

II KINGS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Kings chapter 5 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Tonight we will continue to study the ministry of Elisha the prophet and what a man of God he was. And tonight we will see some very interesting miracles that God allows Elisha to do and there is that spiritual application that I also believe is important for us to understand. With that said, let's begin reading in II Kings chapter 5, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

II KINGS 5

VERSE 1

1. The Syrian's, a nation to the north of Israel, were a persistent enemy of Israel and even to Judah. (I Kings 22:35-36). And now we are told of Naaman, who was their chief military commander, a great warrior, an honorable man, a valiant man, but he was unsaved. But notice what it says here about Naaman, "**because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria.**" Isn't that interesting, the LORD gave Syria victory by the hands of this man, Naaman. We should not be surprised because He used men like Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Alexander the Great and here we are told He used Naaman!

2. As great as this man was, as powerful as he was, he had a devastating problem and that problem was that he was a leper! Thus, it didn't matter how successful he was, he was going to die as a result of this disease! What is leprosy? We are told, "Ancient leprosy began as small, red spots on the skin. Before too long the spots get bigger, and start to turn white, with sort of a shiny, or scaly appearance. Pretty soon the spots spread over the whole body and hair begins to fall out - first from the head, then even from the eyebrows. As things get worse, finger nails and toenails become loose; they start to rot and eventually fall off. Then the joints of fingers and toes begin to rot and fall off piece by piece. Gums begin to shrink and they can't hold the teeth anymore, so each of them is lost. Leprosy keeps eating away at your face until literally the nose, the palate, and even the eyes rot - and the victim wastes away until death." (David Guzik, II Kings 5:1).

3. In the Scriptures, leprosy is a type of sin. There is no cure for it, and thus, like sin, God can only cure it. Thus, it is only God who can save a sinner. And think about this, as many good points as Naaman had, he was like everyone of us apart from Christ, on a death march as he was dead in his trespasses and sins. You can try to cover up the leprosy as much as possible, but eventually it would be seen just as sin is in our own lives. And of all the things that Naaman could have, why did God allow him to have leprosy? I believe it was the thing that would bring him to the true and living God as we will see and God will do whatever it takes to draw us to Him!

VERSES 2-3

1. During Syria's raids into Israel, a Jewish girl was taken captive and placed as a slave ministering to Naaman's wife. We don't know how young she was, but I am sure she was probably a teenager when she was taken captive. And as you read this story you see that she has no bitterness, no anger towards Naaman and his wife for the situation she is in. Why? I believe it was because of her faith in the Lord. You see, He was in control of her life and she rested in that. And as we will see, she is like a missionary that was taken captive because, by her actions, she witnesses to this family of the true and living God!

Now, did she know why she was taken captive? Absolutely not, and yet she still shines forth the love of God, she serves this family who has taken her from her home, from her family, from her friends, and she serves them faithfully! Remember what Mordecai said to his niece Esther, who was in Persia. **"Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"** Esther 4:14. And we do see this played out as this young woman has no concern for herself, but for her master, Naaman, who has leprosy. She has compassion on this man who has taken her captive and folk's, that kind of love can only come from God as you rest in Him knowing that He is in control. You see, it was such a time as this that God had brought her to this place and she tells Naaman's wife that there is a man in Israel who is a prophet of God that can heal Naaman and that man is Elisha!

VERSES 4-6

1. When Naaman hears that there is a possibility he can be cleansed, he goes to his king and tells him what his servant girl told him and the king, Ben-Hadad II, is more than happy to do everything he can to see his military leader cleansed of this deadly disease! In fact, he really must have loved this guy, because, according to the estimations of Russell Dilday, he sent with him more than \$1.2 million worth of treasures to Israel, to bring to Elisha. Thus, how will Jehoram respond when Naaman brings this letter to him, seeking to be healed? Let's read on and see.

VERSE 7

1. Keep in mind that Naaman is looking for Elisha, but he goes to the king thinking the king of Israel must know who this prophet of God is, but the reality is, he is at odds with Elisha.

2. The other thing I want you to notice is the king's response to this letter. He says, "**Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me.**" In other words, Jehoram knew that leprosy is incurable and thus, he thinks that Naaman and the king of Syria are looking for a fight. The sad thing here is he never even thinks to bring this before God and the reason for this is that he did not have a relationship with God. But what about when we find ourselves in similar situations? When we are in a hopeless situation, a situation in which there is no cure you might say, do we give up or do we bring it before the Lord, the creator of heaven and earth? A great question!

VERSES 8-12

1. When Elisha hears what the king of Israel is doing, that he is in mourning for he thinks the Syrians are going to destroy him, Elisha rebukes him and tells him to calm down, chill out. You see, this was a crisis to the king of Israel because he had no relationship with God and thus, Elisha tells the king to send Naaman to him and he will see that there is a prophet of God in Israel, maybe not at the royal palace, but in Israel!

2. So Naaman goes to the house of Elisha to be cured of his leprosy. Now, remember that Naaman was use to being honored, with all the pomp and circumstance that went with his position. But now his pride is hurt for Elisha did not even come out to meet him, but sent his servant out. Not only that, but he was told to bath in the dirty, muddy, Jordan River. He could have stayed at home and bathed in the clear, fresh waters in Damascus that flowed from the snow-covered mountains into the Abanah and Pharpar rivers. This was just too foolish for him to do, so he departed, still a leper. And he just didn't leave, he went away mad, he was angry that this is how he was treated! His blood was boiling, how could he be treated like this!

3. What a picture of people today who are dead in their trespasses and sins and refuse to come to Christ. Why do they do this? Because they reject the work of Christ, what He did at Calvary, because it seems just too foolish for them. That God became man and hung on a tree for our sins, that is ridiculous. People have this expectation of how God should do things and when they are told otherwise, many just refuse to believe! They believe that they have to do something to earn their way into heaven and because of their unbelief; they miss the miracle of the new birth into the family of God, because it is too foolish and goes against their prideful ways of doing things. That was Naaman and that is a picture of many today!

VERSE 13

1. Now you have to give a lot of credit to Naaman's servants because he is so angry you would not want to say anything to him and get yourself in trouble. And yet they did because they loved him that much and they were willing to go out on a limb and share this with him. And when you think about it, his servants were a little wiser than Naaman. They told him basically, "If Elisha told you to go out and slay a dragon and then you would be healed, you would have done that great thing. If he told you to climb the highest mountain and you would be healed, you would have done that great thing. Or even slay 1,000 animals as a sacrifice and you would be healed, you would have done that great thing. But now that you are told to do something that seems foolish, your pride is insulted and you don't want to do it." How many times does our pride get in our way and we miss the miracle that God is trying to do in our lives? What a great lesson for us and for Naaman. But how will he respond to what they are telling him? Let's read on and see!

VERSE 14

1. Naaman did obey the words of Elisha and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan River. Now think about this for a minute. This was purely an act of faith. He humbled himself, got rid of his own ideas on how to be clean, and obeyed. And the first time, nothing happened. Same with the second and third and maybe he started to think this is foolish and he could have given up even at the sixth time and nothing happened, but he didn't. He continued on and as he obeyed the words of Elisha, his skin was restored to that of a little child! No Botox here! God answered his faith with this miraculous healing.

2. Listen to what Russell Dilday wrote regarding this event. “The simple method of this miracle, performed without the prophet there, did give God the credit. It was obvious that the healing came from Yahweh rather than from the sort of magical incantation that Naaman had anticipated.” And as we will see, that is the whole point of this, what transpired in Naaman’s life, to bring him to Yahweh, the true and living God! And folk’s, God still works like that today; He brings events in peoples lives to draw them to Him!

VERSES 15-16

1. Now don’t think that it was just this miracle that brought Naaman to saving faith. It was the Word of God that was spoken and then came forth that brought him to saving faith! And Naaman does not just return home, he goes to Elisha and thanks him for this miracle in his life, knowing that it is the God of Israel that has done this through Elisha. And he wants to give Elisha a gift, but he refuses. Why do you think he refused the gift? Maybe to show that this was not something that he had done but God did, and thus, God gets the glory, He gets all the praise! Yes, a worker is worthy of his wages but too often today we see people trying to make a profit off of the things they are doing for God and that is wrong!

VERSES 17-19

1. Naaman was new in the faith and even though his heart was right, his actions were wrong. You see, he wanted dirt from Israel to build an altar to the true and living God and not to be built upon pagan soil. That was a common practice with the pagan nations. And even though he rejected the false gods, because he was the king's right hand man, he had to accompany the king at these worship services. If you were Elisha, what would you say to this new believer about his actions?

Well, we don't have to guess because we are told what Elisha does. But I think most of us would have gone ballistic over this. But notice what Elisha tells him to do, **"Go in peace."** Why would Elisha say that when his actions were obviously wrong? First of all this is a new believer, but more than that, I think Elisha is showing us that he is not the Holy Spirit. You see, the longer you walk with the Lord the less you get away with. And God has taught you through the years the things you need to know and do. That doesn't mean you can't lovingly share with someone what God has placed upon your heart, but you can't play the Holy Spirit in a persons life because you are not the Holy Spirit! You see, Elisha did not tell Naaman that his actions were right or wrong but again, I believe He left this up to God to deal with Naaman on and his faith would grow, God would make sure of that! But don't let that negate your responsibility to tell someone if they are living in sin, if they are a believer!

VERSES 20-24

1. Gehazi saw this golden opportunity passing him by and thus, he could not just sit back and let this happen. He goes after Naaman to get some of this wealth. And do you see what Gehazi is doing here. He is rationalizing in his mind that what he is doing is not a sin. He has come to the conclusion that there is nothing wrong with receiving a gift.

2. And now we see this little sin, if any sin is little, grow to a lie. He tells Naaman that a couple of guys, students from the school of the prophets came by after you left, and you know how it is to be a student, these guys have nothing. There were no school loans! And so he tells Naaman that my master told me to go and obtain some money and clothes from you for these kids.

3. Naaman sends these gifts with his servants to bring them back, but as they approach his house, he sends them away so that Elisha won't find out what is going on. He was deliberately hiding them from Elisha because he knew what he was doing was wrong and yet he still did it! We can hide things from people but we can't hide anything from God and we will see that in the next few verses as Gehazi gets busted you might say!

VERSES 25-27

1. Gehazi stand before Elisha as if nothing has happened and God gives him a chance to fess up, to speak what he has done, to confess his sin. It is not that God doesn't know, but He wants Gehazi to confess and see that what he has rationalized in his mind was wrong, and not go on and believe a lie. He does the same with us because He loves us that much.

2. But Gehazi lies some more and we see here with Elisha the gift of the word of knowledge in operation. Not only did Elisha know what Gehazi did, but what he was going to use that money for. And you know what, the work of God is so great, and the time is so short, that we are not to take time and be served, but to serve. There is nothing wrong in owning a house or car or anything else unless it becomes a hindrance in your walk with God and the work that God is trying to do through you. For Gehazi, he wanted to buy clothes, olive groves, vineyards, sheep, oxen, male and female servants, and to multiply his money and it is this greed that the Lord called him on and busted him. And because of his actions, judgment came upon him and he was a leper. And not only Gehazi, but upon his family, his descendants! Do you see how destructive sin is!

3. Several years ago there was a story in a Los Angeles newspaper that went like this,

A San Diego patrolman pulled over a driver and informed him that because he was wearing a seatbelt he had just won \$5,000 in a safety competition!

“What are you going to do with the prize money?” the officer asked.

The man responded, “I guess I’ll go to driving school and get my license!”

At that moment his wife who was seated next to him chimed in, “Officer, don’t listen to him. His a smart-aleck when he is drunk!”

This woke up the guy in the backseat who, when he saw the officer, blurted out, “I knew we wouldn’t get far in this stolen car!”

And at that moment there was a knock from the trunk and a voice said, “Are we over the boarder yet?”

- Source Unknown

Funny, yes, but you see, **BUSTED!** And that was Gehazi. It was not that God did not provide for them, he just wanted more and greed got the better of him and it brought him down and it will do the same in our lives!

II KINGS 6

VERSES 1-3

1. The school of the prophets was growing under Elisha, and they needed to expand their building to accommodate the growing number of students. Notice there was no, “How to increase your school of evangelism” program, this was a work of God as the Word of God was being spoken. That is how church growth should be, not artificial!
2. Also, notice that these prophets were to do the work. Too often today people want things handed to them, they are not interested in working, but just the benefits from others doing the work and that is wrong!
3. Elisha was more of a people person, and when the students ask him to go out with them, he does go out to assist them with the work. Elijah, on the other hand, spoke words of judgment and then would split; he was more of a loner.

VERSES 4-7

1. Now ax heads were expensive and hard to get. You could not run out to Fleet Farm or Menards and buy another one. And so when this young prophet lost his ax head, the one he had borrowed, he goes to Elisha for help in this situation. And Elisha puts the stick into the water and the ax head begins to float. That tells me that God is concerned even with the small stuff in our life, even an ax head you might say. God is deeply involved in the day-to-day happenings of His people, so much so that He has even numbered the hairs of our head. And we all know that that number is constantly changing!

2. I think there is another spiritual application that we can glean from this story. In our own spiritual walk, are there times when we lose our sharpness, we have lost the cutting edge of our faith and have become dull in a sense? I think that is what the Lord is showing us here. Then how do we get that back? By placing the stick in the water or by going back to the cross, looking to Jesus and that is the only way we will get our spiritual edge back. It is then we have to pick it up, do those things we were doing before. How important that is for us because I do believe we all encounter this from time-to-time!

VERSES 8-10

1. The king of Syria, Ben-Hadad II, is planning on attacking Israel and sets up these ambushes for the king of Israel. And every time he sets his plan in motion, Elisha warns the king of Israel, Jehoram, and he goes another way. Thus, Syria's attempts at capturing the king have repeatedly failed.

VERSES 11-12

1. You have to love what is going on here. It is a great story! The king of Syria thinks that there is an informant within the camp that is passing on the war strategies to Israel. And that just makes sense, since every strategy is made known to Israel and their plan is foiled! There has to be a traitor, that is the only explanation. But one of his servants tells the king that there are no traders within the camp, but a man of God, Elisha by name, and he knows everything you are doing, even what you speak in your bedroom behind closed doors! What is Ben-Hadad II going to do to rectify this problem? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 13-14

1. Again, this is funny to me. You see, if Elisha knows what the king of Syria is going to do before he does it, then how can any plan work. But he tries anyway and he sends his troops to bring back Elisha, and they surround the city of Dothan, which was about 12 miles north of Samaria, where Elisha was staying. So picture what is going on here, the Syrian army surrounds Elisha, not a good set of events, but again, God is in control and there is nothing to fear, as we will see!

VERSES 15-17

1. Now as Elisha's servant wakes up and he goes to get some water he sees the Syrians surrounding them, and returns to Elisha, bringing him this disturbing news. It is all over, this guy is thinking, there is no way we can escape. And Elisha is wiping his eyes, waking up to this news. What will he do?

Well, as Elisha wakes up we see that he is not worried, but why? Because he sees the situation a little different than his servant does, he sees the armies of God around him protecting him. Yes, his servant did not see all these angels surrounding them but that does not mean it was not true. Spurgeon put it like this,

“That you have not perceived spiritual things is true; but it is no proof that there are none to perceive. The whole case is like that of the Irishman who tried to upset evidence by non-evidence. Four witnesses saw him commit a murder. He pleaded that he was not guilty, and wished to establish his innocence by producing forty persons who did not see him do it. Of what use would that have been? So, if forty people declare that there is no power of the Holy Ghost going with the word, this only proves that the forty people do not know what others do know.”

- Charles Spurgeon, Three Sights Worth Seeing

Thus, Elisha prays that his servant would be able to see what he sees. F. B. Meyer tells us this, “If our eyes were opened, we should see the angel-hosts as an encircling fence of fire; but whether we see them or not, they are certainly there.” How true that is!

2. Isn't it interesting how two people can look at the same situation and one is very discouraged and the other very encouraged. Why? Because one looks through the eyes of flesh, and it seems hopeless. The other looks through the eyes of faith, and they can rest in that and be filled with joy, and not discouraged. G. Campbell Morgan tells us, "Faith is never the imagining of unreal things. It is the grip of things which cannot be demonstrated to the senses, but which are real. The chariots of horses and fire were actually there." May we have the eyes of faith to see what God has for us!

3. I want to share a few faith stories with you so that you too can see that God still works in our lives as He worked in the life of Elisha. We are told,

The Reverend John G. Paton, pioneer missionary in the New Hebrides Islands, told a thrilling story involving the protective care of angels. Hostile natives surrounded his mission headquarters one night, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. John Paton and his wife prayed all during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see that, unaccountably, the attackers had left. They thanked God for delivering them.

A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Jesus Christ, and Mr. Paton, remembering what had happened, asked the chief what had kept him and his men from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, “Who were all those men you had with you there?” The missionary answered, “There were no men there; just my wife and I.” The chief argued that they had seen many men standing guard – hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords in their hands. They seemed to circle the mission station so that the natives were afraid to attack. Only then did Mr. Paton realize that God had sent His angels to protect them. The chief agreed that there was no other explanation. Could it be that God had sent a legion of angels to protect His servants, whose lives were being endangered?

- Billy Graham, *Angels God's Secret Agents*, pp. 16-17

Also, we are told,

A celebrated Philadelphia neurologist had gone to bed after an exceptionally tiring day. Suddenly he was awakened by someone knocking on his door. Opening it he found a little girl, poorly dressed and deeply upset. She told him her mother was very sick and asked him if he would please come with her. It was a bitterly cold, snowy night, but though he was bone tired, the doctor dressed and followed the girl.

As the Reader's Digest reports the story, he found the mother desperately ill with pneumonia. After arranging for medical care, he complimented the sick woman on the intelligence and persistence of her little daughter. The woman looked at him strangely and then said, "My daughter died a month ago." She added, "Her shoes and coat are in the clothes closet there." Amazed and perplexed, the doctor went to the closet and opened the door. There hung the very coat worn by the little girl who had brought him to tend to her mother. It was warm and dry and could not possibly have been out in the wintry night.

Could the doctor have been called in the hour of desperate need by an angel who had appeared as this woman's young daughter? Was this the work of God's angels on behalf of the sick woman?

- Billy Graham, Angels God's Secret Agents, p. 16

And folks, what God did back then during the time of Elisha, He is still doing today. Case in point:

Corrie Ten Boom writes of a remarkable experience at the terrible Nazi Ravensbruck prison camp:

"Together we entered the terrifying building. At a table were women who took away all our possessions. Everyone had to undress completely and then go to a room where her hair was checked.

“I asked a woman who was busy checking the possessions of the new arrivals if I might use the toilet. She pointed to a door, and I discovered that the convenience was nothing more than a hole in the shower-room floor. Betsie, [her sister], stayed close beside me all the time. Suddenly I had an inspiration, ‘Quick, take off your woolen underwear,’ I whispered to her. I rolled it up with mine and laid the bundle in a corner with my little Bible. The spot was alive with cockroaches, but I didn’t worry about that. I felt wonderfully relieved and happy. ‘The Lord is busy answering our prayers, Betsie,’ I whispered. ‘We shall not have to make the sacrifice of all our clothes.’

“We hurried back to the row of women waiting to be undressed. A little later, after we had had our showers and put on our shirts and shabby dresses, I hid the roll of underwear and my Bible under my dress. It did bulge out obviously through my dress; but I prayed, ‘Lord, cause now Thine angels to surround me; and let them not be transparent today, for the guards must not see me.’ I felt perfectly at ease. Calmly I passed the guards. Everyone was checked, from the front, the sides, the back. Not a bulge escaped the eyes of the guard. The women just in front of me had hidden a woolen vest under her dress; it was taken from her. They let me pass, for they did not see me. Betsie, right behind me, was searched.

“But outside awaited another danger. On each side of the door were women who looked everyone over for a second time. They felt over the body of each one who passed. I knew they would not see me, for the angels were still surrounding me. I was not even surprised when they passed me by; but within me rose the jubilant cry, ‘O Lord, if Thou dost so answer prayer, I can face even Ravensbruck unafraid.’”

- Billy Graham, *Angels God’s Secret Agents*, pp. 75-76

Not only that, but listen to what Elisabeth Elliot wrote:

In *A Slow and Certain Light*, Elisabeth Elliot told about her father's experiences with angelic helpers:

“My father, when he was a small boy, was climbing on an upper story of a house that was being built. He walked to the end of a board that was not nailed at the other end, and it slowly began to tip. He knew that he was doomed, but inexplicably the board began to tip the other way, as though a hand had pushed it down again. He always wondered if it was an angel's hand.”

- Billy Graham, *Angels God's Secret Agents*, pp. 15-16

Folks, have you ever found yourself in a situation in which you don't know how you escaped? Maybe God's holy angels brought you through it. I can remember several years ago, driving on the expressway, home from work at 11:30 at night, and going 65 mph and I noticed as I was passing her by, a deer standing in the left lane right next to my window. If my window was open I could have touched her. I believe that God was the one who kept that deer standing right there until I passed by, protecting me. And the instrument He could have used could have been one of His angels.

We are told in Matthew 18:10, a verse that applies to all of us, **“Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angles see the face of My Father who is in heaven.”** As a child of God, each of us has what you may call guardian angels that are directed by God to watch over us. What a joy to know that God loves me that much that He has appointed someone to watch over me. And for my guardian angels, when I pick up power tools, I’m sure alarms are going off in heaven, they know it is going to get hairy! God does have His angels watching over us, I believe that just as Elisha believed it and he wants his servant to see that truth that was before them! It is as Psalm 34:7 says, **“The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.”** May we not forget that!

VERSES 18-23

1. As the Syrians come to take Elisha to capture him they are struck with blindness. Now I don’t believe this is total blindness or they could not have followed Elisha. But I think they could not discern clearly things and thus, they did not recognize Elisha was right in front of them and speaking to them! And Elisha has a great sense of humor. He comes to these Syrian troops and tells them that he will lead them to the man they are looking for. The only thing was that Elisha was the one they were looking for, but because they could not see, they did not recognize that fact. And Elisha leads these men right into the city of Samaria!

2. Now that the Syrian army is within the walls of Samaria, their eyes are open. Can you imagine the shock they got when they saw what had happened to them! And Jehoram, king of Israel, is so excited about this turn of events that he doesn't know what to do. He asks Elisha, "Should we kill them or should we let them live?"

And Elisha tells the king to feed his enemy, let them drink water and then send them home. Now that sounds very New Testament to me. Paul touched on this in Romans chapter 12 when he said, **"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regards for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceable with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay' says the Lord. 'Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."**

Romans 12:17-21. Paul is saying that if you treat others kindly, you may turn an enemy into a friend.

You may remember this story of Massachusetts's congressman, Thaddeus Stevens; he wanted to completely crush the south after the Civil War. But Abraham Lincoln wanted to make peace, to heal the wounds and forgive. But Thaddeus Stevens slammed his fist down on the table and said, "Mr. Lincoln, I think enemies out to be destroyed!" Abraham Lincoln very quietly responded and said, "Mr. Stevens, don't I destroy my enemy when I have made him my friend?" You see, destroy them with kindness. And thus, we see that here. With this council from Elisha, the Syrians held back from their invasions on Israel for a time.

3. We are going to stop here this evening and pick up our story next week in II Kings 6:24 because this story continues on into II Kings chapter 7. But keep in mind that this peace they had with the Syrians is going to come to an end and we will see the devastating affects it will have on the Northern Kingdom of Israel!