

# ELISHA'S POWER

## + SESSION OUTLINE

1. The man of God brings life from death (2 Kings 4:18-21,32-35).
2. The man of God multiplies bread for the people (2 Kings 4:42-44).
3. The man of God heals a skin disease (2 Kings 5:1-3,10-16).

Background Passage: 2 Kings 4–6

## + WHAT WILL MY GROUP LEARN?

God works through His people to do great things for His glory.

## + HOW WILL MY GROUP SEE CHRIST?

The miracles Elisha performed revealed that he was a prophet of the one true God and that the Lord's words were true. In a greater way, the miracles Jesus performed revealed that He is the Son of God, the true Word of God (John 20:30-31).

## + HOW SHOULD MY GROUP RESPOND?

Because we have come to know Jesus as the Word of God and have been forgiven and transformed by Him, we declare God's Word to those around us with faith and boldness so that God may move others from death to life.

# GROUP TIME

NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

**SETTING:** Elijah left the earth by God's appointment, and by God's will, he passed on his title and his spirit to the new prophet, Elisha. This prophet is now filled with the same power as his predecessor and is present in Israel. The majority of kings that follow in Israel are still wicked in the eyes of the Lord, and the people follow them. So Israel still needs a prophet to call them to repentance and obedience to Yahweh. Through Elisha, God continues to demonstrate His power so the kings, people, and nations will know Yahweh is the Lord God. And Elisha remains faithful in obedience to God, following the footsteps of his mentor.

**EXPLAIN:** There are moments in life when we feel like we need to prove ourselves. Imagine you are in a new role at a job and the person who had the job before you was amazing at what they did, and now you are the new person in the role.

**DISCUSS: What would be some positive and negative reactions to the situation?** (positive: thankful for the person before me; do my best with my gifts; use my strengths and work on my weaknesses for the role; negative: be insecure and try to assert power; be afraid and do little; try to be the person before me instead of being me)

**TRANSITION:** Elisha is now the prophet in Israel. His ministry will either cause the people to turn back to the Lord or not. This is a weighty role, and Elisha could be tempted to prove himself and fight for the respect of the people. However, he shows no signs of fighting to prove his power nor signs of laziness or apathy. Elisha walks forward in obedience to God and lets God's word speak for itself. The power shown through Elisha is a testimony to the truth that God is with him.

**OPTIONAL QUESTION: When things work out well in your life, who do you tend to give credit and thanks to—God, yourself, others, the situation, luck, fate? Why?** (be prepared to share an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

# POINT 1

## THE MAN OF GOD BRINGS LIFE FROM DEATH (2 KINGS 4:18-21,32-35).

**18** When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. **19** And he said to his father, “Oh, my head, my head!” The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.” **20** And when he had lifted him and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. **21** And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out. . . . **32** When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. **33** So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. **34** Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. **35** Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read aloud **2 Kings 4:18-21,32-35** from his or her Bible.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the **VERSES 18-21** commentary to highlight the following point (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the *Daily Discipleship Guide [DDG]*):

**Tragedy** drove the Shunammite woman to the man of God. Though her son had died, she kept her **faith**.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the **VERSES 32-35** commentary to emphasize the following idea (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the *DDG*):

Elisha was a **vessel** of God’s power, and through him, the dead son was raised to life. Jesus is **the** Man of God with the **power** to raise the dead, both physically and spiritually.

**DISCUSS:** How should the reality of God’s resurrection power affect the lives and actions of people today? (sinners should repent and believe in the resurrected Jesus for forgiveness of sin, salvation, and the gift of eternal life; believers should proclaim the gospel with boldness, knowing no consequence or persecution can affect what God has promised to accomplish through His power; believers can grieve death and do so with hope because of the promise of the resurrection)

**TRANSITION:** Elisha foreshadowed the ministry of Jesus in raising this son from the dead, and he did so through other miracles as well.

### NOTES

### SHUNEM

A small town in the territory of the tribe of Issachar, located next to Mount Moreh. This is modern-day Solem in northern Israel. Across the mount to the north, just 3 to 4 miles away, is the town of Nin, or Nain, where, like Elisha, Jesus raised from death the only son of a widow (Luke 7:11-17).

### VOICES from THE CHURCH

“Humans have been unable to open their own eyes, spiritually, since Adam hid behind the tree in hopes that his hiding from God could save him from God. We’ve all become very creative at trying to make ourselves see, but we will never succeed . . . [God] will always be doing what no one can: be God. The God who does the miraculous. And we can be sure that the salvation of a sinner is the greatest miracle the world could ever see.”<sup>1</sup>

—Jackie Hill Perry

## COMMENTARY

**VERSES 18-21** / Elisha had built a relationship with a family from Shunem in his travels. Their home became a place of rest for him because the woman from Shunem opened her table to him to eat and the couple made a room for him. As an expression of thanks, Elisha miraculously blessed them with a son (2 Kings 4:8-17). After some years, the son died unexpectedly. The child this couple didn't even ask for was now dead in his mother's arms.

The tragedy of losing a child cannot be overstated, but the mother's response was not what we might expect. She did not weep; she did not tear her clothes; she did not wear sackcloth and ashes in mourning. She did not start the process of preparing the child's body for burial. Rather, she took the boy to Elisha's room and laid him on the bed, shut the door, and left. She then saddled the donkey and went directly to the man of God (4:22-28). She went to confront him, confident that he was capable of anything if he had the power of God, even raising the dead to life.

This woman demonstrated great faith. She was so confident in the power that the man of God possessed that she reasoned right away all would be well if she could just get to Elisha.

**VERSES 32-35** / We can see this Shunammite woman was strong and courageous. She dismissed her husband's questions, commanded her servants, dismissed Gehazi's questions, and went straight to Elisha, knowing he had access to God's power, knowing he could resurrect her son (4:22-30). Her words in verse 30 are the exact words of Elisha to Elijah, showing her desperate faithfulness in not leaving him.

So Elisha came to the house he stayed at so many times before and went to the room built just for him, finding the dead boy on his bed. He closed the door, as God works both in public spectacles and in quiet moments. Then Elisha prayed to Yahweh. This was a clear act of dependence on God

for whatever would happen next. Elisha knew that if a miracle was to occur, it would be God doing it. He was just a vessel.

Elisha then lay on the child, and the boy became warm, but nothing more. Sometimes God works quickly and sometimes He works in slow steps. So Elisha got up and paced around the house. We don't know what he was thinking, but we do know he trusted God enough to try again. He laid on the boy once more, and this time the boy came alive, opening his eyes and sneezing seven times, a sign of wholeness in being healed.

Elisha was a man of God, and because of this, he was subject to obeying the law of God regarding ritual cleanness. However, by laying on this child, he "risks his holiness" because he touched a corpse (see Num. 19:11).<sup>2</sup> Yet becoming unclean was not Elisha's primary concern. His primary concern was to bring this woman's son back to life and be true to his word in giving the son in the first place.

In a similar story, Jesus also raised a dead child by His touch. In Mark 5:41, Jesus took the hand of a little girl and raised her to life. In both instances, the resurrections were private affairs, as those who needed to see God's grace and compassion were able to do so with the miracle. And in both instances, the authority of the prophet was confirmed and God was given the glory.

Jesus's greater miracle of changing death to life, however, is in humankind's own story. By living a perfect life, dying on the cross, and rising on the third day, He gave us sinners a new path from death to life. Like the Shunammite woman and Elisha, we simply need to take a step in trusting Jesus and His work on the cross for us. We need to humble ourselves and know that we can't do anything on our own. God is the One in control and all-powerful. As we trust in Christ, He gives new life—resurrection life—when only death was on the horizon.

# POINT 2

## THE MAN OF GOD MULTIPLIES BREAD FOR THE PEOPLE (2 KINGS 4:42-44).

NOTES

**42** A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, “Give to the men, that they may eat.” **43** But his servant said, “How can I set this before a hundred men?” So he repeated, “Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the LORD, ‘They shall eat and have some left.’” **44** So he set it before them. And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read aloud **2 Kings 4:42-44** from his or her Bible.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the **VERSES 42-43** commentary to highlight the following point (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

Elisha’s faith led to **confidence** that the Lord would **provide** for the needs of the people.

**DISCUSS:** What are some ways you have seen the Lord provide for your needs? (wait for a group member to respond first; only share your response as a conclusion to the discussion)

**EXPLAIN:** Use the **VERSE 44** commentary to highlight how God works through and for His people for His glory (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

**ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #27:** *God’s Glory:* The glory of God is His manifest work, the way He represents His perfect **character** through His **activity**. It also refers to His excellent reputation and is given as one of the reasons we are to praise His name. Another sense of the word is the inherent beauty of God, the unbearable brightness and beauty of His being as He radiates His own attributes and characteristics for **all** to witness. The Scriptures speak of humanity as having “fallen short” of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23) because we have rejected the purpose for which God created us—to **glorify** Him.

**DISCUSS:** What are some ways we can serve the Lord for His glory? (live a life of obedience like Christ did; help and serve the needy; provide for the needs of others; love our enemies well; teach Scripture to our children; share the gospel with others; support financially and participate in the ministry of your local church)

**TRANSITION:** So far, Elisha’s miracles have proven that God has the power to raise the dead to life and to provide for physical needs. Next, we will look at one more miracle—a healing—that confirms the Lord deserves all the glory from all people everywhere.

## COMMENTARY

**VERSES 42-43** / There was a famine in the land, making food difficult to come by (2 Kings 4:38). Elisha was in Gilgal with the sons of the prophets when a man from a town named for the false god Baal arrived with grain and bread, the firstfruits of his harvest, to offer to Elisha. The law stated that the firstfruits be brought to the Levites as an offering to the Lord (Num. 18:12-13; Deut. 18:4-5), but Elisha was not a Levite. The man's offering, then, seems like a breaking of the law. But because the Northern Kingdom of Israel at that time had so fallen away from the Lord—counterfeit worship with non-Levite priests—the gift of the man showed his recognition of Elisha as a true, faithful man of God, a worthy recipient of this offering of firstfruits to give to the Lord. Though it was not going to the Levitical priests, it was still going to the Lord through Elisha.<sup>3</sup>

The stewardship of Elisha would be the sign that proved whether or not the man was correct in his recognition of Elisha's closeness with God. After receiving the gift, Elisha said with confidence that it should be given to the people to eat. He had compassion on the people and knew to serve them in this way. He also knew there were more people than twenty loaves could feed. But he believed God was able to satisfy the needs of His people.

Elisha's attendant, probably Gehazi, did not share the same confidence that Elisha had. He showed doubt, asking, **“How can I set this before a hundred men?”** Unlike the faith of the man bringing the gift, the man with Elisha did not recognize Elisha's power, which was ultimately the Lord's power. But Elisha commanded him to give it to the people to eat anyway.

Elisha was full of confidence, not in himself but in the Lord. He trusted that God would move and His power would be known. Elisha also spoke God's word, a prophecy for the occasion, and said that not only would they eat but there would be more leftover.

**VERSE 44** / The attendant, though doubting, set the food before the people. This man did not trust the food would be enough, but at least he obeyed Elisha.

Then we come to the climax of this brief narrative: **“And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.”** Exactly as God had said, it was done. God always does what He says He will do, all for His glory.

It is clear, then, that this offering of the firstfruits of the man's crops was not a sinful disobedience of the law but rather an act of honor that gave glory to the Lord. God blessed this offering abundantly, and the bread was used to feed a large group of people that they too would glorify God.

Again, this story is similar to one, even two, in the Gospels. In Mark 6:34-44 and 8:1-9, Jesus was teaching crowds of 5,000 and 4,000, and afterward, He realized the people were hungry and intended to feed them. In both instances, the disciples showed doubt that Jesus could feed the crowds. In Mark 6:37, they asked if they should spend a large amount of money to feed them, and in Mark 8:4, they asked where they could possibly get enough bread to feed all the people.

Much like Elisha's attendant, they didn't understand or believe that Jesus could multiply bread to feed the crowds. And yet, much like Elisha, Jesus was able to provide enough bread for the people in a miraculous way, overly and abundantly. But unlike Elisha, who knew it was God performing the miracle, Jesus, as God, performed the miracle Himself.

In each of these examples, we see that God is able to provide above and beyond what we need that we might see His glory and glorify Him. Physical needs or spiritual needs, God is able and willing to provide for them all. And through Jesus, we see how God meets our greatest needs, those of forgiveness, redemption, and life, all to the glory of God.

# POINT 3

## THE MAN OF GOD HEALS A SKIN DISEASE (2 KINGS 5:1-3,10-16).

NOTES

**1** Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. **2** Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. **3** She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." . . . **10** And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." **11** But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. **12** Are not Abana and 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. **13** But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" **14** So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. **15** Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant." **16** But he said, "As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none." And he urged him to take it, but he refused.



### SYRIA

A troublesome nation northeast of the kingdom of Israel that often fought with Israel and occasionally Judah. At God's command to Elijah (1 Kings 19:15), Elisha later anointed Hazael as king over Syria and wept because he foresaw the atrocities Hazael would perpetrate upon Israel as God's tool of punishment (2 Kings 8:7-15).

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read aloud **2 Kings 5:1-3,10-16** from his or her Bible.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the **VERSES 1-3,10-12** commentary to highlight the following point (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

The young slave girl demonstrated **kindness** by **sharing** with her captors about God and His work through His prophet, Elisha.

**DISCUSS:** **What are some ways we can show kindness in the world and point people to Jesus?** (take a coworker out to coffee to share a testimony; share the gospel with a relative; start a conversation with a stranger or enemy)

**EXPLAIN:** Use the **VERSES 13-16** commentary to emphasize the following idea (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

God desires that all people in every nation would come to **believe** in and glorify Him. He healed Naaman for this and sent **Jesus** for us.

## COMMENTARY

**VERSES 1-3,10-12** / The next miracle we observe begins with a setting outside the kingdom of Israel in neighboring and hostile **“Syria,”** or Aram. Naaman, an army commander, was described as **“a mighty man of valor.”** He had the favor of his king because of his military success, which the author attributed to **“the LORD.”** But he had one problem—**“he was a leper.”**

A young Israelite girl who had been captured and enslaved by Syria was serving Naaman’s wife. She spoke of the prophet in Israel who could heal Naaman’s leprosy. Through this small act of undeserved kindness, she began a series of events that would lead the lost to worship Yahweh.

Hearing this, Naaman got permission from the king of Syria to go to Israel to find healing. Naaman then approached the king of Israel who, doubting healing was possible, was terrified, thinking the king of Aram was just instigating war. But Elisha heard of the king’s doubts and told him to send Naaman over (2 Kings 5:4-9).

When Naaman arrived at Elisha’s house, the Israelite prophet remained indoors and sent the Syrian commander a simple message: Wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River and you will be healed. This angered Naaman, likely perceiving this scenario as a sign of disrespect. He expected the prophet to make a spectacle, to call on the Lord and to wave his hand to heal the skin disease. He was angry because the solution was not miraculous enough from his vantage point; and why the muddy Jordan River when the rivers of Damascus were better? Angry and prideful, diseased Naaman began to leave for home.

We should pause here and recognize that it doesn’t take great feats to bring about God’s plans. Sometimes our seemingly small acts of faith can lead to much fruit. The servant girl’s speaking out. Naaman’s desire to go seek the prophet. Elisha’s command to wash seven times. Even our small acts of faithful obedience glorify God and are

used to accomplish His purposes. But in all cases, large or small, we must do our part in faith, even if it is a seemingly small act of courage or humility.

**VERSES 13-16** / Naaman was heading for the border, but at this point, fortunately, Naaman’s servants boldly intervened. They rightly stated that if Elisha had told Naaman to do some remarkable thing, Naaman happily would have done it, and quickly. The servants further added that since Elisha was asking him to do something so simple, there was no harm in just doing it. Naaman saw the logic in his servants’ response, so he humbled himself and **“dipped himself seven times in the Jordan.”** To everyone’s amazement, Naaman’s skin was restored beyond just healing the skin disease to smooth perfection, to that of a small boy.

Now that Naaman obeyed and listened to the man of God, not only was he healed physically but spiritually as well. Naaman went to Elisha and declared, in front of his whole company, that Yahweh is the only God **“in all the earth.”** It can be assumed that many that day acknowledged Yahweh as the true God and Elisha as a true prophet to the glory of God. Naaman then offered a gift to Elisha, not one of repayment but of thanksgiving. Yet Elisha refused, knowing God was the One at work, as He always is, bringing grace to the nations.

In addition to healing lepers Himself, Jesus referred to Naaman once to make a point about the people of Israel struggling to see beyond themselves and to accept the prophets God gave them to lead them back to Him (Luke 4:24-27). So often, the Lord’s prophets were rejected by God’s people, but the foreigner, the Gentile, and the sinner would humble themselves and realize who the true prophets were. And through Jesus and prophets of old, like Elijah and Elisha, we see that God desires to bring Himself glory through all the nations as people come to faith in Him because of His love and mercy.

# MY RESPONSE

Because we have come to know Jesus as the Word of God and have been forgiven and transformed by Him, we declare God's Word to those around us with faith and boldness so that God may move others from death to life.

NOTES

## HEAD:

In the ministry of Elisha, there are several examples of faithful servants of God: the mother who went to Elisha, believing her child would live; the man who brought bread to Elisha; the young girl who spoke out, believing Elisha could heal Naaman. God honors those who have faith and act upon it, showing His power even when others doubt. Elisha's ministry points forward to the future ministry of Jesus that looks similar but greater. It would be faith in action that brings about healing and miracles and life. Faith has always and will always be the key to a life that brings glory to God and serves others. But faith must reveal itself in works and acts.

**How should faith in Jesus, the powerful Son of God, affect the way you think, speak, and act this week?**

## HEART:

When tragedy strikes or hard circumstances come, our deepest beliefs are revealed. It is not wrong to feel the depth of pain in sickness, death, struggle, and sorrow. The world is broken and it is difficult to walk through life without despair. Yet we have options as to where we run when we feel the most pressure. We could seek out lesser idols to try and find comfort or security. But if we do this, our belief that something other than God can bring comfort is revealed. When we run toward the living God, however, the only One who can actually hear our prayers and answer them, we demonstrate our belief that God is sufficient for us and that we are confident in His ability to care for us.

**How have you experienced the comfort of God's power in hard times? Praise Him for His love and care for you.**

## HANDS:

Sometimes we can forget that God cares about physical needs and spiritual needs. We can swing the pendulum to one side or the other when we are serving and ministering to the world. We can focus so much on people's physical needs that we fail to share the gospel and care for their soul as well. Or we can only care for their spiritual needs and neglect to meet basic physical needs. Obedience to Jesus requires both service to the soul and service to the body. All of the miracles mentioned in this session involve both the physical and the spiritual.

**What are some ways you will care for people's physical needs this week? For their spiritual needs, namely, to know Jesus and believe in Him?**

### VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Every effort to change must involve at its core a shift in direction away from dependence on one's own resources for life to dependence on God."<sup>4</sup>

-Larry Crabb (1944-2021)

## POINT 1: THE MAN OF GOD BRINGS LIFE FROM DEATH

(2 KINGS 4:18-21,32-35).

### + COMMENTARY

“The significance of this action is that at the beginning of the story Elisha is introduced as ‘a holy man of God’ (v 9). In such actions as these he risks his holiness (cf. Num 19:11). When the boy wakes, the action shifts once again to the woman. She comes to Elisha, falls at his feet as before (vv 27,37), but this time in worship. She also carries her son, this time not as a dead body (vv 21,37).”<sup>5</sup>

### + COMMENTARY

“Elisha quickly sent Gehazi ahead with instructions to lay the prophet’s staff on the dead lad (v. 29). The woman, who apparently had never trusted Gehazi, would entrust neither herself nor the final disposition of her son to him but rather stayed with Elisha until he could reach Shunem (v. 30). Her faith and concern for her son’s cure were totally centered in God’s approved prophet.”<sup>6</sup>

### + ILLUSTRATION

Death is one of the few things in life that is not reversible. Nothing that modern science or the greatest philosophers can do or say can bring a person who is dead to life. The only one with that kind of power is the One who gives life in the first place. Think of a time when you have been around death. Maybe a loved one passed away and you went to the funeral; maybe you’ve had a near-death experience like an accident; or maybe you have another kind of experience with death around you. What are some words that describe what you felt? Likely powerless, despairing, or conscious of your own life. Our helplessness against death positions us to either live in despair or to believe that God, who gave life to us, is able to raise up the dead. We must humbly come before God and ask that He give us life abundantly so we do not fear death, for if we trust in Jesus, eternal life is here and waiting for us.

# EXTRA

## POINT 2: THE MAN OF GOD MULTIPLIES BREAD FOR THE PEOPLE (2 KINGS 4:42-44).

### + COMMENTARY

“The small loaves of fresh barley bread and ears of new grain were brought to Elisha as firstfruits. Normally these portions were reserved for God (Lev 23:20) and the Levitical priests (Nu 18:13; Dt 18:4–5). Because the religion in the northern kingdom was apostate, the owner of the portions brought them to someone (Elisha) whom he considered to be the true repository of godly religion in Israel.”<sup>7</sup>

### + COMMENTARY

“Unfortunately, people merely tended to look for more miracles (Mark 8:12), and even the disciples saw the feedings as temporary relief from hunger instead of evidence of Jesus’ limitless provision (Mark 8:14–21). Elisha faced a similar problem, for his miracles helped preserve the faithful but never effected permanent change in the nation. Like Moses, Jesus and Elisha worked miracles that were signs of God’s kingdom breaking into history, and both were ignored by all but a remnant of Israel. Still, the remnant did emerge, so their work was not totally in vain.”<sup>8</sup>

### + COMMENTARY

“The next two stories concern provision in a famine that lasts for seven years, causing local migrations (8:1-2). Those affected include prophets who have gathered for a training session (4:38-41) and a community of prophets that has come to the end of its resources (4:42-44). Elijah saves the trainees from food poisoning and multiplies an offering so that it meets the needs of the entire community. As we read these stories, we see hints of a deteriorating religious and social order. We noted earlier that the widow had no confidence in the legal system and came instead to Elisha for a solution. The extended famine is an indicator that Joram’s reign, like that of his father, is under a curse (Deut 28:21-24; 1 Kgs 17:1). The fact that the harvest offerings are brought to Elisha rather than to the priests shows that the faithful are bypassing the corrupt sanctuary (Num 18:13; Deut 18:4-5).”<sup>9</sup>

### + ILLUSTRATION

Hosting a party can be a stressful endeavor. One of the most difficult parts is calculating how much food to prepare. Some parties end up better than others when there’s sufficient food for everyone. There was once a wedding where the bride and groom served Mediterranean food for the reception. Their guests went through the line, but by the time it got to the last few people, there was no more food. The chefs scrambled to prepare more, but the issue was not their fault. The newlywed couple miscalculated how much food they would need. This induced panic and worry and a giant scramble to come up with a solution. How chaotic and embarrassing!

What a comfort it is to remember that God is not in a flurry to make sure there are enough provisions for His people. He provides exactly what all His people need because He knows all things and is able to do all things in an instant. Especially when it comes to our spiritual needs, we will never be hungry because the reserves of God’s love for us are bountiful and endless.

## POINT 3: THE MAN OF GOD HEALS A SKIN DISEASE

(2 KINGS 5:1-3,10-16).

### + COMMENTARY

“Just as the washings of the Levitical system cleanse from various forms of defilement, so Naaman is cleansed and brought near through washing. Because he is a Gentile, Naaman’s baptism is a particularly apt sign of Christian baptism, which marks out a new community of worshipers in which the distinction of Jew and Gentile is utterly dissolved (Gal. 3:26–29). Naaman shows an admirable grasp of the implications of his baptism. Having been baptized, he realizes that he is exclusively devoted to Yahweh and promises to worship no other gods (2 Kgs. 5:17).”<sup>10</sup>

### + COMMENTARY

“The healing of Naaman is a story of need met by God through the agency of the prophet, but the provision itself is subordinate to other moral and theological issues. Historically the story is related to the wars with the Arameans, though neither the Aramean king nor the Israelite king is named. The role of Elisha is complemented by that of a captive Israelite maiden, and the fate of Naaman is contrasted with that of Gehazi. The story shows the powerlessness of the king and the power of the prophet, the reign and grace of God extending outside Israel, the commendation of a foreign military chief, and the condemnation of a deceitful assistant to the prophet. Naaman’s healing points toward a changed relationship between Israel and Syria as the worship of God extends beyond the borders of Israel by a general who has been raiding the land of Israel.”<sup>11</sup>

### + ILLUSTRATION

What does the kingdom of God look like? If there were a checklist of the types of people that were present in heaven, who would be included? It is easy in Western culture to have one type of person in mind. Our churches often are not an exact picture of what heaven will be like. Pause for a few minutes and reflect on the diversity that will be found in the new heavens and the new earth. There will be people who had clean records, and there will be convicted felons. There will be people who were never hungry a day in their lives and people who struggled to survive every day. There will be people from every continent, every tribe, every tongue, every nation, and every demographic you can imagine. Most people will not be like you. What a glorious day that will be! Naaman’s entry into the kingdom is a foretaste of the many Gentiles that will be welcomed into the kingdom.

#### References

1. Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 146.
2. T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, vol. 13 in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1985) [Logos].
3. Richard D. Patterson and Hermann J. Austel, “1 & 2 Kings,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017) [Logos].
4. Larry Crabb, *Inside Out* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2007), 216.
5. T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, vol. 13 in *Word Biblical Commentary* [Logos].
6. R. D. Patterson and Hermann J. Austel, “1, 2 Kings,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 185.
7. Richard D. Patterson and Hermann J. Austel, “1 & 2 Kings,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* [Logos].
8. Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 8 in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 1995), 269.
9. Havilah Dharamraj, “2 Kings,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 449.
10. Peter J. Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, in *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006) [Logos].
11. August H. Konkel, *1 & 2 Kings*, in *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 427.