

Lesson 95

Elisha and the Syrians

God healed Naaman's leprosy and protected Elisha from the Syrians.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. During the time of the divided kingdom, God used prophets to give messages to the people of Israel and Judah. God also worked miracles through the prophets to show his power and to bring glory to his name.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Slide #5

Refer to Lesson 92 Theme Poster. The prophet Elijah stood for God on Mount Carmel against the false prophets of Baal. When Elijah prayed, God sent fire from heaven to burn up his altar. The people of Israel saw that the Lord was the only true God. Baal was nothing.

Refer to Lesson 93 Theme Poster. But King Ahab and Queen Jezebel didn't repent and turn to the Lord. Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah, forcing him to flee. Elijah became very discouraged because of the nation's idolatry, but God sent an angel to give him food and then spoke to him on the mountain to encourage him and tell him he was not alone.

Whom did God call to be the prophet after Elijah? Elisha.

Elijah found Elisha when he was plowing a field in his hometown. Elisha obeyed God's calling and followed Elijah. After Elijah was taken to heaven, God gave Elisha a double portion of his spirit. We see the power of God on Elisha in the miracles God enabled him to do. Elisha parted the Jordan River, just as Elijah had done, then he helped a widow in a desperate situation.

Refer to Lesson 94 Theme Poster. What miracle did God do for the widow so she wouldn't lose her sons to slavery? Her small jar remained full of oil and did not run out until she and her sons filled all the vessels they had borrowed.

The widow was able to sell the oil to pay off her husband's debt, keep her sons, and provide for her family. Elisha's next miracle was raising a boy from the dead! These miracles showed that Elisha was a true man of God.

In today's lesson, we'll see how God used Elisha to glorify himself among the people of Syria. The Syrians were a people to the north of Israel, and they were often raiding and fighting with Israel. On one of their raids into Israel, the commander of the Syrian army captured a young girl. When he brought her back to Syria, this girl became a servant for his wife.

Imagine an enemy nation riding into your town, stealing from your people, and then taking you away from your family and home. Then you're made a servant of these people. How would you feel if this happened to you? Allow discussion.

Pass out the Naaman Cue Cards.
Most of us would be pretty upset, maybe even bitter and angry that God let this happen. But not this girl. She chose to serve her new masters and to show God's love to them.

Naaman Is Healed

Pass out the Naaman Cue Cards. Turn to 2 Kings 5. As we go through this account, those of you who have a cue card, be ready to read your line when I call on you.

Slide #6

2 Kings 5:1

Let's find out about the commander of the Syrian army, who was the servant girl's master. Who will read 2 Kings 5:1? Assign a reader.
What was the name of the commander of the Syrian army? Naaman.
What else do we learn about Naaman from this verse? He was a great man, favored because of his military victories; he was a mighty man of valor; he was a leper.

Naaman was a great man in his country. The king of Syria, his master, favored Naaman because of his courage and successful military campaigns. Naaman was famous and wealthy. But he had one major problem—he was a leper.

Leprosy was an incurable skin disease. It was believed to be contagious, so everyone would avoid you once you got it. It was also a death sentence. Naaman's fame, courage, and wealth could not save him from leprosy. But the Israelite servant girl was not happy that her master had a terrible disease. She was concerned and wanted to help him.

Who has card 1? Read what the servant girl said to Naaman's wife. Have student read card.
What prophet in Samaria do you think the servant girl was talking about? Elisha.

Samaria was the capital city of Israel. The servant girl believed that if only Naaman were to go to Elisha, God would heal him.

Naaman's wife was excited to hear that there was a way her husband could be cured. She hurried to tell Naaman about the prophet in Israel. Then Naaman went to the king of Syria and repeated what the girl had said.

Who has card 2? Read what the king of Syria said. Have student read card.

The king of Syria wanted Naaman to be healed, so he sent him to Israel. Naaman gathered expensive gifts to take with him, a lot of silver and gold and 10 sets of clothes. Naaman took the letter from his king and went to the king of Israel. The king of Israel at this time was the son of Ahab and Jezebel. His name was Jehoram. The letter from the king of Syria said that he'd sent Naaman to him to be cured of his leprosy. When he read this letter, Jehoram tore his clothing, a sign of great distress.

Who has card 3? Read what Jehoram said. Have student read card.

Even though Jehoram was an evil king because he didn't stop the idolatry in his nation, what did he understand only God could do? Cure someone of leprosy.

What was Jehoram worried would happen if Naaman wasn't cured? The Syrians would come fight against Israel.

Jehoram was distressed because this request for healing was impossible from man's point of view. And if Naaman wasn't cured, Jehoram feared the Syrians would attack Israel. This could lead to war!

But Elisha heard about the letter and how Jehoram was upset. He sent word for Naaman to come to him so that Naaman would know there was a true prophet of God in Israel.

Naaman came to Elisha's house with his horses, chariots, soldiers, and servants. It would have been an impressive group arriving at Elisha's house!

But Elisha didn't even come out to greet him. Instead, he sent his servant to deliver a message.

Who has card 4? Read what Elisha's servant said to Naaman. Have student read card.

What instructions did Naaman have to follow to be cured? Wash in the Jordan River seven times.

That seems pretty simple, but it was not what Naaman was expecting. In fact, he was furious!

Who has card 5? Read what Naaman said. Have student read card.

Naaman was angry that the healing did not go as he imagined. He expected Elisha to come out and pray and wave his hand and cure him. Instead, Elisha didn't even talk to him! A servant gave him instructions to wash in the Jordan River.

Naaman was a proud army commander; he didn't want to wash in one of Israel's rivers. In fact, he said in his country there were better rivers. Why couldn't he wash in one of them? He was ready to give up and go home.

Thankfully, Naaman had servants who loved him.

Who has card 6? Read what the servants said. Have student read card.

The servants understood that Naaman's pride was keeping him from obeying Elisha's instructions. Naaman would've been willing to do something challenging to be healed. But he needed to be willing to humble himself and to obey the word of God as given through Elisha. He had to have faith that the God of Israel could heal him.

Slide #7

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. Naaman did listen to his servants, and he went to the Jordan River and dipped down seven times. When he came up out of the water the seventh time, he was healed! His leprosy was gone, and his skin was as clean and clear as it was when he was a child!

Think for a minute about all the events God worked out for this miracle to happen. God let a young Israelite girl be captured and taken to serve in Naaman's household. God allowed Naaman to get leprosy, an incurable disease. God arranged for Elisha to hear about the king of Syria's request to heal Naaman. God used Naaman's servants to urge Naaman to follow Elisha's instructions. Then God healed an "enemy" commander.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What attribute of God describes how he's in complete control of everything? Sovereign.

Slide #8

Slide #9

Let's start our Class Notes. You will write the answer next to each question. You may want to write answers on the board for students to copy.

Who will read #1 and give us the answer? Choose a reader. Naaman. Have students complete #1.

And #2? Who will read that? Choose a reader. Servant girl. Have students complete #2.

Who tore his clothes when he got the letter from the king of Syria? That's #3. Choose a reader. King of Israel. Have students complete #3.

Right. His name was Jehoram.

Now #4, who will read that? Choose a reader. Elisha. Have students complete #4.

Who will read #5 and give us the answer? Choose a reader. Naaman's servants. Have students complete #5.

Gehazi Is Punished

How do you think Naaman and his servants felt after seeing this miracle? Allow discussion.

Naaman returned to Elisha's house. Who has card 7? Read what Naaman said. Have student read card.

And card 8? Read Elisha's response. Have student read card.

Naaman, the commander from an enemy nation, recognized that the God of Israel was the true God. He wanted to give something to Elisha to show his gratitude for being healed.

But Elisha refused any gifts. He could have received silver and gold and clothing from Naaman. Why do you think Elisha didn't take anything? Allow discussion.

Elisha wanted God to get all the honor and glory for this miracle, so he refused to take anything from Naaman. Instead, Elisha sent Naaman home in peace.

But not everyone agreed with Elisha's decision. Elisha had a servant named Gehazi.

Who has card 9? Read what Gehazi said. Have student read card.

Gehazi thought Elisha was too nice to Naaman, an enemy Syrian. He thought Elisha should've made him pay. He ran after Naaman's group. Naaman saw him coming and stopped his chariot. He asked Gehazi, "Is all well?"

Then Gehazi lied! He made up a story about two young men, prophets of God, arriving at Elisha's house after Naaman left. Gehazi asked for a talent of silver and two sets of clothing, supposedly for the prophets.

But who was the silver and clothing really for? Gehazi, himself.

Naaman believed Gehazi's lie and was happy to give him what he asked. Gehazi accepted two talents of silver and two sets of clothing from Naaman then returned to Elisha. Gehazi stashed the gifts in the house then went and stood before Elisha. Elisha asked where he'd gone, and Gehazi lied again! He said he hadn't gone anywhere.

But God had let Elisha see everything that happened between Gehazi and Naaman. Elisha knew Gehazi was lying and was sad that Gehazi was focused on collecting material things. He pronounced a judgment on Gehazi.

Who will read card 10? Have student read card.
What was God's punishment on Gehazi? Leprosy.

Slide #10

Slide #11

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. God showed Naaman and his people that he is the only true God. He healed Naaman of his leprosy, an incurable disease! But Gehazi was greedy. He wanted the material things Naaman had brought to give Elisha. He went against the authority of Elisha by asking for gifts as "payment" for the miracle. That was what Elisha didn't want. Elisha wanted God to get all the glory and praise for the miracle. As punishment, Gehazi received the leprosy of Naaman.

Let's answer the next two questions in the Class Notes. Who will read #6 and give us the answer? Choose a reader. Elisha. Have students complete #6.

And who lied to receive the gifts Elisha turned down? That's #7. Choose a reader. Gehazi. Have students complete #7.

Elisha Is Protected

Let's look at another miracle God used to glorify himself among the people of Syria. Sometime later, the king of Syria went to war against Israel. But every time he moved somewhere to attack, God told Elisha where he was going. Then Elisha would warn Jehoram, the king of Israel. Jehoram would then defend those places and keep the Syrians from winning battles. In this way, Elisha saved Israel several times from the Syrians.

This made the king of Syria angry as his battle plans continued to be foiled. He thought that one of his own servants was betraying him by revealing his plans to the king of Israel. But his servants said that it was Elisha, the man of God, telling the king all his plans. The king of Syria determined to capture Elisha. He sent a great army to the city of Dothan, where Elisha was staying.

Slide #12

Slide #13

Slide #14

2 Kings 6:15-19

Turn to 2 Kings 6. Who will read verses 15-19? Assign a reader. Elisha's servant got up early in the morning. What did he see all around the city? An army with horses and chariots.

This wasn't a small raiding party of Syrians. The king had sent the army after Elisha. The servant was afraid and asked what they should do. Elisha said that they had a bigger army than the Syrians, but the servant didn't see anyone protecting them!

What did Elisha pray for his servant? For the Lord to open his eyes. What did the young man see? The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Wow! God let Elisha and his servant see the mighty angelic army protecting them with horses and fiery chariots! That would be an awesome sight.

What did Elisha pray for next? He asked God to strike the Syrians with blindness.

God answered, and the Syrian army was blinded. With the men no longer a threat, Elisha led them to the capital city of Samaria, where King Jehoram was. Then Elisha prayed again, and the men's eyes were opened to see that they were within an enemy city!

King Jehoram asked Elisha what to do with the captured Syrians. Elisha said to give them a meal and send them home. They showed mercy by not killing these men, who were sent to harm Elisha. The miracle of blindness not only protected Elisha and his city but also showed the Syrians the power of God. They returned home and did not raid Israel for quite some time.

Slide #15

Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #8? Choose a reader. King of Syria. Have students complete #8.

Who will read #9 about who was blinded? Choose a reader. Syrian army. Have students complete #9.

And #10? Who will read that? Choose a reader. God. Have students complete #10.

Application

Slide #16

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Elisha was used by God to show his power among the people of Syria, a nation that was often warring against Israel. God's sovereignty and power were displayed in the events leading to Naaman's healing. A captive servant girl shared her faith in the God of Israel, and God healed Naaman. Naaman no longer believed in the false gods his people worshipped. He knew that only the true God had the power to cure leprosy. Elisha's servant Gehazi did not fear the Lord. He sought to gain material wealth from God's miracle of healing. As punishment, God gave him leprosy.

We're actually a lot like Naaman. Naaman's biggest problem was leprosy. What's our biggest problem? Sin.

Leprosy was an incurable disease ending in death. Naaman's fame, courage, and wealth couldn't save him from his condition. Our sin results in eternal death and separation from God. It's a problem we are all born with, regardless of our family, fame, or wealth. We can't save ourselves by being good or giving gifts.

But God showed his love and mercy by sending Jesus to die and take the punishment for our sin. Jesus said he is the only way to heaven. We must believe in him and repent of our sins to be saved. That requires humility because we must admit we can't save ourselves. In order to be healed, Naaman had to humble himself and obey God's instructions given through Elisha. But the rewards of obedience are wonderful! Like Naaman, we can be washed clean. And when we trust in Jesus, we will be seen as righteous before God.

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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