

The Woman of Shunem

2 Kings 4

Elisha often passed through a place called Shunem. Now in Shunem, there lived a woman with her very old husband. Every time Elisha passed by, the hospitable woman invited him in and gave him something to eat.

One day the woman said to her husband, "I know this is a holy man of God who passes by us regularly. Please, let us make a small upper room for him with a bed, a table, a chair and a lampstand so that he can lodge with us when he passes by."



Elisha was thankful for the kindness and care the woman and her husband had shown.

One day, as he lodged in the upper room with his servant Gehazi, he spoke to the Shunemite woman. "You have shown us great kindness. Now what can I do for you?" But the woman had nothing to ask of Elisha.

After she had left, Elisha turned to his servant, Gehazi. "What can we do for this woman?"



Gehazi answered, “The woman has no son, and her husband is very old.”

Elisha knew Gehazi was right. Although the woman might have given up on ever having a child, God could do miracles!

Elisha spoke to the woman again, “About this time next year, you will be holding a son,” he promised her.

“No, my lord.” the woman cried in disbelief, “Man of God, don’t lie to your maid-servant.”

But just like Elisha had promised, the woman soon embraced a little baby son.

The child grew. One day he went out to his father who was reaping in the field. But something was wrong. “My head! My head!” the boy cried.

“Carry him to his mother,” the father said to a servant.

The Shunemite woman held the promised child on her lap. But as she held him, he died.

She carried her dead child to Elisha’s upper room and lay him on the bed. She must find Elisha.



Quickly the woman went to Mount Carmel, where she knew she would find Elisha.

When she saw Elisha, she bowed down and caught Elisha's feet. "Did I ask for a son?" she cried. God had blessed her with a son, but now her only son was dead.

Elisha gave Gehazi his staff, and sent him ahead to lay his staff on the child. But the woman refused to go until Elisha also came. She had faith that Elisha was a man of God, and that through Elisha, God could work miracles.

Gehazi put Elisha's staff on the boy, but still the child lay dead.



Elisha came to the upper room where the boy lay, and prayed. Then he stretched out himself on the child. Suddenly the boy sneezed seven times... and opened his eyes!

Elisha called for the woman. Her son was alive again!

Elisha's name means "Salvation of God." He showed God's power to Save when he raised the boy to life again. But that was only a small taste of what will happen very soon! Any day now, God's own Son (whose name also means "Salvation of God"!) will come to earth again, and he will raise to life all those who have believed in His salvation!

Naaman is Healed

2 Kings 5

Syria was Israel's enemy. The Syrian army fought against Israel over and over. Naaman was the commander of this army. Naaman was very important to the King of Syria because he had won many battles.

But Naaman had leprosy. Leprosy was a very painful disease that would slowly eat away at your skin until it finally killed you.

Naaman was very strong and very important, but none of that mattered. Being strong and important couldn't save him from leprosy.



Now Naaman's wife had a little servant girl from Israel. Naaman's army had stolen her away from home on one of their raids on Israel.

The little girl must have been very sad to have been stolen away from her home and everyone and everything she knew. Naaman was her enemy, but instead of treating him like an enemy she wanted him to be healed.

She told Naaman's wife about the prophet of God who lived in Samaria. "He would heal Naaman of his leprosy!" the little girl said.



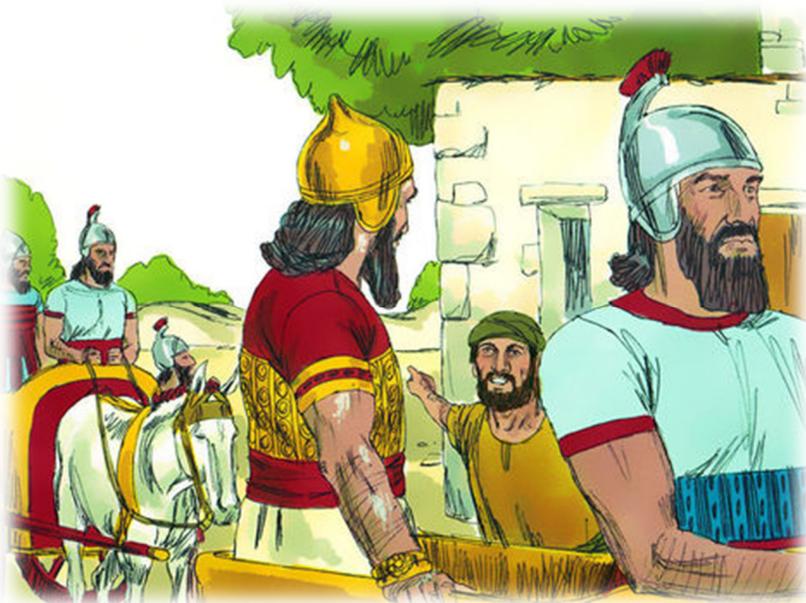
So off Naaman went to the King of Israel his enemy. He brought presents as a reward in his hand, and he brought a letter from the King of Syria addressed to the King of Israel: “Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman to you that you may heal him of his leprosy.”

But the King of Israel couldn't cure Naaman of leprosy. “Am I God?” the King cried as he tore his clothes, “Why is the King of Syria asking me to cure his commander's leprosy? He wants to pick a fight with me!”

But Elisha heard and sent to the king, “Why have you torn your clothes?” he asked. The King of Israel should have known that of the Man of God in Israel! “Please let Naaman come to me, and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.”

Important Naaman went to Elisha's house. But Elisha didn't even come out. He sent his servant to tell Naaman to wash in the River Jordan seven times.

Naaman was furious.



He was angry that Elisha didn't come out to meet him. He was too proud to wash in the Jordan. Didn't Elisha realize that he was Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army? Jordan was a nasty river. Furiously, Naaman turned to go home.

But one of Naaman's servants spoke to him: "My father," the servant said, "If the prophet had told you to do something important wouldn't you have done it? He has only asked you to wash, and you will be clean."

Finally, Naaman swallowed his pride and obeyed. He didn't need to do something great for God to save him. He needed to obey.



One, two, three, four, five, six, seven times Naaman dipped in the dirty Jordan just as he was told. When he came out of the dirty Jordan River his skin was as clean as a child's.

Naaman returned to Elisha and tried to give him many gifts. But Elisha wanted nothing. It was God who had healed Naaman. "Go in peace," Elisha told Naaman.

God did not ask Naaman to do something important to be healed. God wanted Naaman –and us– to learn that God's healing and saving can only when we are humble and obey. Instead of being proud and feeling important, God wants us to worship Him, and Him alone.

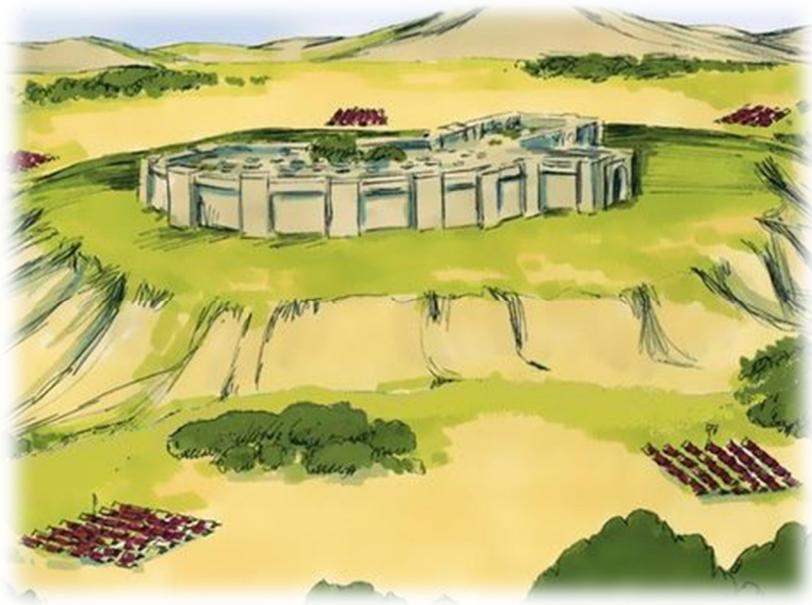
Opened Eyes, Blinded Eyes

2 Kings 6

Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, continued to war against Israel. But something strange was happening! Every time Ben-hadad made a secret plan to camp his army where the king of Israel was—the king of Israel moved!

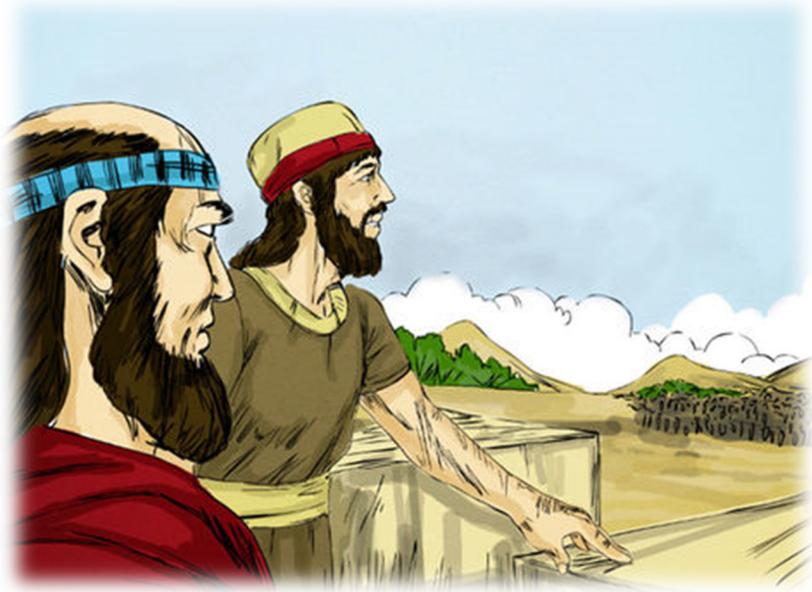
Troubled, Ben-hadad called his servants together. “Tell me!” he said, “Which of you is spying for the king of Israel?”

One of his servants replied, “No one is spying on you, O king. This is the work of Elisha, the prophet. He tells the king of Israel all of your secret plans!”



Now instead of attacking the king of Israel, Ben-hadad wanted to attack Elisha! “Go,” Ben-hadad told his men, “Find out where Elisha is, and we will capture him!”

News came back to Ben-hadad that Elisha was in Dothan. So Ben-hadad sent a great army surrounded the city of Dothan at night.



Elisha's servant woke up early in the morning to the distressing sight—they were surrounded! "Master!" he cried out in fear to Elisha, "What shall we do?"

Elisha didn't have a sword or bow and arrows. What COULD he do to fight against a surrounding army?

"Don't be afraid," Elisha said to his servant. "There are more with us than those who are with them!"

Elisha prayed, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see."

Suddenly, the servant's eyes were opened to see what Elisha saw in faith—God's army! All around Elisha were fiery horses and chariots.

Elisha prayed again, "Strike this Syrian army, I pray, with blindness." Suddenly, the entire army was blind!



Elisha led the blinded army right into Samaria, where the king of Israel was. Once inside the city walls, Elisha prayed again, “LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.”

When the men of the Syrian army opened their eyes—they were trapped inside Samaria!

“Father! Should I kill them?” the king of Israel asked Elisha.



“No,” answered Elisha. “Give them food and water, and send them home.”

So the king of Israel prepared a great feast for the Syrian army. After they were filled, he sent them home to Ben-hadad.

After that the Syrian raiders stopped attacking Israel.

Elisha opened the servant’s eyes to see God’s army—all around Elisha.

Psalm 34:7 says, “The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.”

When we are afraid, like Elisha’s servant, we can remember that just like God’s army was encamped around Elisha, we can have faith that God’s angels are encamped