

The Prophet Elisha: Miracle upon Miracle

by Joelee Chamberlain

Do you remember when we talked about Elijah? Who was Elijah? That's right, he was a great prophet. Do you remember where Elijah lived, in the kingdom of Israel or the kingdom of Judah? Yes, in the kingdom of Israel. When did he live, who was king of Israel then, do you remember? Yes, Elijah lived during the time that wicked Ahab was king Israel, king of the 10 northern tribes. But do you remember that God had told Elijah to anoint Elisha to be the prophet after him? Now, that is hard to remember those two names, isn't it! To remember which is which! And they sound so much alike, don't they? Well, let's see if we can get them straight, all right?

Elijah was prophet first. And Elijah anointed Elisha to be prophet after him. Now, the way I keep them straight is with the alphabet again. The name Elijah has a "j" in it, "jah." And the name Elisha has an "s" in it, "sss, sshh". In the alphabet, which comes first, "j" or "s"? Yes, "j" comes first and then later "s" comes. "...h-i-j-k-l-m-n-o-p-q-r-s..." And with the prophets, Elijah with a "j" comes first, and Elisha with an "s" comes later, just like with the alphabet. So Elijah is first, the one with wicked King Ahab, and Elisha is later. Maybe that will help you, too. I hope so. But Elijah and Elisha were both very great prophets. I'm going to say their names carefully so that hopefully you can hear the difference.

Well, Elijah had anointed Elisha to be a prophet after him. Then Elisha then went with Elijah and helped him until it was time for Elijah to go to heaven. But then did Elijah die? No! Remember, Elijah and Elisha were walking along. They came to the River Jordan, and Elijah took off his mantle, sort of a shawl for a man, and he rolled it up his mantle, and then Elijah hit the river with it. And do you remember what happened then? That's right. The Jordan River just opened up and made a dry path for them! And Elijah and Elisha walked across the river, and the river closed up again and kept on flowing right along. Well, this was sort of near the city of Jericho, and there were 50 men standing a ways back from them and were watching all of this!! Well, Elijah and Elisha kept on walking after they had crossed the river.

Elijah said to Elisha, "What would you like for me to do for you before I'm taken away from you?"

Elisha said, "Please, let me have two times a share of the spirit you have."

I think what he meant by that was that he wanted to be filled with the Spirit of God and be able to be a great prophet and do even more miracles than Elijah had done.

Elijah said, "That's a hard thing you ask. But if you see me as I'm taken away from you, then you will have that. But if you don't see me, you won't."

And they kept on walking along and talking. Then, suddenly, a chariot of fire and horses of fire came along and went between them, and Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind!! And Elisha saw all of this happen, but then after that Elisha didn't see Elijah anymore. The Lord had taken Elijah to

heaven, and Elijah hadn't died! That only happened to one other man that we know of. Before Noah and the flood, Noah's great-grandfather, Enoch, was a very godly man. Enoch loved God very much, and the book of Genesis tells us that Enoch didn't die, either, that the Lord just took him up to heaven. And now that's what happened to Elijah. The Lord just took him up to heaven without his having died!

Well, Elisha saw this. He saw the fiery chariots and horses, and he saw Elijah being taken up to heaven in the whirlwind, and Elisha tore his clothes to show he was unhappy. (He would miss him, wouldn't he?) But what do you think had happened as Elijah was being taken up to heaven in the whirlwind? Why, Elijah's mantle had fallen to the ground! Elisha picked up Elijah's mantle, and Elisha walked back to the Jordan River. He didn't know yet if he'd really be able to do miracles like Elijah had done, but he took Elijah's mantle, and he hit the water of the river with it just as Elijah had done earlier. And Elisha said, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" (I think this means, he asking if the Lord would let him do miracles now.) And what do you think happened? That's right, the river just opened up for Elisha, and Elisha walked across it!

Now remember that I said that 50 men were standing a ways off watching? When they saw the Jordan River open up and make a dry path for Elisha, they said to each other, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." They knew that Elisha was going to be a great prophet. And the 50 men went to meet Elisha, and they bowed down to the ground before him.

All right, then. The men who saw this and met Elisha said, "Look there are 50 of us here. Let us go and look for Elijah. Perhaps the Lord only took him a little ways away and left him in a valley or on a mountain." Elisha didn't want them to go look for Elijah. Elisha knew that the Lord had taken Elijah to heaven. But the men kept asking and asking Elisha to let them go look for Elijah, so finally Elisha said they could, and he waited for them in the city of Jericho. So 50 men went and looked for 3 days for Elijah. Do you think they found him? Of course not! The Lord had taken Elijah to heaven!

Finally the men came back and said to Elisha, "We couldn't find him."

Elisha said, "Didn't I tell you not to bother?!"

And that is all that we're going to talk about Elijah today. From now on I'm going to be talking about Elisha. So I won't have to pronounce his name quite so carefully, will I? And now I'm going to tell you about some of the miracles that Elisha performed. These are all found in the Bible in the book of II Kings.

Well, Elisha was there in the city of Jericho. (This is the same Jericho where hundreds of years before Rahab had lived. Remember, she had hidden the two Jewish men who were looking around? And Joshua was the leader of the children of Israel then. And the Lord had told them to march around the city. Finally the last time they had blown trumpets and shouted, and the walls have fallen down! But Rahab and her family were saved, and Rahab became the great-great-grandmother of good King David! You remember all of that, don't you? Well, this is that same city of Jericho.) Anyway, Elisha was in Jericho, and the men of Jericho came to Elisha and told him, "We have a very nice city here, but the water isn't good, and plants don't grow well."

Now why would they be telling Elisha about their water? Yes, because they knew now that Elisha was going to be a great prophet of the Lord, and they hoped he could make their water into good water.

Well, Elisha said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in the bowl." So they did. Then Elisha went to the spring, the place where the water came up out of the ground, and he threw the salt into the spring. Elisha said, "The Lord says that He has made the water good now." And the water was very good and kept on being good water. It didn't make people sick anymore, and the plants grew well. Now, would just salt make the spring give out good water? No, of course not! It was a miracle that the Lord let Elisha do.

Well, Elisha left Jericho and was going along to another city. A big group of boys, over 40 boys, came out of the city and began making fun of Elisha and saying rude things to him. Elisha turned around and saw them, and he said for the Lord to punish them. And suddenly two bears came out of the woods and killed a bunch of them! They shouldn't have been making fun of anyone, should they? But especially not making fun of a prophet of the Lord God!

Now, do you remember what a widow is? A widow is a woman whose husband has died, isn't it? Well, there was a man who had served God, and he died. His widow went to Elisha and said, "My husband is dead. You know that he worshipped the Lord. But he owed some money to someone, now that my husband is dead, I can't pay the man, and the man is going to come and take my two sons to be his slaves because I can't pay him."

Elisha said to this poor widow, "What do you want me to do? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

The widow said, "I don't have anything except a jar of oil."

Elisha said, "Go to your neighbors and borrow all of the empty jars you can. Not just a few, a lot of them. Then after you have those empty jars, take them into your house, and you and your sons go in and close the door. Then you start pouring oil into the empty jars. When one jar is full, set it aside and keep pouring into empty jars."

So that's what the widow did. She borrowed lots of empty jars, and she and her sons went into her house and began pouring oil from her one jar into the empty jars. And she kept pouring and pouring oil from her one jar, filling up lots of the empty jars. Finally she said to her son, "Bring me another jar." But her son said, "There aren't any more jars." All of the many jars she'd borrowed were full of oil from just her one jar! That was a miracle, wasn't it?!

Well, then the widow went to Elisha and told him, and Elisha said to her, "Now you go and sell the oil and pay the man what your husband owed him. There will be enough money left over for you and your sons to live on." So the Lord had let Elisha perform this miracle, hadn't He? And this miracle took care of the poor widow and her sons.

Now, Elisha used to go to different cities. One day he went to a city where a very rich woman lived. This woman urged Elisha to come eat at her house. So whenever Elisha would go to that city, he would stop at her house and eat. One day the rich woman said to her husband, "Look, I see that Elisha is a holy man of God, and he comes through here a lot. Let's make a little room for him and put in it a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp. That way, whenever he comes to our city, he can just go in there." So they did.

Now Elisha had a servant who would go places with him and help him. This servant's name was Gehazi. One day after Elisha had come to the city and was resting in his room, he said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the woman to me." When the woman had come to him, Elisha said to Gehazi, "Ask her that since she has taken all of this trouble for us, what can I do for her. Would she like for me to talk to the king or to the general for her?" But the woman said, "I live here among my own people." In other words, she didn't need for Elisha to talk to the king of Israel for her.

Elisha talked to Gehazi. He said, "What can I do for her?"

Gehazi said, "Well, she doesn't have any children, and her husband is old."

Elisha said, "Call her to me."

So the woman came to Elisha and stood in the doorway, and Elisha said to her, "Next year you will have a son."

The woman said, "No, sir, don't tell me a lie." (You see she really wanted a baby, but she didn't think she'd ever have any.) But what do you think happened? Yes, the next year she had a little baby boy! Just as Elisha had said! But Elisha was a prophet of the Lord, wasn't he, and whatever a prophet of God says will happen, always does happens, doesn't it?!

Well, the little boy grew bigger. One day he went out with his father into the fields. The Bible doesn't tell us just how old he was, but he wasn't a man yet. Anyway, the boy suddenly said to his father, "Oh, my head! My head!" The father said to the servants, "Take him to his mother." So they did. They lifted him up and took him to his mother, and he sat on her lap until noon (about lunch time), and then he died. The woman then took the boy up to Elisha's room. Elisha wasn't there, but the woman laid her son on Elisha's bed and went back out and shut the door. She didn't say anything to anyone about it. Then she called to her husband, "Have one of the servants saddle a donkey; I want to go quickly to the man of God and come back again."

Her husband said, "Why do you want to go today? It's not a special feast day."

The woman said, "That's all right."

So she got the donkey, and she told the servant, "Make the donkey go fast. Don't slow down unless I tell you to." So off she went on the donkey as fast as she could, and she got to where Elisha

was.

When Elisha saw the woman coming, he said to Gehazi, his servant, "Look, here comes that woman. Run out right away and meet her and ask her if all is well with her and her husband and her child." So Gehazi did, and the woman said, "It is well."

But when she came to where Elisha was, she got down off the donkey and grabbed Elisha by the feet. Gehazi came up to have her let go, but Elisha said, "Leave her alone; for she is very unhappy, and the Lord hasn't told me what is wrong."

Then the woman said, "Did I ask you for a son? Didn't I tell you not to lie to me?"

Right away Elisha knew something had happened to her son. Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, "Quickly. Take my staff and go. If you meet anyone, don't speak to him, and if anyone speaks to you, don't answer. Lay my staff on the face of the child."

But the woman said to Elisha, "I won't leave you."

So Elisha got up and followed her. Gehazi, in the meantime, had gone ahead of Elisha and the boy's mother. Gehazi got to the house and laid Elisha's staff on the face of the boy, but nothing happened. So Gehazi went back and met Elisha and said to him, "The child hasn't wakened up."

Then when Elisha got to the house and went up to his room, he found the boy lying on his bed, and he was dead. Elisha had Gehazi and the boy's mother stay outside of the room, and Elisha went into the room and shut the door and prayed to the Lord God. Then Elisha went up to the boy and lay on him. Elisha put his mouth on the boy's mouth, his eyes on the boy's eyes, and his hands on the boy's hands. Then the boy's skin started getting nice and warm. Elisha got up and walked in the house a minute, then he went back and lay down on the child again. And what do you think happened then?! Why the boy sneezed 7 times and then opened his eyes!! That was a miracle that the Lord God had let Elisha do, wasn't it?!

So then Elisha called Gehazi and said, "Call the woman." And Gehazi did. When she came, Elisha said, "Take up your son."

You can imagine how happy the boy's mother was! She went in and fell at Elisha's feet and bowed herself to the ground. Then she took up her son and went out.

There are lots more miracles that Elisha did. Would you like to hear some more of them? All right. Well, one time there was famine in the land of Israel. (You see, the kingdom of Israel was always worshipping idols, and God was trying to make them realize that their idols couldn't do anything for them, that only the Lord God was the real God. So God had bad things like famines happen to them so that they would remember the Lord God of Israel.) Anyway, there was a famine in the land, and one day a lot of men were sitting with Elisha, and he said to his servant, "Put on the big pot and boil some food for these men." One of the men went out into the field to gather some things to cook, and he

found a wild vine with gourds growing on it. He didn't know what these gourds were, but he gathered a whole bunch of the gourds and came and cut them up and put them in the big pot to cook with the other things. Well, when everything was cooked, they poured out the stew or soup, and the men started to eat. As they were eating it, they cried out, "Oh, man of God, this has poison in it!" And they couldn't eat it.

Well, Elisha said, "Bring me some flour." They brought him some flour, and he threw it into the big pot of food. Then Elisha said, "Now pour out food for the people so they may eat." And they did, and the food wasn't poisonous any longer! Now, flour, the stuff your mother uses to make bread and cake, can't take poison away by itself, can it? But Elisha was a prophet of the Lord, so the Lord worked this miracle through Elisha.

Another time a bunch of people were with Elisha, and Elisha told his servant, "Give the people food to eat." The servant said, "How would only the amount of food we have feed so many people?" But Elisha said, "There will be enough food for them, and there will be some left over." And there was. That was another miracle, wasn't it?

Now, we've talked about the country of Syria before, haven't we? That was the country that wicked King Ahab was fighting against when he was killed, wasn't it? Well, Syria was a country right next to the kingdom of Israel. Sometimes Israel would be fighting with Syria, and sometimes they wouldn't be fighting with them. Well, there was a general in the army of Syria, and his name was Naaman. Naaman was a very great and brave soldier -- but he had leprosy. Leprosy was a terrible disease of the skin, and there was no way then that it could be cured. Well, one time the Syrians had gone out and captured some people who lived in the kingdom of Israel and taken them back to Syria, and one of these people was a girl. This girl became a servant to the wife of the great general Naaman.

One day the girl said to Naaman's wife, "Oh, I wish that my master Naaman were with our prophet who lives in Israel, for he could cure my master from his leprosy."

Now, who do you think this girl was talking about?? Why, Elisha, of course!

Well someone told the king of Syria what the girl had said. And the king of Syria said to Naaman, "You go, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So Naaman went to the land of Israel. He took with him soldiers and a present to give to the prophet (that was Elisha, wasn't it?). There was lots of silver and gold and nice clothes. Well, Naaman got to the king of Israel and gave him the letter from the king of Syria. The letter said, "I am sending Naaman with this letter so that you may make him well from his leprosy."

Well, how do you think the king of Israel took that?? Why, he read the letter, and he tore his clothes (that meant he was very upset and unhappy), and he said, "Am I supposed to be God that I can do such things?! Why the king of Syria must be trying to get in a fight with me!!"

Well, Elisha heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes and what he had said, so Elisha

sent a message to the king of Israel. Elisha said, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let this man come to me now, and he shall know that there is a real prophet in Israel."

So Naaman and his horse and chariot and soldiers all came and stood at the door of Elisha's house. But Elisha didn't go out and see Naaman himself. Instead, Elisha sent a messenger out to Naaman. The messenger said, "Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times, and then your skin will be all clean and well."

That made Naaman angry. Naaman went away from Elisha's house, and Naaman said, "Look, I thought that the prophet would come out to me himself and he would stand there and call on the name of the Lord his God and wave his hand over my leprosy and cure it. Why, don't we have rivers in Syria that are better than all the rivers of Israel? Why couldn't I just wash in them and be cured?!" And Naaman was very angry and turned around and started going back home to Syria.

But one of the men with Naaman came up to him and said, "Oh, my father." (Naaman wasn't really his father, but this was a polite and friendly way of talking to the great general Naaman.) He said, "Oh, my father. If the prophet had ordered you to do something hard, wouldn't you have done it? Why not just do this easy thing he says, like `Wash and be clean?'"

So Naaman decided to do what Elisha's messenger had told him to do. Naaman went to the Jordan River, and he dipped himself seven times into the Jordan River like Elisha had said. And when he had dipped himself seven times in the river, Naaman's skin looked as clean and well as a little child's skin! His leprosy was cured! That was a miracle, wasn't it?!

Well! Naaman and all of the men with him went back to Elisha's house. Naaman stood before Elisha and said, "Look, I know there is no God in all the earth except the God of Israel. So please take a present from me." You see, he realized that no idol or false god could have cured him of his leprosy. Only the one real God could have done that.

But Elisha said, "I serve the Lord. I won't take a present."

Naaman urged Elisha to take the gold and silver and clothes that he had brought, but Elisha wouldn't take it.

Then Naaman said, "Well, if you won't take a present from me, then please give me some dirt from Israel, enough dirt for two mules to carry. Because from now on I won't offer any sacrifices to any god except the Lord." You see, he was going to use the dirt from Israel some way in his worship of the Lord. But we aren't told just how, whether he was going to build an altar on it or what.

Well, Naaman then left with all of his men to go back to Syria. He had gone just a little way, when Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the prophet, said to himself, "Oh, my master didn't take any of the presents that Naaman had brought with him. But I'm going to run after him and get something from him for myself." Now, do you think Gehazi should have done that? No, of course not!! But he did!

Gehazi went running after Naaman and the men with him. When Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from his chariot to meet Gehazi and said, "Is everything all right?"

Gehazi, "Everything is all right. But my master has sent me to say to you. `Two young men of the sons of the prophets have just come to me. please give them a talent of silver (that would be about 100 pounds of silver!) and two dressy pieces of clothes." Was that true? No, of course not! Gehazi was greedy, and he lying to Naaman!

But Naaman was happy to give something to him, so Naaman said, "Oh, please take two talents of silver." (That would be about 200 pounds of silver -- a lot of money!) And Naaman tied up the two talents of silver in two bags along with two fancy, dressy garments, and he had two of his own servants carry them for Gehazi. When they came to the hill, Gehazi took the two talents of silver and the two dressy garments from them and put them in his own house and sent the men back to Naaman.

Then Gehazi went in to where Elisha was. Elisha said to Gehazi, "Where have you been, Gehazi?"

Gehazi said, "Oh, I haven't been anywhere." He was lying again, wasn't he?

But Elisha the prophet said, "I saw you in my spirit when the man Naaman turned from his chariot to meet you. Was this the time to accept money and garments or anything that money could buy?"

Elisha said to Gehazi, "Because you have done this, you will have Naaman's leprosy, and so will your descendants."

And Gehazi looked at himself and saw that his skin was full of leprosy, and he went out away from Elisha. And that's all we ever hear of Gehazi who was now a leper, and that's all we ever hear of General Naaman who was cured of his leprosy.

Now, would you like to hear some different miracles that the Lord let Elisha do? All right.

Well, there were some men called the sons of the prophet, and they evidently lived together, with Elisha in charge of them. One day they came to Elisha and said, "Look, the place where we live with you in charge of us is too small for us. Let's go to the Jordan River and each of us get a log from there, and let's make a place for us to live there."

Elisha said, "Go ahead."

Then one of them said, "Please go with us."

Elisha said, "I'll go with you." And he did. He went with them.

When they all got to the Jordan River, they began cutting down trees to make the place for them to live. But one of them as he was cutting down the tree, the metal part of the axe, the axe head,

came off of the handle and fell into the river. And since it was made out of metal and would be heavy, what would happen to it? Why, it would sink down to the bottom of the river, wouldn't it? Well, the man was very upset and cried out, "Alas, my master!" (He was talking to Elisha.) "That wasn't my axe; it was borrowed!" (The metal axe head would have been valuable, so he was really upset.)

Elisha said, "Where did it fall?"

When the man showed Elisha where the head of the axe had fallen, Elisha cut a stick and threw it in right there, and guess what happened?! That heavy, metal axe head just floated up to the top of the water!

Elisha said, "Pick it up."

And the man reached out his hand and took the metal axe head! That was a miracle, wasn't it?! After all, pieces of metal don't just float by themselves, do they? But God let Elisha perform this miracle.

Let's see, now. What were some more miracles that the Lord let Elisha do. Oh, yes.

Remember I told you about the country of Syria? Well, at another time the king of Syria was at war with the kingdom of Israel. The king of Syria got his men together and said, "I'm going to have my army camp at such and such a place." But the Lord God let Elisha know what the king of Syria was planning! So Elisha told the king of Israel, "Don't go to such and such a place, for the Syrians are going down there." So instead the king of Israel went to another place that Elisha told him to go. This happened several times. The king of Syria would plan something against Israel, but Elisha, being a prophet of God would know about it and warn the king of Israel!

Well, after a while the king of Syria got upset. He called his men together and said to them, "All right! I want you to tell me which of you is for the king of Israel!" (He didn't know that God was telling Elisha about this; the king thought one of his men was a spy for Israel!)

But the men said to the king of Syria, "None of us are telling the king of Israel anything. But there is a prophet in Israel named Elisha, and he tells the king of Israel anything you say."

The king of Syria said, "Well, you go see where he is so that I may send and grab him." Now that seems pretty silly to me! Does it to you?! After all, if Elisha knew everything the king of Syria was saying, he'd know that the king of Syria was going to try to capture him!

But anyway, they told the king of Syria, "Look, Elisha is in the city of Dothan right now."

So the king of Syria sent a great part of his army there with horses and chariots. They got there at night and surrounded the city of Dothan.

Well, when Elisha's servant got up early in the morning, he went outside, and what do you

think he saw?! He saw the army with horses and chariots was all around the city! The servant said to Elisha, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?!"

But Elisha said, "Don't be afraid. We have more with us than they have with them." Then Elisha prayed to God and said, "Oh Lord, please open my servant's eyes that he may see."

So the Lord let the young man who was Elisha's servant see something very special that other people couldn't see. And what do you think it was? Why, the mountain was full of fiery horses and chariots all around Elisha! Who do you think these fiery horses and chariots belonged to? Why to the Lord, of course! The Lord was going to protect His prophet Elisha!

Well, the army of the Syrians started to come down against Elisha, but Elisha just prayed to the Lord and said, "Please make all of these soldiers blind." And the Lord did; He made them blind, just as Elisha had prayed. And guess what Elisha did then?! Elisha went out and said to this big blind army, "This isn't the way, and this isn't the city. Follow me, and I will take you to the man you're looking for." And Elisha led the big, blind Syrian army to the big city of Samaria where the king of Israel was!!

As soon as the army got inside of the city of Samaria, Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open the eyes of these men that they may see." So the Lord took their blindness away, and they looked, and they were right in the middle of Samaria!

When the king of Israel saw this, he said to Elisha, "My father." (He was being polite to Elisha.) "My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?"

But Elisha said to the king of Israel, "You are not to kill them. Would you kill people that you'd captured in war with your sword and bow? No, put bread and water in front of them so that they may eat and drink and go back to their master, the king of Syria."

So the king of Israel had a lot of food fixed for them, and when the Syrian army had eaten and drunk, the king of Israel sent them back home to the land Syria. And the Syrians didn't try to make any more raids on the land of Israel for a while!

But another time a king of Syria named Benhadad got his whole army together and they besieged the capital city of Israel, the city of Samaria. Now do you know what a siege is? That is when an enemy army comes and makes it so that no one can go into a city or go out of the city. And what do you think would happen if no one could go into a city? Why, after a while the people in the city would run out of food; there would be a famine in the city. And that's just what happened in Samaria. They were running out of food. Now, before we go on here, why would the Lord God be letting enemies come and do this to the Jews in Israel? After all, the Jews were God's special people. Yes, it's because they were worshipping idols, and the Lord was teaching them that there was only one real God, and they should only worship the Lord, not idols.

So back to the city of Samaria. It was being besieged by Syria, and they were running out of food. Why they were even selling bird droppings for food!! And charging a lot of money for it! Well,

the king of Israel heard how terrible it was, and he got mad at Elisha. The king of Israel figured either that Elisha had caused this trouble or that he could have stopped the trouble; I don't know which. But the king of Israel tore his kingly clothes, and underneath his kingly clothes he had clothes for mourning, clothes that showed how sad he was. And the king of Israel said, "I'm going to chop off Elisha's head!" And the king sent a messenger to Elisha.

Well, Elisha was sitting in his house, and there were elders sitting with him. Before the messenger got to Elisha, Elisha said to the elders, "Oh, they're coming to take off my head. Look, when the messenger comes, close the door and hold it closed. His master is coming right behind him."

And while Elisha was still talking, he came and said, "This trouble with the Syrians is from the Lord. Why should I wait for the Lord to help me any longer?"

But Elisha said, "Listen to what the Lord says. The Lord says that about this time tomorrow food will be sold very cheaply here at the gate of the city."

There was a very high soldier there, and this high soldier said, "Huh! Could this happen if the Lord Himself should make windows in heaven and rain food down?" He didn't believe the prophet Elisha.

Elisha said, "Well, you'll see it yourself, but you won't eat any of the food."

Now, the city of Samaria had walls around it and a gate that could be opened or closed. And there were four men who had leprosy, and they were just outside of the walls of the city of Samaria. These men said to each other, "Why do we sit here just waiting to die? If we ask to go inside the city, why the famine is in the city, and we'll just die there. But if we sit here, we'll die anyway. So come on, now. Let's go over to the camp of the Syrians. If they don't kill us, all right, we'll live. But if they kill us, we'll just die." So the four lepers got up just as it was starting to get dark, and they went over to the camp of the Syrians. But when they got to the edge of the Syrians camp, why there was no one there! You see, the Lord had made the Syrian army hear a noise. The noise was like a great big army coming. And the Syrians had said, "Look, the king of Israel has hired other kings to come and fight us!" So the Syrian army had all run away as fast as they could! And the Syrian army had run away so fast that they'd left everything they had right there! They'd left their tents and everything in their tents. And they'd left their horses and their donkeys. They had run for their lives!! Of course, there was no great big army coming to fight them; it was just that the Lord had made them think so!

Anyway, the four lepers got to the camp and saw that no one was there! The four men went into a tent and saw food and other things. They ate all the food they wanted, and then they carried off silver and gold and clothing and went and hid these. Then the four lepers came back and went into another tent and carried off more things and hid them.

But then they stopped and said to each other, "We're not doing the right thing. There is good news today. If we keep quiet about it and wait until it's morning to tell the people in the city, why, we'll be punished. So come on, let's go and tell the king's household about this."

So off they went back to the city of Samaria, and they got to the gate of the city and called to the gatekeepers, "We went to the camp of the Syrians, and behold, there was no one to be seen or heard in the camp. There was nothing but the horses tied up there and the donkeys tied up there, and the tents there with everything in them."

Then the gatekeepers called out with the news, and this news reached the king's household. And the king got up in the night and said to his men, "I'll tell you what the Syrians are doing. They know we are very hungry, so they've gone out of their camp and are hiding. And the Syrians are thinking that we'll go to their camp to get food, and then they will come out of hiding and capture us and get into our city."

But one of the men with the king said, "We're going to die here anyway, so why not have some men take five of the horses we have left and go out and see."

So the king sent two men on horses out to see what the Syrian army was doing. "Go out and see what's happening," the king told them. So the men went out. They rode as far as the Jordan River, and they saw that all along the way to the river there were clothes and equipment that the Syrian soldiers had dropped as they had quickly run away. So the men went back and told the king what they'd seen.

Well, the people in the city of Samaria knew that now there was food that they could have! They were so hungry! And there was so much food from the Syrian camp that it was going to be sold very cheaply. And the people all started running out of the gate to go get some food. But remember the very high soldier who hadn't believed Elisha when Elisha had told him that lots of food would be sold very cheaply the next day? And remember that Elisha had told this soldier, that he would see the food but wouldn't eat any of it? Do you think that will really happen? Let's go on and see! Well, the king told this high soldier to have charge of the gate of the city when the food was sold, and guess what happened? Why, the people were so hungry and wanted the food so badly, that they just all ran and pushed and shoved to get out of the gate, and they knocked the high soldier down and ran right over him, and he died! So he had seen the food there, just as Elisha had prophesied, but he hadn't eaten any of it, had he? When a prophet of the Lord God says something will happen, it always happens, doesn't it?

Well, Elisha was a prophet of the Lord God for many years. But then it got to be time for Elisha to die. He was sick, and he knew that he would die. He had lived during the time that four different kings had ruled over the kingdom of Israel. And now that he was dying, the king of Israel came to where he was and began crying. Elisha said to the king, "Take a bow and arrows." So the king took a bow and some arrows. Then Elisha said to the king, "Now put an arrow in the bow and pull it back." Then Elisha laid his own hands on the king's hands. And Elisha said, "Open the eastward window." And he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot!" And the king shot the arrow. Then Elisha made a prophesy. He said to the king, "That is a picture of an arrow of victory that you'll have over Syria! You will fight them until you have beaten them."

Then Elisha said, "Now take the arrows." The king took the arrows. Then Elisha said, "Now hit the ground with the arrows." The king hit the ground three times and then stopped. Elisha was angry with the king. Elisha said, You should have hit five or six times; then you would have really finished off the Syrians. But now you will only beat the Syrians three times."

Well, Elisha had been a prophet of the Lord for about 50 years, and then he died, and he was buried. But an interesting thing happened some time after he was buried. One day some people were going to bury another dead man, when suddenly some bad soldiers came. So the people just threw the dead man into the grave where Elisha had been buried. And what do you think happened? Why, as soon as the body of the dead man touched Elisha's dead body, the man became alive again! So that was a miracle that happened in connection with Elisha even after Elisha was dead!

And later, after Elisha had died, the king of Israel beat the Syrians three times and got back three cities from them. What a prophet of God says will happen, always happens, doesn't it?

Well! We've really had lots of exciting true stories today, haven't we?! And they've all been about a great prophet of the Lord God. What was this prophet's name? That's right, Elisha. But who had been the great prophet before Elisha? Yes, Elijah. Elijah was the one who was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind and there were fiery horses and a fiery chariot. But Elisha died when he got old, just as everyone else dies, didn't he? And where do we read in the Bible about the many miracles that Elisha performed? Yes, in the book of II Kings in the Old Testament.

There are many, many interesting true stories in the Bible, aren't there? But the most important ones are in the New Testament about Jesus. Jesus came to earth many years after Elisha had died. But why is Jesus so important, even more important than Elisha? Yes, that's right. Jesus is the Son of God, and Jesus came to earth to make a way for us to be able to go to heaven and be with God forever when we die. Jesus loves us so very much that He died on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. Then three days after He'd died, the Lord Jesus was alive again! And He stayed alive and He'll never die again! And then Jesus went up to heaven and is still alive in Heaven, isn't He? And someday the Lord Jesus will come back to earth and be the King of everyone and everything. Won't that be wonderful? It tell us all of that in the Bible, and we know this will happen, because whatever God says will happen, always does happen, doesn't it? And all we have to do in order to be with the Lord Jesus forever is just to believe in Him, to trust the Lord Jesus to take our punishment for us, and He will. God always keeps His promises, doesn't He? And if we trust Jesus, we'll want to do what He says, too, won't we? Jesus will be our King!!