

WEEK 32 | SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2026

Elisha, God's Power and Compassion

Primary Scripture: 2 Kings 5

Supporting Scripture: Luke 4:27 | James 4:6 | 2 Kings 5:20 to 27

Memory Verse, 2 Kings 5:15: Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel.

BIBLE TIMELINE PLACEMENT

Building on Elijah's ministry from last week, Elisha continues as God's prophet, and this account reveals that God's power and compassion reach beyond Israel's borders, even to an enemy commander. It also directly foreshadows Jesus, who references this exact account centuries later.

2 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Naaman was a highly respected commander of the army of Aram, modern day Syria, a nation that was often at war with Israel. Despite his status and success, Naaman suffered from a skin disease that in the ancient world often meant social isolation and fear from others, since it could not be cured and sometimes worsened over time. The young girl who first mentions Elisha was an Israelite, captured during a raid and forced to serve as a slave in Naaman's household, yet she shows remarkable kindness toward the family that held her captive. Naaman initially expects an elaborate healing ceremony, since ancient prophets and priests across many cultures often performed dramatic rituals. Ancient people also commonly believed a god's power was tied to a specific territory or land, which explains why Naaman later asks to take soil from Israel home with him, so he can worship the LORD even while living in a foreign country. The Jordan River, where Elisha sends Naaman to wash, was considered far less impressive than the rivers of Naaman's home region, making the simplicity of God's instruction even more surprising to him.

3 WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PASSAGE

Naaman, a powerful army commander for Aram, suffers from a serious skin disease. A young Israelite servant girl in his household mentions that a prophet in Samaria could heal him. Naaman travels to Israel with a letter from his king and a fortune in silver, gold, and clothing.

The king of Israel panics upon reading the letter, assuming it is an impossible demand meant to start a conflict. Elisha hears of this and instructs the king to send Naaman to him instead, so that Naaman will know there is a true prophet in Israel.

Naaman arrives at Elisha's house expecting a dramatic ceremony. Instead, Elisha does not even come out, sending only a messenger with simple instructions, wash seven times in the Jordan River. Naaman is furious and insulted, ready to leave in anger.

Naaman's own servants wisely reason with him. If the prophet had asked something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when he simply says wash and be clean? Naaman relents, washes seven times in the Jordan, and his skin is completely restored, like a child's.

Naaman returns to Elisha and declares that the LORD alone is God. He wants to pay Elisha, but Elisha refuses any payment. Naaman asks to take soil from Israel home with him, intending to worship the LORD alone from now on.

The chapter closes with a warning. Elisha's own servant, Gehazi, secretly chases after Naaman, lies to obtain some of the payment Elisha had refused, then lies again to Elisha about where he had been. Gehazi is struck with the same skin disease Naaman had just been healed of, a sobering consequence for greed and deceit.

4 KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

1. What This Reveals About God (2 Kings 5:14 to 15)

God's power to heal and His compassion reach beyond the borders of Israel, even to a commander from an enemy nation. God is not a tribal deity limited to one people, but the one true God over the whole earth.

2. What This Reveals About People (2 Kings 5:11 to 12)

Pride can make people resist God's simple instructions, wanting something more impressive or dramatic instead. True humility means obeying God even when His way seems too plain or unimpressive.

3. How This Points to Jesus (Luke 4:27)

Jesus Himself pointed back to this exact story, reminding His own hometown that God's grace has always reached beyond Israel's borders. Jesus, like Elisha, offers healing freely, not to those who seem most deserving, but to anyone who comes to Him in humble faith.

5 GOSPEL CONNECTION

Naaman had everything the world considers impressive, power, wealth, position, yet none of it could cure him. He needed something he could not earn or buy, offered freely to someone who was, by every measure, an outsider and even an enemy. Elisha refused Naaman's payment because God's healing was never for sale. Centuries later, Jesus pointed back to this very story to make His own point, that God's grace has never been limited to the people who seem to deserve it most. Jesus offers the same free healing Naaman received, to anyone humble enough to receive it exactly the way God offers it, not the way we think it should look.

Simple Gospel Sentence: Naaman could not buy his healing, and neither can we, because Jesus offers it freely to anyone humble enough to simply receive it.

6 QUESTIONS CHILDREN WILL ASK

Why did Naaman get so angry about washing in the Jordan River?

Naaman expected something impressive and dramatic, and washing in a plain river seven times seemed far too simple for such an important man. His pride almost kept him from being healed.

Why did a young servant girl help the man who captured her?

The Bible does not explain her reasons fully, but her kindness shows that God can use even the humblest, most unlikely person to point others toward Him.

Why wouldn't Elisha accept any payment from Naaman?

Elisha wanted Naaman, and everyone watching, to understand that God's healing is a free gift, not something that can be bought or earned.

What happened to Gehazi, and why?

Gehazi secretly chased after Naaman for payment and then lied about it. He ended up with the very disease Naaman had just been healed of, a consequence for his greed and dishonesty.

Was Naaman a bad guy since he was from an enemy country?

Naaman was an outsider to God's people, and even served a nation often at war with Israel, yet God still showed him mercy. This reminds us God's compassion reaches everyone, not just people who seem to deserve it.

7 TEACHER SUMMARY

Big Idea	God's power to heal and His compassion for people reach far beyond Israel's borders, offered freely to anyone humble enough to receive it His way.
What God Did	Healed Naaman, a foreign army commander from an enemy nation, through the simple, unimpressive instruction to wash seven times in the Jordan River.
How It Points to Jesus	Jesus Himself referenced this exact story to show that God's grace has always reached beyond Israel, offering the same free healing to anyone who comes to Him in humble faith.
Error to Avoid	Do not present this as a story about a foreign general who simply got lucky or who earned his healing through eventual obedience. The point is God's free compassion meeting real humility, not human effort earning a reward. Gehazi's failure is a clear warning against turning God's grace into a way to profit.
Hope to Emphasize	God's mercy is not limited to people who look right, belong to the right group, or seem to deserve it. Anyone humble enough to receive His way of healing can be made whole.