

ELISHA (3)
2 Kings 6:24–8:15

Memory Verse: “*I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it*” (Isaiah 46:11b ESV).

Background Helps:

This week’s readings include three stories:

1. The siege of Samaria (capital of the northern kingdom of Israel) by Ben-hadad, king of Syria (2 Kings 6:24–7:20). The siege led to a great famine in Samaria, which the king of Israel (Jehoram) blamed on the LORD (6:33) and on Elisha, the prophet of the LORD (6:31-32). Elisha, the man of God, promised a miraculous end to the famine, and he also prophesied the death of the unbelieving captain of the king (7:1-2)—all of which came to pass to the last detail (7:3-20). This story is covered in *Faith in the Face of Apostasy*, pages 135-140.¹ Notice especially the author’s helpful comments on Deuteronomy 28:53-57 and the awful fulfillment of these covenant curses in 2 Kings 6:26-29 (pp. 137-139).
2. The providential restoration of the Shunammite woman’s property by the king after a seven-year famine (8:1-6). The word of God through Elisha played a significant role in the woman’s well-being during the seven years of famine (vv. 1-2), and Elisha’s earlier miracle of raising her son from the dead played a significant role in her property being restored to her after the famine (vv. 3-6). This story is also covered in *Faith in the Face of Apostasy*, pages 141-145.
3. Hazael’s murder of King Ben-hadad—just as Elisha prophesied (8:7-15). Notice that Elisha gives this prophecy in Damascus (v. 7), outside the land of Israel, and that his prophecy was the fulfillment of a task originally given to Elijah (1 Kings 19:15). Like Naaman before him (2 Kings 5:5, 15-16), Ben-hadad sought to “purchase” the favor of the Israelite prophet (8:8-9). Notice also that the Syrian king, Ben-hadad, in his sickness, inquired of the LORD, the God of Israel; in contrast (in an earlier story), the Israelite king, Ahaziah, in his sickness, inquired of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron!

Lesson Helps:

Here are two alternative lesson plans for this week:


1. A lesson aim for children’s classes (but also possible in teen and adult classes): My students will learn about God’s providential care of the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 8:1-6, so that they will trust God to supply all their needs. For this lesson, you may want to begin by reviewing the story of Elisha’s earlier dealings with the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4:8-37. Now we meet her again in 8:1-6. This story is a wonderful example of God’s providential care for his own people. You may want to introduce your students to the term “providence”—not the capital of our great state of Rhode Island (!) but the term after which our capital is named. “Providence” refers to God’s continued preservation

¹ Raymond B. Dillard, *Faith in the Face of Apostasy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Company, 1999).

and governance of the universe he has made or, more simply, his continued guidance and care of the world, especially of his own people. His providential care of the Shunammite woman is seen in (1) Elisha's informing her of the coming seven-year famine in Israel, so that she could avoid its consequences in Philistia (2 Kings 8:1-2); (2) the timing of her return to Israel, just as Gehazi is telling the king about the wonderful exploits of Elisha, including the resurrection of the Shunammite woman's son—which makes the king more disposed to restore her property in full. Urge your students to trust in the providence of God to supply all their needs now and in the future. Use the promise of Philippians 4:19. You could also do some research on why Roger Williams named our capital city Providence, which would make a good illustration for your lesson.

2. A lesson aim covering all three stories in this week's readings: My students will learn about the fulfillment of Elisha's prophecies in 2 Kings 6:24–8:15, so that they will trust in the word of the Lord. In each of the three stories, the word of God through Elisha plays a significant role: (1) In 2 Kings 7:1-2, he prophecies the miraculous supply of food for Samaria and God's judgment on the captain of King Jehoram, all of which comes to pass in 7:3-20. (2) In 8:1-2 Elisha prophecies a seven-year famine in Israel and encourages the Shunammite to flee the country in order not to suffer privation—a word from the man of God which she follows. (3) In 8:7-15 Elisha prophecies the death of King Ben-hadad of Syria and the subsequent reign of Hazael—a prophecy which comes to pass. Urge your students to trust in the words of God spoken through his prophets (see Deut. 18:15-20), words which are now preserved for us in Scripture. Select some additional scriptural promises (Phil. 4:19?) and prophecies (John 14:1-3?) for your students to claim by faith. Use this week's memory verse (Isa. 46:11b) as an overarching theme for your lesson.

Home Assignment:

 Read 2 Kings 9:1-13, 30-37; 10:1-19; 13:14-21.

 Memorize Romans 12:11 ESV.