeen Bible Night Scenes, illustrating and elucidating various truths of the Gospel.

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Chapter 9

A Night in a Camp — Appropriation.

A friend of mine once said to me, "Faith appropriates what love provides." What, then, has God provided for you and me? A free and a full salvation; and the only thing you and I have to do is to appropriate it. I know some people are greatly troubled, because they think there is an immense amount of feeling and experience to be gone through before it can be appropriated. Well, I do not deny that God works in a man's soul, and that He uses all sorts of means to bring a man into a condition of self-judgment, and repentance in His presence. But the point is this, it is not your repentance that leads God to goodness, it is God's goodness that leads you to repentance. Many people think a great deal about repentance — in fact, make a Saviour of it — but all such put it in the wrong place. Some one was finding fault with me lately for not preaching it enough. Perhaps I do not so often use the word as I might, but I like to preach so as to produce repentance. Repentance might be urgently pressed by the preacher for a lifetime, without any repentance in sinners being produced; but if a man is brought to see God's love and goodness in providing, and offering him salvation, he will say, What a wretch I have been not to have accepted it! and he will repent without being aware of it.

Repentance comes before us in a very remarkable manner in this sixth chapter of Kings. When the people looked upon the king, what did they see? When he rent his clothes, they saw "sackcloth within upon his flesh" (2 Kings 6: 30). Sackcloth all through Scripture is a sign of repentance. When Jonah preached his remarkable sermon to the Ninevites, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," they all "put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them" (Jonah 3: 5). There never was a sermon in the world's history that produced such an effect as Jonah's eight words. The whole people of Nineveh, from the king and his nobles downward, repented. The Book of Jonah tells us they "believed God" (3: 5), and the Lord Jesus Christ tells us in the New Testament that they "repented" (Luke 11: 32). Even the very cattle were covered with sackcloth. The Ninevites "believed God" when He warned them of coming judgment, and consequently repented, for, as has been well said, "Repentance is the teardrop in the eye of faith."

My friends, if you have never repented yet, I say to you very frankly, it is high time you did. You may die in your sins tonight, and you will not repent then. There is no repentance in hell; there is plenty of remorse, plenty of regret, plenty of unavailing sorrow, plenty of weeping and wailing; tears may flow like rivers, but repentance is unknown, and salvation is never offered there. If you want to be saved, *now* is the time.

I find here that the king of Israel had a sense that the hand of God was upon him and the nation, and was repentant. Picture to yourselves a large city, as Samaria was, beleaguered by a vigilant enemy, who had cut off every possible means of supply, until at length the bread was spent, the corn gone, the food done, and the besieged reduced to such a condition that an ass's head fetched nine pounds of our money. They were surely hungry, starving people in Samaria that day. Even the very mothers forgot their natural affection for their offspring. I believe there is not a mother now living whose blood does not boil as she reads this chapter. Think of a woman, a mother, actually boiling and eating her own child. Impossible, you say. No, women did it. God had said they would do it. In an earlier book, God said to His people that if they sinned, and departed from Him, they would be reduced to such a state that they would eat their own offspring (Lev. 26: 29), and here they do it. The Word of God never fails; and the beauty of Scripture is this, that it paints man as he is, and woman as she is, and not as a historian or a novelist paints them. The difference between the Scripture and a novel is that the Scripture is true, and the novel false; and the difference between Scripture and any human biography is, that the Scripture shows me exactly what a man is, what he can be and do, and how the grace of God can save him, and bring him to glory; but when any one nowadays writes a biography, he tells all the nice things about his subject, and covers with the mantle of charity, so-called, all his little peccadilloes. The result is, that when you read a Christian's biography, you are usually discouraged, for you have to say, That is such a good man, he is not a bit like me. But the truth is this, that is not the man, it is only a bit of him.

Scripture tells me the truth about man, it sets him before me as he is. And we may as well start with the truth, that man is lost; every man, woman, and child is lost, and must perish eternally, unless saved by the sovereign grace of God. It will not be your own works that will save you. It was no work of the Samaritans, it was no work of the lepers, that saved them that day,. No, it was the intervention of God in sovereign grace, and it is the same today. So far from man's works or merits having anything to do with it, it is when the sin of man has risen to its full height, that the gospel of God comes out.

The misery of this poor Samaritan woman you can imagine. She had made a bargain with another woman, that they were to eat her son one day, and the other woman's son the next. The other woman played her false, and hid her son, and she makes her complaint to the king. No wonder, when the king hears the tale, that he forgets himself, and rends his clothes. It is when people forget themselves that the truth comes out. No doubt the king was looking very much as usual outwardly. I do not doubt he was repenting in measure, and therefore had put on the sackcloth, but he did not want the people to know it. He did not wish anybody to know what was going on inside, and so he covered the sackcloth with his robes. This is like many a poor sinner, troubled, and distressed about his soul, but hoping nobody knows. Why, you young man, you would not for the world that your friends should know that you are an unconverted sinner, without peace after all, although a church member, and perhaps an office-bearer. You would not

like, perhaps, to be as honest as a poor fellow who was hearing me preach some time ago in Glasgow. He said, in answer to my question, "Are you saved?" "I am not saved, that is the truth, but I have been a precentor in a church for twenty years." Perhaps there is some one listening to me who has been a church member for ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, and yet is still unsaved. God grant you may be saved now.

The king had the sackcloth on inside, covered up by his robes. But that sort of repentance will not do. A man should be genuine, and honest, and open in the acknowledgement of his sin. It is not that I want display. No, no: but you must be real, whatever you be. God searches the heart, and tries the reins, He knows exactly what is in a man, and He will have you and me confess honestly what we are, lost sinners in our sins. You will say, It was a good thing that the king had the sackcloth on at any rate. I admit it, but there was something deeper than the sackcloth. There was the kingly robe outside, and he looked very well, but when the robe was torn the sackcloth was seen inside, and the people might say, What a nice state he must be in! But what was deeper than the sackcloth? Hatred of God, and of God's servant. "God do so, and more also to me," he said, "if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day" (2 Kings 6: 31). Underneath your religion, friend, there is deep-seated hatred of God, if you are not converted. Do you say, That is a very strong statement? It is what God says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God," and that is why you do not like to be spoken to about your soul. You like very well to talk about religion, in general terms, now and then, but if any one takes you by the button-hole, and tries to get to close quarters with you about your soul, you do not like that. Why? Because you do not really love the Lord Jesus. If you loved Him, you would like to talk with any one about Him. If I were to get to close quarters with you, and talk to you about Jesus, it would be quite distasteful to you: you would not like it. Why? Because you are unregenerate. You do not know Jesus, and you do not love Him. If, on the other hand, you are anxious and aroused about your sins, it is quite another matter, and you will be glad to be spoken to.

The real state of the king's heart comes out when he says, May God slay me today if I do not slay Elisha. He is determined to become a murderer. Instead of owning his sins, instead of confessing that the frightful condition of the city was the direct, and legitimate fruit of his own sins against God, he tries to put the blame upon the prophet, and thus indirectly upon God Himself, and he sends his servant to take off Elisha's head. The servant goes down, and finds Elisha, the man of God, sitting in his house with some of the elders — the godly ones of Israel, I suppose — with him. Elisha knows what is going on. He says, "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?" So determined is the king to see his threat executed, that he follows his servant to see that Elisha is killed. But where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound. In the very moment when the deep deadly hatred and opposition of the king to the Lord's servant is manifested, in that very moment God unfolds to the angry king, and the beleaguered city, the sweet tidings of what His grace and mercy will do for the hungry, and the needy. At that very moment Elisha is commissioned of the Lord to issue a beautiful proclamation of grace.

There come into the house the king's messenger, to slay Elisha, the king himself, and the lord on whose hand he leaned. Now, says Elisha, having heard what you have thought and said about me, let me tell you what God's thoughts are about you: He is going to save and deliver you,

and that at the moment of your deepest guilt, when your sin and enmity against Him have risen to their full height: "Thus saith the Lord, Tomorrow, 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." What did that mean? It meant salvation for the Samaritans. Nobody could doubt that it meant that, within twenty-four hours, the common necessities of life would be abundant, and that barley meal was to be sold at three-farthings a pound, and the finest flour for a penny-half-penny a pound. Those were not famine prices. The Lord says, By this time tomorrow you shall have things cheaper and better than ever you have known them before.

This was salvation for those starving, perishing people, though, I grant you, it was salvation for a shekel of silver. Thank God, I have better news for you than Elisha had for the Samaritans. There is for you, poor hungry sinners, salvation, not tomorrow for a shekel of silver, but now, this very moment, for nothing. I ask you not to think of buying God's salvation, or working for it, or earning it; you have but to appropriate it. The prophet may tell the good news for "tomorrow," but I have good news for today — this very moment. The beauty and the wonder of the gospel is this, that when man's sin had risen to its full height, then it was that God brought out, and published salvation. The cross of Christ was the meeting-place of all the principles that could be found at work in the heart of God and in the heart of man. Looking at man's side, I find him refusing God, refusing the Saviour, the Son of God come in grace among men. We must never forget that this world has refused the blessed Son of God. You may tell me you did not refuse Him, you did not cry, "Away with him." I grant you that you and I were not living at that moment, we were not present when Jesus was brought in and condemned by Jew and Gentile, but, whoever you are, you were represented there. You remember that His crime, His charge, "This is Jesus the king of the Jews," was written in letters of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The religious Jew, the learned Greek, and the martial Roman, all gave their consent to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the very leaders of religious thought were those who hounded on the people to clamour for His blood. Pilate was anxious to get Him off. He declared, "I find no fault in him, I will therefore chastise him, and let him go," but the people and their leaders would not have it. Pilate sent Him to Herod, hoping to get rid of Him, and when He came back he wanted again to let Him go, but the people cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him."

Then an idea strikes his mind. He always released a prisoner at that time as an act of clemency. He sends down to the cell, and brings up Barabbas the murderer, and Barabbas is put side by side with Jesus, that the people may make their choice. There you have the man who has imbrued his hands in the blood of his fellow, the blood-stained robber Barabbas, and by his side you see Jesus, the holy spotless Saviour, the Son of God. Pilate says, "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" With one voice the answer comes, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Then says Pilate, "What shall I do with Jesus that is called Christ?" "Crucify him, crucify him," is the reply. Pilate might wash his hands, and the people might say, "His blood be on us and on our children," but the fact remains that the world united to murder Him. Peter afterwards accused the Jewish nation of this: "Ye denied the Holy One and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life" (Acts 3: 14). The world, therefore, to this day stands charged with the murder of the Son of God. Do not forget this, you who are of the world. Ye worldlings, who are not Christ's, lay hold of this solemn truth, that you are part and parcel of the world that has been dyed and stained with the blood of the Son of God. And remember, too, that God will yet deal with this world for the rejection and murder of His Son.

But there is another side to the cross. In the very moment when the bitter hatred and enmity of man's heart to God came out in the refusal of Christ, and nailing of Him to a tree, God seized the opportunity to have the question of sin settled for ever, to have a work accomplished by which sins could be put away, and the sinner righteously saved. That which demonstrated the depth of the iniquity of man's heart unfolded at the same time the depth of the love of God's heart. While it is true that man's wickedness and hatred put Christ upon the tree, it is equally true that God in love gave His Son, and that Jesus in grace "gave himself, a ransom for all to be testified in due time."

In the cross of the Saviour I see the full flood tide of the evil of man's heart; but, thank God, high and black as was the tide of evil that culminated that day, there was a tide higher and deeper still, — the tide of divine love, which rose to its loftiest height then, when the Saviour gave Himself for the very people who slew Him, and when the Son of God died for His murderers and His foes. "Hear ye the word of the Lord," I may well say, Today is salvation proclaimed to you through Him who died and rose again. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things." Observe it is not all who work, but *all who believe*. Now, the work of redemption having been finished, atonement having been made, the sin-offering having been presented to God and accepted, and all having been done that God required, or the Saviour could do for sinners, the gospel comes out in its own sweetness. The Holy Ghost comes down from heaven to tell the wonderful news that not only are the claims of God met and satisfied, but that the power of the enemy is broken. That is what we saw in our last night scene.

We have seen the Son of God coming into the world as Saviour; that man was in such a condition that he needed salvation; that the Son of God died as a substitute to meet the claims of God against the sinner in righteousness, and that the power and opposition of the enemy have been broken that the sinner might be set free. What then remains for you and me? To appropriate, to lay hold of, to enjoy, what the goodness of God presents to us in our need and misery. That is the point of the interesting night scene now before us.

When the good news of an abundance of food "tomorrow" was announced by Elisha as the word of the Lord, there was, of course, the well-dressed sceptic in the audience of that day (there may be many such found in this day), but what good did his scepticism do him? Do you not think the hungry starving people of Samaria would be glad to know they would be delivered within twenty-four hours? Was it not grand gospel, for some one going out from Elisha's house to be able to tell the people, You will be saved in twenty-four hours; we have the word of the Lord for it? That was a grand gospel for the Samaritans, but there is a better gospel for the souls who hear my voice now — the pardon of your sins where you sit this moment through the faith of Jesus.

A work has been wrought by the Son of God that enables God to come out in righteousness and relieve His own heart, as He dispenses the gospel, and meets the need of the most miserable and wretched sinner He can find. And I will tell you who will get the blessing first — the most miserable. Of all the wretched people of Samaria that day who first got the blessing God proclaimed? The four leprous men whose sad state precluded their even being admitted inside the gate. Yes, they are the men to get the relief first, as we shall see. And this exalted lord, on whose arm the king leans, what does he say when he hears Elisha's message of mercy and

salvation? A scornful smile plays upon his lips, and he says, with a cold cynicism which is common enough in our day, "Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" I do not believe such nonsense as that we are going to be saved in twenty-four hours. Look at the hosts of the Syrians all round the city. I do not believe anything of the kind. So said the infidel, the sceptic, of Elisha's day. But he got a solemn reply: "Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." He had his warning too. That lord had a large family. I am persuaded he has many descendants living today. They hear the gospel, they listen to it, but they do not believe it. It is too good to be true, some say; others, that they need some works of their own in order to be saved.

I am sometimes accused of leaving out works, and of giving people nothing to do. I will tell you why. If I gave them something to do for salvation, they could not do it. A friend of mine once saw a boat with two men in it which had been run into by a steamer, and was sinking, when a lifeboat was sent to save them. Now I quite admit what they were doing when the lifeboat went to them; they were baling out the water as well as they could from their damaged boat, and they were crying for help. But what saved them? It was the lifeboat. And right glad they were to be taken out of their own old, ruined, sinking boat, and be placed in the lifeboat. So must it be with you. You have to get out of your own old boat of works, and efforts, and rest on Jesus, and Jesus alone. And what is the reason why so few people really receive the gospel? Because they think they can do something themselves; because they are not, in repentance, brought down to utter nothingness in the presence of God. They are not, if I may so say, where Christ can save them. Whom did He come to save? The lost, the ungodly, the guilty, the helpless. "To him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 5).

Why have you never yet been saved? The reason is very simple: I do not think you know you are lost. You are like a man who fell overboard the other day in a harbour. He could not swim, and very soon the cry went round, "A man drowning." On the quay stood a splendid young fisherman, the finest swimmer in the place, who had saved many a life, and everybody cried, "Jim, Jim, go in and save him!" Jim came and looked into the water, and there was the poor fellow struggling violently, and crying, "I cannot swim, I cannot swim." Jim made no movement, and the crowd began to cry, "Shame." But Jim folded his arms, and looked on like a statue. The murmurs of the crowd grew louder, as the poor fellow went down under water, and Jim never moved a muscle. The man came up, continued struggling, but was evidently getting weaker, and still Jim stood on the quay. He went down a second time, and came up again, but now there was no struggling, and as he was about to go down the third time, Jim was seen to slip off his coat and boots, and prepare to jump in. As the sinking man threw up his arms, his strength exhausted, Jim plunged in like an arrow, caught him, and saved him. Said the crowd, "Jim why did you not go in before?" "He had too much strength," replied the rescuer. "If I had gone in sooner he would have drowned me. I should not have saved him." That is the reason why you, though miserable, are still unsaved. You have not got down low enough. You have never known salvation yet because you have never taken the place of being a lost man or a lost woman. You are trying to do something, not knowing that all is done.

Now, these lepers knew they were lost. They were outside the gate, and they thus wisely reasoned: "Why sit we here until we die? 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" (2 Kings 7: 3, 4). They have the sentence of death on them, and so have you, my friend, but you may get life. Well, they conclude that they will go forth, as they, think, to meet their enemies; and when they go out, expecting to meet foes — just like a poor sinner when he comes to God, whom he thinks is his foe — what do they find? A feast, and a royal one too, for all they needed was there. Sinner, you do not know what you have missed by not coming to the Saviour all these years, but if you will be wise now, you will follow the example of these simple men. They go out in the twilight (ver. 5), hoping nobody will see them, or pay attention to them. They get to the camp of the Syrians, and all is quiet. They come near a tent, and listen, but there is no sound. What does it mean? The fact is, God has cleared the scene of the enemy, and left the spoil for them to appropriate.

Can you not apply this? There is nothing to hinder your getting God's blessing now; every foe is gone. Sin has been put away, the power of the enemy has been broken, Christ has annulled death. The Son of God has come into the prison-house of death, and what has He done? He has burst open the door, He has broken all its bolts and bars, and spoiled the lock, and it is well to remember that Satan cannot repair that lock, or put back those bars. He tells you that you cannot be saved, that you are too bad a sinner to be saved, and that you dare not come to Jesus — he tells you a lie. I tell you that you may come, and you ought to come to Christ, and if never before, you ought to come this very moment to Him. The door of the dungeon has been opened by the mighty Son of God, and all you have to do is to march out into the light of day, and feast on the good things that the love of God has provided for the needy and the lost. Appropriate what His love provides.

Whom do the lepers find in the camp of the Syrians? Nobody, not an enemy to be seen. They go into a tent, and what do they get? A good big loaf, and a nice bottle of water. They eat and drink. That is what the sinner needs — bread and water — the bread of life, and the water of life — and Christ declares, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Come to Jesus, and your hunger shall be met, and your thirst satisfied for ever, for He says, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

"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" (ver. 8). The lepers eat and drink till they begin to feel satisfied, and then enrich themselves. They had not had such a meal for ever so long. And when their hunger and thirst are satisfied, what next?

Why, here is a bag of gold, and there a bag of silver; and as for clothes, they never saw such garments in their lives. So they load themselves with silver, and gold, and raiment, and go and hide their treasures. They were not only saved, but enriched. God not only pardons the sinner, but He enriches him, makes him His child, and gives him a place in Christ. Silver, in Scripture, typifies *redemption*; gold, *divine righteousness*; and the raiment tells of *fitness* for God's presence. Christ answers to them all, as it is written, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus,

who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1: 30). The moment I come to the Saviour, I not only get my need met, the hunger of my soul satisfied, but all that God can give me wrapped up in the person of Christ, and I appropriate it.

The attractiveness of the gospel is this: that God having sent His Son into the world, and Christ having accomplished the work of redemption, the testimony of the Holy Ghost now goes out on every hand: "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Christ is the bread of God that came down from heaven, that a man should eat thereof and not die; but that could not be till He had died, and risen again. But now that He has died, and risen again, you and I are called on to eat and drink, to take that which God provides. In Revelation 21 the Lord declares, "*I will give* unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (ver. 6); and in Revelation 22 we read, "Whosoever will, *let him take* the water of life freely" (ver. 17). I will give freely, says the Lord; let the thirsty take as freely. There is God's side, and your side. He gives; you have only to take and enjoy. I said to a man the other night, "I will give you a book." "Will you?" he replied. I gave it to him; and when it was in his hand, he asked me, "When am I to return it?" "Never," I said; "it is yours. If I give you a book, you take it, and it is yours. When God makes you a present of His Son, and His salvation, what have you to do? Simply to take it." He saw the simile, and was helped.

These four lepers were very wise men, I think. They ate and drank, and carried forth gold, and silver, and raiment. They possessed in figure what God gives us in the gospel. Christ Himself is our redemption, our righteousness, and our raiment. Believers have put on Christ. You must stand either in Adam, or in Christ. If you are in Adam, you are on your road to hell; if you are in Christ, you are on your road to glory. Do not forget this, that a Christian is a man who has a title to glory without a flaw, and a prospect before him without a cloud. The title is the blood of Jesus, and the prospect is going to be with Him for ever. What can compare with that? There is nothing in the world like it, and it may be yours now, my friend, if you will in simple faith turn to Christ.

After these lepers have got their own need satisfied, and have become enriched, they begin to think of others: "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." They want everybody else to know what they have got for themselves. Sometimes people ask me, Why do you preach the gospel? Well, simply because I cannot help it. It is a joy to share what fills one's own heart with gladness. The blessing is so great, and so sweet, that, when you have it, you will want everybody else to know it. Conversion is truly contagious: if it gets into a house, it is apt to spread all through it. Each blessed one wants to communicate the blessing to his fellow.

So the lepers wake up the porter, and the porter tells the king's household (vers. 10-12). What is the news? There is plenty of food outside, and nobody to hinder you from getting it. Oh, says the king, in his wisdom, I do not believe that: I will tell you what it is: these Syrians are very crafty: "they know we be hungry," and they, have laid a trap for us: they have gone to hide in the field, and when we come out they will catch us alive, and ,et into the city. God was going

to relieve these poor starving Samaritans in the moment of their deepest need, and the king thought the news too good to be true: he could not take it in.

What did the king do? He did what many people are doing today: he sent out scouts. He could not believe the good news. And yet there were those four leprous men, with beaming faces, well fed, clothed, and happy, bearing witness to what they had found outside the city. They could each say, I got my hunger appeased, and my thirst quenched; I am rich, and I am satisfied; there is abundance left; and there is not a single soul in the camp to hinder you from getting the same as I have, for God has swept all our foes out of the field. Ah, I do not believe that, says the king; the enemies are still there, they are only hiding. At this juncture one of the king's servants says, Let us take seine of those starving horses, and send a couple of scouts to see whether it be true or not. Happy idea, says the king, we will have the country scoured (vers. 13-15). Away they go all the way to Jordan — some fifty miles. It took them, I suppose, six hours to go, and the same to return, so that they put off their blessing by about twelve hours at any rate.

People now are doing just the same thing. They do not believe God's good news. They do not believe that God is giving salvation without money and without price. But, thank God, there are some who will believe it. Do you believe that God loved you enough to give His own Son for you, and that Christ has died for you? The moment you believe that, God gives you the salvation of your soul.

The scouts go off all the way to Jordan, and the people are waiting anxiously to hear the news. They had heard the truth hours before from the lepers, but they did not receive it; they were not the authorised, recognised heralds; but when these tired-out messengers come back, they just confirm the message of the lepers, and out go the people to find the reality for themselves. "And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord" (ver. 16). This is what souls have said to me often: I have been all my life in darkness, and now when I have come to the Saviour, I find it exactly as it was told; I have been all these years without salvation, and peace, through unbelief.

And now see the doom of the doubting lord. The word of the prophet came true. The king appointed this lord to be over the gate, and the people in their hurry to get to the food trod upon him, so that he died — died in sight of the relief that had come to the beleaguered city. The fate of the unbeliever is always dreadful. He had said, "Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" And the servant of God answered solemnly, "Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, *but shalt not eat thereof.*"

Now, my unbelieving friend, dwelling in your cold scepticism, untouched, unregenerate, and saying, I do not believe a man can be saved that way, beware lest this come upon you — to see God's salvation with thine eyes, and yet have no share in it. By-and-by, when the Lord returns, and gathers up His own into glory, then, if still in unbelief, you will know, when it is too late, that the gospel was true, and that the way of salvation was plain, and simple; that it was not to him that worketh, but to him that believeth, that salvation came by the free sovereign grace of God. But, alas, it will be too late Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." I do not doubt that as the sacks of flour passed by through the gate, this hungry lord said to himself, "I

shall have my turn presently." But he did not get his turn: he died under the judgment of God in the very sight of salvation, "for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died" (ver. 20). Oh, do not you be like him; turn to God, believe in Jesus, and get God's salvation now.