



# The Ministry of Elisha

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## Lesson 3: Miracles at the Jordan

### ***Introduction***

*The ministry Jesus performed many miracles on and around the Sea of Galilee (or the Sea of Kinnereth, as it was called in Old Testament times.) He walked on the water. He caused the disciples to catch a great draught of fish. He calmed the storm that threatened to capsize the boat he and the disciples were in. Of course, the water had nothing to do with the miracles themselves. It was the power of God and his Word that proved Christ to be the Son of God.*

*The two miracles that we will witness in this lesson, took place not beside the Sea of Galilee, but somewhere along the sixty-five mile stretch of the Jordan River that begins at the south end of the Sea of Kinnereth and empties into the Dead Sea.*

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### ***Naaman Healed***

*An official of Aram who had leprosy is spurred on by the witness of an Israelite girl to seek the prophet of the LORD in Israel.*

### **A. Read**     ***2 Kings 5:1-8: A Human Mind at Wit's End***

- Apart from his medical problems, how would you describe Naaman's life?
- What did the king of Israel (Joram) wrongly conclude?
- What did Elisha propose as a solution to the problem?

### **Learn**

- Look at some references to Israel's dealings with **Aram** in the past: **Judges 3:8-10; 1 Kings 20:1-3**
- **Money:**
  - 6000 shekels of gold = 150 lbs. = 2400 oz. @ \$1133/oz (today) = \$2,179,200
  - 10 talents of silver = 750 lbs = 12,000 oz @ \$ 15.28/oz (today) = \$ 183,360

### **Take to Heart**

- What does the Israelite servant girl have to teach us about evangelism?
- Read **2 Ki 5:1** again. Naaman was highly valued because "through him the LORD had given victory to Aram." Really? "The LORD" gave victory to a pagan nation? Does this shed any light on how a modern Christian views contemporary world and national politics?

## **B. Read**     *2 Kings 5:9-14 : The Call to Faith*

- How is a servant a blessing to Naaman a *second* time?

### **Learn**

- Why is it that Naaman was willing to do some great thing in order to be healed... but not a simple thing such as washing in the Jordan?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.** What connections can you draw between the narrative with Naaman and Paul's preaching in the Greco-Roman world?
- Compare this short section with **Luke 24:13-27.** Why didn't Elisha even come out and talk to Naaman? Why didn't Jesus reveal to the Emmaus disciples who he was? Common thread?

### **Take to Heart**

- How do we see in Naaman sinful mankind's "natural religion"? What evidence of such natural religion do we still see in our world today?

## **C. Read**     *2 Kings 5: 15-19 : The Joy and Fruit of Faith*

- Name some ways in which Naaman demonstrated the joy and sincerity of his new-found faith.

### **Learn**

- What do you make of the request to take two bags of Israel's earth back to Aram?
- Concerning Gentiles seeking the Lord: **Isaiah 56:3-8.** Can you think of other Gentiles in Old Testament times who came to know the one true LORD?

### **Take to Heart**

- What question of conscience did Naaman raise with the prophet? As pastors and congregations deal with members in our modern day ministry, are there any insights we can glean about dealing with people in this last little incident (5:18-19)?

## **D. Read**     *2 Kings 5: 19-27: The Weakness of a Servant's Faith*

- What led to Gehazi's downfall, and what was his punishment?

### **Learn**

- Naaman was initially offended by the gospel. But how is the same thing true of Gehazi? (v.20)
- What list of sins could we compile into which Gehazi fell?

### Take to Heart

- "Is now the time to take money....?" Elisha asked. Would it have been wrong for Elisha (or any modern pastor / congregation) to accept gifts such as Naaman offered? Why or why not? Discuss why Elisha acted as he did.

### ***An Axe-Head Floats***

*Although a minor and seemingly insignificant miracle, the floating axe-head is no parlor-trick; it is a powerful and comforting reminder of how a gracious God watches over even the smallest details of our life.*

### **E. Read     2 Kings 6:1-7**

- What is the great concern over the axe on behalf of one of the young men?

### **Learn**

- What evidence of God's *grace* in Israel do you see in 6:1?
- What's really at stake here? Briefly discuss how **Proverbs 22:1** and **1 Timothy 3:7** play into the discussion of this short section.

### Take to Heart

- Think of examples from our modern world about how "outsiders" look for every opportunity to discredit and publicly malign believers/ congregations. Then read **Psalms 62** for comfort and a closing prayer.