



2 Kings has thus far showed us the miracles of Elisha, but despite the renown this man of God gained both within Israel and abroad, the king of Israel, Jehoram, assumed the king of Syria was picking a fight with him when he sent Naaman to Israel for healing. Jehoram focused only on how he could not perform a healing and did not even think of Elisha. For this reason, Elisha rebuked the king and told him to send Naaman his way. But Naaman too soon struggled with faith, for Elisha was not going to heal him in the way he expected. Only when Naaman's servant spoke to him did he comply to reason and was healed. We can miss many miracles simply out of an unwillingness to seek God's help or do as He instructs!

1. Context

a. Miracles

- i. Elisha performed 16 miracles through the power of God.
- ii. Only Jesus performed more miracles than Elisha.
 1. 40 of Jesus' miracles are recorded, but He did many other things which could not be contained by all the books on earth (**John 21:25**).

b. Elisha miraculously helped a poor widow (**2 Kings 4:1-7**).

- i. Elisha told the widow to take action and borrow the neighbors' jars.
 1. Sometimes God requires us to be active rather than passive before He acts on our behalf.
- ii. Elisha told the widow to close the door behind her.
 1. Some things are just between us and God.

c. Elisha miraculously helped a Shunammite woman (**2 Kings 4:8-17**).

- i. The Shunammite woman had set up a room for Elisha when he was in the area.
- ii. Elisha wanted to thank her, and his servant Gehazi pointed out that the woman was barren and her husband was old.
 1. In that culture, a son was necessary for managing the family business.
 2. With an aging husband and without a son, the Shunammite woman could be left destitute.

iii. Elisha had a word of the Lord for the woman: she would bear a son.

d. The Shunammite woman's son died.

- i. The Shunammite woman's son was three to five years old when he ran to help his dad in the field.
- ii. Bible scholars think the son died from a heat stroke or a brain aneurysm.

iii. There is no record of the Shunammite woman crying.

1. This woman of faith knew God could even raise her son from the dead.
2. She put her son on the prophet's bed, then went to get Elisha.

2. **2 Kings 4:23–27** – *“So he said, ‘Why are you going to him today? It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath.’ And she said, ‘It is well.’ Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, ‘Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you.’ And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, ‘Look, the Shunammite woman! Please run now to meet her, and say to her, “Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?”’ And she answered, ‘It is well.’ Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, ‘Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me, and has not told me.’”*

a. The husband of the Shunammite woman

- i. The husband asked the Shunammite woman why she was leaving, for there was no special occasion.

b. The Shunammite woman

- i. The woman said, *“It is well.”*

1. She may have said this out of faith, or to delay her husband.
2. Horatio Spafford wrote the hymn “It Is Well with My Soul” when in deep pain.
 - a. He lost his four children on a shipwreck, and his wife sent him a telegram saying, “Saved alone.”
 - b. He went on a boat to the place where his children died, and wrote the following words: “When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.”
3. **DISCUSS:** Have you experienced the peace of God amid trials? How has the Lord ministered to you?

ii. The woman sought Elisha.

1. Her home in Shunem was 20 miles from Mount Carmel.
2. Mount Carmel was where Elisha's mentor, Elijah, called down fire from heaven upon the altar and defied the prophets of Baal, so this was likely a place Elisha often came back to.

c. Elisha and Gehazi

- i. God often revealed things to Elisha, but not this time.

- ii. Gehazi was not a good man, and his willingness to push away a grieving woman is the first hint we get of his character.
 1. Instead of focusing on showing grace to the woman, Gehazi was worried about Elisha possibly being bothered by her.
 2. **DISCUSS:** Have your priorities ever been skewed? How did God reveal this to you?
 3. Give extra grace to people in distress and be sensitive to the moment.
 4. **DISCUSS:** What are some ways God has called you to show grace to people in distress?
 - iii. Like Gehazi, the apostles initially lacked grace toward others.
 1. In the Gospels, parents were bringing children to Jesus so He could bless them, but the disciples tried to hinder them because they thought Jesus was too busy or too important to deal with them.
 2. **Mark 10:14** – *“When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’”* (NIV)
 3. **DISCUSS:** What does God’s care for the Shunammite woman and the little children tell you about how God views us (**Matthew 10:29–31**)?
 3. **2 Kings 4:28–37** – *“So she said, ‘Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, “Do not deceive me”?’ Then he said to Gehazi, ‘Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but lay my staff on the face of the child.’ And the mother of the child said, ‘As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you.’ So he arose and followed her. Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, ‘The child has not awakened.’ When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi and said, ‘Call this Shunammite woman.’ So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, ‘Pick up your son.’ So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out.”*
 - a. Elisha’s instructions

- i. Elisha gave his servant, Gehazi, a command to help the Shunammite woman's son.
 - 1. The Shunammite woman did not explain the situation.
 - 2. When the woman reminded Elisha of what she had said when he prophesied to her, God revealed the rest of the story in that moment.
 - ii. Gehazi was younger, and he went ahead of Elisha.
 - 1. The woman returned home with Elisha.
 - b. A miracle
 - i. Elisha laid himself atop the boy.
 - 1. This was not a mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
 - 2. God used Elisha to breathe life into the boy, the Spirit of God acting through the spirit of Elisha.
 - 3. Elisha likely learned this from his mentor, Elijah, who did the same thing for the son of the woman of Zarephath.
 - ii. The child sneezed seven times.
 - 1. The number seven is often significant in the Bible, and this is the moment the child is revived.
 - iii. The woman had her son returned to her, and her faith endured.
 - 1. We all wish that God would answer us in a similar manner, but though God sometimes operates this way, other times, His miracle is Him taking a loved one home to heaven.
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** How can we come to peace with the reality that God's ways are beyond ours, and that His answers to our prayers do not always look like what we expected?
- 4. **2 Kings 4:38–41** – *“And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, ‘Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.’ So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were. Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, ‘Man of God, there is death in the pot!’ And they could not eat it. So he said, ‘Then bring some flour.’ And he put it into the pot, and said, ‘Serve it to the people, that they may eat.’ And there was nothing harmful in the pot.”*
 - a. The school of the prophets
 - i. Elisha visited this school, which was like a seminary.
 - ii. Elisha did not have the means to feed all his students.
 - b. Death in the pot

- i. Someone found a vine and gourds in the wild, and he put them in the stew. These wild plants were poisonous.
 - ii. Elisha asked them to bring flour to put in the pot, and God used that to miraculously fix the stew.
 1. This is another instance when God asked for man's participation before He performed a miracle.
 2. The church should be like the flour in the pot: an antidote to a poisonous world.
 3. **DISCUSS**: What are some ways we can be salt and light (or flour) to the world around us? How have you been impacted by a Believer's witness?
5. **2 Kings 4:42-44** – *"Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, 'Give it to the people, that they may eat.' But his servant said, 'What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?' He said again, 'Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have some left over.'"* So he set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD."
 - a. The miracle of the multiplication of food
 - i. Elisha asked Gehazi to give the donated food to the people.
 - ii. Gehazi did not see how this was possible and gave Elisha attitude.
 - b. A similar miracle
 - i. The last miracle recorded in **2 Kings 4** parallels the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000—the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels.
 1. This miracle likely fed over 15,000 people.
 - a. In those days, usually only men were counted and not the women or children.
 2. In both miracles, there was food left over.
 - ii. **Psalms 34:10** – *"The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing."*
 1. **DISCUSS**: How has the Lord provided for you?
6. **2 Kings 5:1** – *"Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but a leper."*
 - a. Naaman
 - i. Naaman had a lot of great things going for him.
 1. Naaman was a Syrian army commander and an honorable man.
 2. Jesus mentioned him in **Luke 4:27**, saying that in Elisha's days there were many lepers, but only Naaman was cured.

3. God gave the Syrians victory over Israel using Naaman.
 - a. Sometimes God used foreign nations to discipline Israel for their idolatrous ways.
4. Naaman was *"a mighty man of valor."*
 - a. This phrase was used to describe Gideon, Jephthah, and David.
 - b. Naaman was the only gentile described as a mighty man of valor.
- ii. But Naaman was a leper.
 1. Leprosy was a highly communicable disease at this time, at around 850 B.C.
 2. Leprosy was transmitted by touch.
 3. Leprosy was a slow, debilitating disease that would end in death.
 4. Leprosy began on a person's skin as red dots which turned white and scaly, then eventually took over the body, attacked the peripheral nervous system, and affected the extremities. The bacteria would begin to disintegrate the body and organs.
 5. Leprosy was incurable until recently.
 - a. The bacteria responsible for leprosy was only discovered in the 1800s. The disease was called Hansen's Disease after the scientist who discovered the bacteria.
 - b. The cure was created in 1981.
 - c. There are still over 100,000 people getting leprosy worldwide, mostly in third world countries.
 6. Miriam was the first person to contract leprosy in the Bible.
 - a. Miriam questioned her brother Moses' authority and God struck her with leprosy.
 - b. Moses interceded for Miriam and God healed her.
 - c. This incident happened around 1400 B.C.
 - d. For almost 3,500 years, leprosy was incurable unless you received a cure from God.
- iii. Naaman is a picture of people who seem to be thriving, until something happens and God gets their attention.
 1. **DISCUSS:** What has God had to do to get your attention?

7. **2 Kings 5:2-5** – *"And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. Then she said to her mistress, 'If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy.' And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, 'Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel.' Then*

the king of Syria said, 'Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.' So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing."

a. The young girl

- i. *"The prophet"* is a reference to Elisha.
- ii. The Syrians were a conquering people and took this young Jewish girl, who became a servant to Naaman's wife.
- iii. Terrible things could happen in these types of raids, and we do not know what happened to this young girl, but at the very least she was separated from her home and her family.
- iv. Rather than be glad that the man who stole her was getting leprosy, she wished Naaman would go to Elisha to be healed.
 1. We should want God's best even for people who have given us their worst.
 2. **DISCUSS:** Was there a time God called you to pray for your enemies? How did you respond and what was the result?

b. Naaman's departure

- i. Naaman listened to the girl and sought leave to go to Israel.
- ii. Naaman brought a handsome reward with him for the cure.
 1. The combination of silver, gold, and clothing would be worth around 3 million in cash today.

8. **2 Kings 5:6-12** – *"Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy. And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, 'Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me.' So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, 'Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.' Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, 'Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.' But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, 'Indeed, I said to myself, "He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy." Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?' So he turned and went away in a rage."*

a. The letter

- i. The king of Syria assumed wrote to the king, assuming he and Elisha were friendly, and they were not.
 - 1. Elisha had often confronted King Jehoram about his sin.
 - ii. Jehoram, the king of Israel, did not think of asking for Elisha's and assumed the worst: that the king of Syria sought war with him.
 - b. The instructions
 - i. Elisha sent a messenger to tell Naaman to wash himself in the Jordan.
 - 1. Sometimes God wants us to participate in our miracles.
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** When has God called you to step out in active faith before He gave you a miracle?
 - c. Naaman offended
 - i. Naaman was offended because Elisha was not performing the miracle in the way he had expected.
 - ii. **DISCUSS:** Have you ever been offended by God? How did God show you a better way?
- 9. **2 Kings 5:13-15** – *“And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, ‘My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, “Wash, and be clean”?’ So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, ‘Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.’”*
 - a. The servants
 - i. The servants were more level-headed.
 - 1. The servants called Naaman *“my father”* as a term of affection and respect.
 - 2. The servants reasoned with Naaman that he would have followed a harder command, so why not an easy one?
 - a. As a warrior, Naaman likely felt that the instructions the prophet gave were too easy.
 - b. Sometimes the simplest things God asks us to do are the hardest.
 - c. **DISCUSS:** When has a simple task God gave you felt too difficult to do and why?
 - ii. Unmet expectations can lead to unnecessary frustrations.
 - 1. We must be willing to accept God chooses how to accomplish His will.
 - 2. We can make our requests, but we must defer to our Lord.

3. **DISCUSS:** How do you respond when things do not go according to your plan?
- b. Naaman got his miracle and recognized the God of Israel was the one true God.
 - i. **DISCUSS:** What has God done in your life to show you who He is?

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)