

Elijah and Elisha

#17, famine and leprosy, II Kings 4:38-5:14

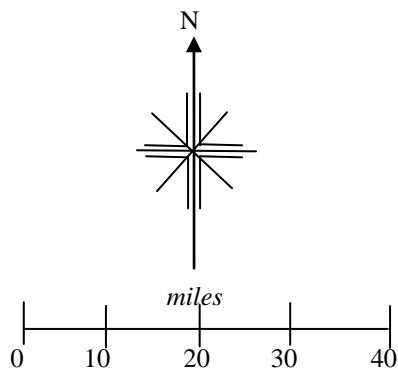
We have seen a number of times how, when the Lord performs a miracle, through His prophet, He makes the statement, “so that they may know that there is a God in Israel”. After years of idolatry, most the nation had forgotten about the one true God. This lesson starts with another miracle that the Lord performs through Elisha.

38 When Elisha returned to Gilgal, there was a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”

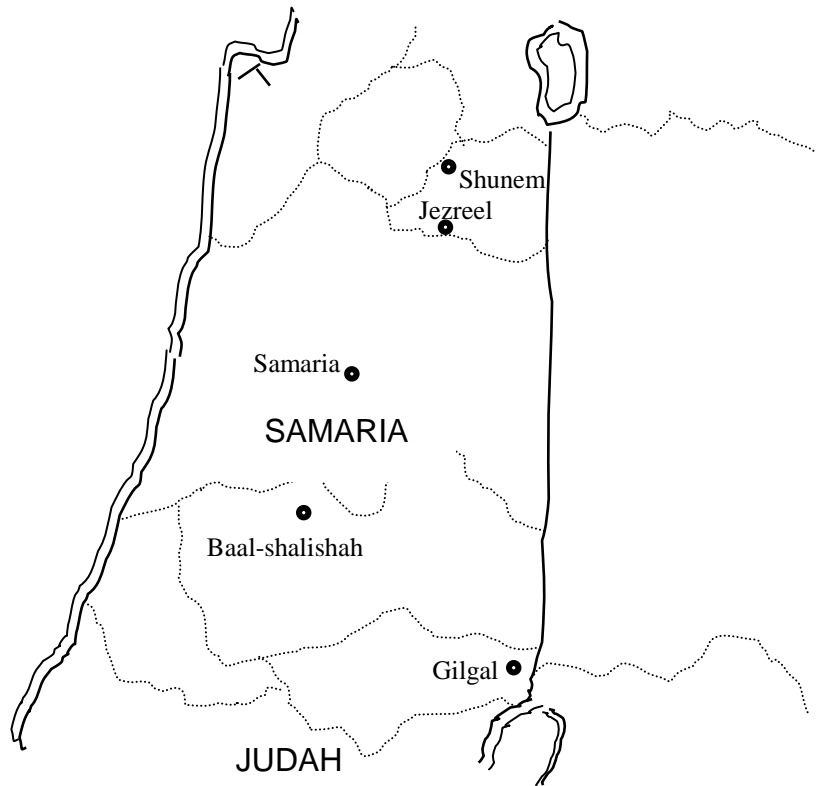
39 Then one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, for they did not know what they were. 40 So they poured it out for the men to eat. And as they were eating of the stew, they cried out and said, “O man of God, there is death in the pot.” And they were unable to eat.

[1.] v:38, famine, Recall that the Lord caused one during the time of Ahab. Why might you conclude that the same problem still existed?

[2.] v:39-40, unable to eat, What ingredients probably caused the problem?



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41 But he said, "Now bring meal." He threw it into the pot and said, "Pour it out for the people that they may eat." Then there was no harm in the pot.

42 Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he (**Elisha**) said, " Give them to the people that they may eat."

43 His attendant said, "What, will I set this before a hundred men?" But he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have some left over.

[3.] v:41, no harm, Why might it be true that the miracles are the Lord way, to remind sons of the prophets, to continually speak of His power?

[4.] v:42, Baal-shalishah, On the map, you can see that this was also an area of famine. What do you feel was the man's motivation in sharing with Elisha?

[5.] v:42 again, he (**Elisha**) said, The value of this food was like gold and Elisha could have sold it and built up his purse. Instead, what did he do?

[6.] v:43, His attendant, One can't help but think this man had seen the Lord's power in many miracles however, what did his words imply?

[7.] v:43 again, thus says the Lord, What miracle did Elisha predict?

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44 So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord.

[8.], v:44, some left over, If this miracle were heard throughout Israel, how might it help the faith of the people?

Before we leave the account of the famine, there is one fact we'll look at. The name of Elisha's "attendant" (v:43) is not given nor is the name of his "servant" (v:38). However, in the last lesson, the name of Elisha's servant is given. He was Gehazi. This is mentioned because both of these "unnamed" could have also been Gehazi. In the remainder of this lesson and the next lesson, Gehazi is again identified as Elisha's servant.

In verses we just looked at (v:43), it seems the attendant (Gehazi?) was skeptical about the donated food being able to feed many people or did he really want Elisha to sell it for the money? What ever! In the next lessons we will see more about Gehazi.

We move North to Aram, a strong empire North of Israel. A fearless soldier had a disease that made, even him, experience real fear!

II Ki 5:1 Now Naaman (*na'-a-man*), captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, but he was a leper.

[9.] v:1, Naaman, List 4 or 5 descriptions of Naaman.

[10.] v:2 again, Lord had given victory to Aram, Why might it possible that, in our time, God is giving victories to the enemies of Christianity so that in the future He can accomplish great things?

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2 Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy.

4 Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel." 5 Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold and ten changes of clothes.

6 He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy." 7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me." 8 It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

[11.] v:2, a little girl, In all honesty what do you think Naaman's wife thought about the life of the little captive?

[12.] v:3, I wish that my master, Even with all her troubles, the little girl knew some very important things. Where would she have ever learned them?

[13.] v:4-5 again, From what Naaman took along we can conclude:

a) this would be a freebe.

b) better safe than sorry!

c) he was willing to pay a great deal for health.

[14.] v:6-7, that you may cure him, From v:4 it seems the little girl's message was passed on accurately. Apparently in the hand of the king of Aram things got confused How did the king of Israel respond?

[15.] v:8, he shall know Once again, What was Elisha's real motive in helping the king?

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9 So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha.
10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean."
11 But Naaman was furious and went away and said, "Behold, I thought, '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 cure the leper.'
12 "Are not Abanah 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 Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, "My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says 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.

[16.] v:9-12, Naaman was furious, **Why was Naaman so angry?**

[17.] v:11-12 again, **Back in question [9.] we listed some descriptions of Naaman. Write down some new things you observed about him?**

[18.] **Something to think about. As believers, if our self image is invaded, what personal secrets might be revealed?**

[19.] v:13, servants came near, **Here is another example of personal importance getting in the way of truth. What did those lowly servants conclude that Naaman could not?**

[20.] v:14, So he went, **What was the result of Naaman's step of faith?**

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NOTES