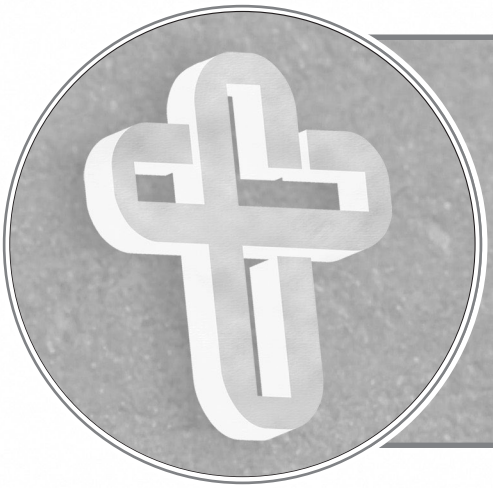


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
APRIL 2024

the miracle worker

Scripture Story: 2 Kings 4.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 19.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Summarizing the heart of this lesson, Ellen White said: "The lesson is for God's children in every age. When the Lord gives a work to be done, let not men stop to inquire into the reasonableness of the command or the probable result of their efforts to obey" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 243). This challenge to boldly pursue the work God calls us to do—in spite of how unreasonable or impossible it seems—is an exciting invitation to put one's faith fully in Him. When we do this, miracles are often the result.

Second Kings 4 tells of the following miracles: the widow's oil multiplied, the dead boy raised to life, the poison in stew purified, and the prophets' food multiplied. To teach about these miracles, it is helpful to understand the context of the ancient world and the popularity of Baal worship. Baal was a false god worshipped by many Israelites. He was the god of rain, fire, and crops; moreover he required child sacrifice. Elisha's miracles demonstrate the power of the true God over the domain of Baal. The story of the dead boy being raised to life stands in contrast to Baal's requirement of child sacrifice and illustrates the priority God puts on the life of a child.

While this lesson is primarily about miracles, there are other topics you may wish to explore with your group. The key text emphasizes that Elisha was a holy man. You could unpack what that means and challenge your students to live similar lives of holiness. The corresponding chapter in *Prophets and Kings* is titled "A Prophet of Peace." You could look at this virtue and discuss what peace and contentment look like today. Another theme that emerges from this study is the topic of kindness. Ellen White comments: "The kindly spirit that enabled Elisha to exert a powerful influence over the lives of many in Israel, is revealed in the story of his friendly relations with a family dwelling at Shunem" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 237). Whatever direction you take this lesson, clearly God is calling us to do His biddings in the spirit of Elisha.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Consider the miraculous works of God. *(Know)*
- Sense the possibilities when fully trusting God. *(Feel)*
- Be challenged to live a life of faith. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Gift of Prophecy, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 18

"The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. . . . (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Divide the class into two groups and separate

them so they cannot hear the other group. Give each group two minutes to write down all the miracles they can think of that are in the Bible. They are not allowed to use their Bibles. After the two minutes have each team read their list. Cancel out all of the same miracles that are on both lists. Have each team tally up the miracles listed that were not included on the other team's list. The team with the most miracles wins!

Next, share a personal experience of a miracle. This might be a story of surviving an accident, receiving a miraculous healing, observing an event that can't logically be explained, etc. Another option would be to invite a guest who would share either a personal story of a miracle or tell of a story they have heard. A third option would be to simply read a story of a miracle.

Illustration

Share this illustration from Mark Finley's devotional, Solid Ground:

In January of 1999 our It Is Written evangelistic team and production crew flew to the Philippines to conduct an evangelistic series. Our meetings were scheduled to take place at the Philippine International Convention Center and be transmitted via satellite throughout the Pacific Rim.

We were concerned that the satellite transmission equipment might not arrive on time. We praised God when we learned our equipment had arrived the Tuesday before our meetings were to begin. It was then that a serious problem surfaced.

All of our equipment was held up in customs subject to a $335,000 bond. The customs officials were adamant. Unless we paid $335,000, the goods would not be released.

All of our efforts to negotiate the equipment's release failed. Time was running out. Our production coordinator talked with numerous customs officials. The story was always the same. Without the payment, no goods.

We didn't have the money. Meanwhile, hundreds of churches, with tens of thousands of people, eagerly anticipated hearing God's Word Friday evening. What options did we have? Our staff prayed earnestly. We met in little prayer groups, claiming God's promises to find a way where there is no way.

Providentially we discovered that the Philippine ambassador to New Guinea was a Seventh-day Adventist. If he were in the country, he could possibly help us.

As God would have it, Ambassador Ben Tejano was in Manila and eager to help. He appealed directly to the then president of the Philippines, Joseph Estrada. President Estrada signed an executive order stating, "Immediately release all goods and transmission equipment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at no charge."

Within a few hours our equipment was released. Our evangelistic meetings began on time. Tens of thousands heard God's end-time message of love and truth.

God still works miracles. He still answers prayer.

When we are at our wits' end, He isn't. When human solutions to our problems have run out, divine solutions have not. When we don't know what to do, He knows just what is necessary. Without a doubt, we can still depend upon Him to respond when we ask.[1]

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Mark Finley and his crew were put in a difficult situation where their trust in God would be tested. Although the team was under pressure, they still trusted, and God provided. When in doubt, trust in Him, for our worldly problems are never too big for Him.

Do the miracles in the Bible ever seem as if they are from another time and another place, and God doesn't perform the same kind of miracles today?

How does one retain a sense of wonder for the miracles that occur today?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

Divide the students into four groups and have them act out the four miracles in 2 Kings 4 (the widow's oil, the Shunammite's son restored to life, death in the pot, and the feeding of a hundred). After you have enjoyed the dramatic sketches of the stories, engage the students in a conversation by using the following questions:

When you see God at work caring for the widow, raising the Shunammite's son from the dead, and so on, what does this tell you about God? Is the God of the New Testament any different than the God of the Old Testament? Explain. How might these miracles

help us keep God's harsh judgment toward the unrepentant in proper perspective?

Elisha is remembered as a man who performed many miracles to help those in need. Can you think of a better legacy that you could leave? Explain. How do you want to be remembered? How should you live today so that you can be remembered as you want to be?

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

There are different words in the Bible that can be translated as "miracle." However, each word carries with it a unique nuance. Among the most common words we call "miracles" are the following:

***1. Terata*—Wonders**

Terata is usually translated "wonders" (see Matthew 24:24; John 4:48; Acts 2:43; 5:12; 6:8; 15:12; Romans 15:19). This word indicates the state of mind of those eyewitnesses who experienced miracles. To the witnesses, such a display of power was contrary to their expectations—opposite to anything with which they were accustomed.

Such miracles, however, were not merely "wonders," producing momentary amazement. The focus was on their purpose and their inner spiritual appeal. A good example of this is the healing of the crippled man in Lystra (see Acts 14:8-15).

***2. Semeia*—Signs**

Semeia is usually translated "signs." In 2 Corinthians 12:12 the apostle Paul wrote: "I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles" (NIV). The purpose in these "signs" was to be an indication of the near presence and working of God and proof of the authentic nature of revelation. For example, the "signs" or "miracles" of Christ authenticated His divine calling and His nature as the Son of God. These signs were evident in the work of the disciples (see Mark 6:30). Similarly, the signs and miracles performed by Paul and Barnabas testified of God's Spirit at work in them (Acts 14:3). Hebrews 2:3, 4 (NIV) puts it like this: "This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will."

***3. Dunamis*—Power**

Dunamis is usually translated "power." Miracles can be considered "powers" in that they show the mighty power of God that was evident in Jesus, "the Great Power of God" (Acts 8:10, NASB). This word suggests that there are higher forces at work in this lower world of ours (see Hebrews 6:5). The plural form, "powers," is the same word translated "mighty works" (Matthew 11:20; Mark 6:14; Luke 10:13) and "miracles" (Acts 19:11; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; Galatians 3:5).

These three words are combined in one verse—"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles *[dunamesi]*, wonders *[terasi]* and signs *[semeiois]*, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know" (Acts 2:22, NIV).

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

The Power of Personal Testimony

It is important not to allow this lesson to slip into the ethereal realm—totally removed from any reality in the life of the teenager sitting in your Sabbath School class. Students might be tempted to blow off the topic of miracles as something that "possibly happened in Bible times but they certainly don't happen today."

Included in the teacher's helps this week are a couple of contemporary miracle stories. While you can share these stories—and hopefully they will make a strong impact—there is no substitute for the power of a personal testimony. Therefore, to really make this lesson sing, share from your own story. While you may not have a personal story of some dramatic miracle ("I died and then four days later I was raised from the dead—just like Lazarus"), chances are you have experienced signs, wonders, and the power of God in your life. Share these stories and help the young people see the miracles in everyday life.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask the students to form small groups and discuss the following question: If you had a guarantee that God would perform any miracle in your life right now, what miracle would you pray for? Covenant with one another in your small group to make each individual request a matter of prayer. Keep one another posted on any answers to prayer.

Summary

Share the following as a conclusion to this lesson:

Dr. Ben Carson tells of facing the seemingly inevitable death of a patient, the father of three children.

Lord, I need a booster here, I remember praying. *You could do wonders for my faith right now.*

Within two days, Rob was off the respirator. A few days after Rob went home there was an interesting development. Since I first entered the field of medicine, I have met doctors who have difficulty dealing with unanswerable situations. Often they'll finally admit, "Well, there's some explanation, we just don't understand it."

One of the neurosurgeons, an especially brilliant man and one who doesn't acknowledge a belief in God, pondered this matter of Rob for several days. He asked question after question, determined to figure out an answer. None of us could offer an explanation for Rob's recovery.

"I know, but I think I've finally figured it out," he said. "It's the mitrochondria at the subcellular level, and they can go into shock."

I listened to his explanation before I asked him a question. "Tell me, did you ever see such a thing before?"

"No, not really, but. . . ."

"This is a miracle," I said. "Why not accept it for what it is? They don't come any more blatantly than this. Rob was gone and now he's back. This is the only time I've ever seen an adult sink to such a low neurological level and then recover."

As my final statement I said, "We don't have to explain miracles; all we have to do is accept them."[2]

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[1]Mark Finley, *Solid Ground* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald®, 2003), p. 338.

[2]Adapted from Ben Carson, *Think Big* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), pp. 131-140.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 19.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
APRIL 2024

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 2 Kings 4.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 19.

the miracle worker



Photo by Jacqui Janetzko

keytext

"She said to her husband, 'I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God.' "

(2 Kings 4:9, NIV)

flashlight

"The lesson is for God's children in every age. When the Lord gives a work to be done, let not men stop to inquire into the reasonableness of the command or the probable result of their efforts to obey. . . .

"A fuller sense of God's relationship to those whom He has purchased with the gift of His Son, a greater faith in the onward progress of His cause in the earth—this is the great need of the church today" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 243).

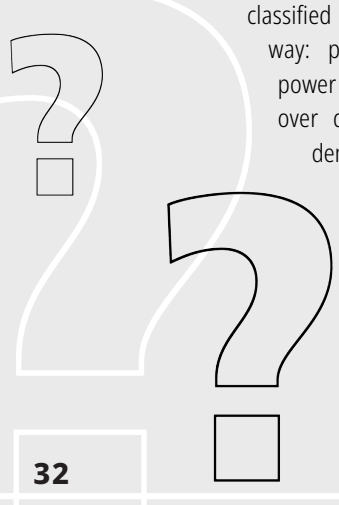
what do you think?

What do you think of the following statements—do you A (agree) or D (disagree)?

___ God works as many miracles today as He did in Bible times.
___ Many times we experience miracles and don't realize it.
___ If we had more faith we'd see more miracles.
___ If we saw more miracles we'd have more faith.
___ The greatest miracle is our salvation.
___ Faith will take away all your doubts forever.
___ Faith will make everything in your life easier.
___ If we truly believed in miracles there would be no world hunger.

did you know?

The word "miracle" is derived from the Latin word *miraculum* meaning "something wonderful." Simply defined, a miracle is an event or action that contradicts known scientific laws and that can be explained only as an act of God. Miracles recorded in the Bible can be classified in the following way: power over nature, power over disease, power over death, and power over demons.



INTO THE STORY

The Widow's Olive Oil: **"The** wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, 'Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.'

"Elisha replied to her, 'How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?'

" 'Your servant has nothing there at all,' she said, 'except a small jar of olive oil.'

"Elisha said, 'Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.' "

The Shunammite's Son Restored to Life: "One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. She said to her husband, 'I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God.' . . .

"Then Elisha said, 'Call her.' So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. 'About this time next year,' Elisha said, 'you will hold a son in your arms.' . . .

"When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. . . . Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out on him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

"Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, 'Call the Shunammite.' And he did. When she came, he said, 'Take your son.' "

Death in the Pot: "Elisha returned to Gilgal and there was a famine in that region. While the company of the prophets was meeting with him, he said to his servant, 'Put on the large pot and cook some stew for these prophets.' . . .

". . . The stew was poured out for the men, but as they began to eat it, they cried out, 'Man of God, there is death in the pot!' And they could not eat it.

"Elisha said, 'Get some flour.' He put it into the pot and said, 'Serve it to the people to eat.' And there was nothing harmful in the pot."

Feeding of a Hundred: "A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. 'Give it to the people to eat,' Elisha said.

" 'How can I set this before a hundred men?' his servant asked.

"But Elisha answered, 'Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: "They will eat and have some left over." ' Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD."

(2 Kings 4:1-4, 8-16, 32-44, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

In 2 Kings 4 we find four miracle stories. Read the four stories then reflect on these questions:

Which of the four miracles do you think was the greatest? Why?

_____
_____
_____

What impresses you most in each story? Explain.

_____
_____
_____

What do the stories have in common? What are the unique aspects of each story?

_____
_____
_____

Have you heard of any modern-day miracles that are similar to these stories in 2 Kings 4?

What do these stories tell us about Elisha?

_____
_____
_____

What do these stories tell us about God?

_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"This is what the LORD says:

" 'Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded,' declares the LORD. 'They will return from the land of the enemy. So there is hope for your descendants,' declares the LORD. 'Your children will return to their own land' " **(Jeremiah 31:16, 17, NIV).**

"This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" **(Romans 3:22, NIV).**

"LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy" **(Habakkuk 3:2, NIV).**

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" **(Matthew 7:7, NIV).**

"I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades" **(Revelation 1:18, NIV).**

further insight

"You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. . . . Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 146

Sabbath

Read Matthew 12:38-42.

Based on today's Bible passage, reflect on how Jesus' answer to the Pharisees might inform your answers in the *What Do You Think?* section. What was Jesus saying in His answer?

_____

_____

_____

Sunday

Read 2 Kings 4.

Review the four miracles in 2 Kings 4. Next to each miracle see if you can find a similar miracle recorded in the Bible.

The miracle of the widow's oil is similar to ___

_____

_____

The miracle of the healing of the Shunammite's son is similar to _____

_____.

The miracle of the poisoned pot is similar to

_____

_____.

The miracle of the feeding of a hundred is similar to _____

_____.

Monday

Read Hebrews 12:14.

The Shunammite woman recognized Elisha as "a holy man of God" (2 Kings 4:9, NIV). What attributes do you think she saw in Elisha that led her to this conclusion? Who comes to mind for you when you think about a "holy person"? How can you be known as a holy person?

_____

_____

_____

Tuesday

Read Matthew 7:7.

Ellen White points out that this lesson is for God's children in every age: "When the Lord gives a work to be done, let not men stop to inquire into the reasonableness of the command or the probable result of their efforts to obey" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 243).

Where is the line between absolute faith in God ("I *believe* God will take care of me if I donate my entire paycheck to an orphanage") and reckless foolishness ("I *believe* God will protect me in jumping off the Empire State Building")? What do you think Ellen White means when she counsels us not to "inquire into the reasonableness of the command"? Was God's command of Abraham to kill his son Isaac a "reasonable command"? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

What is one thing that you believe God is asking you to do that you know is WAY out of your abilities? Do you think it's out of God's?

_____

_____

Wednesday

Compare the *Punch Lines* to the following verses about faith:

John 20:24-29
Hebrews 11:1
Hebrews 11:6
Romans 10:17

_____

_____

_____

Thursday

Read Romans 3:22.

Is it possible to emulate the kind of faith that we read about in people like Abraham, David, and Peter? How can I exercise more faith? Does faith produce miracles? Or is it in seeing miracles that my faith is strengthened?

_____

_____

Friday

Read Habakkuk 3:2.

Read the following passage from Ellen White then write down what this means in your life today.

"What condescension it was on the part of Christ, through His messenger, to work this miracle to satisfy hunger! Again and again since that time, though not always in so marked and perceptible a manner, has the Lord Jesus worked to supply human need. If we had clearer spiritual discernment we would recognize more readily than we do God's compassionate dealing with the children of men" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 241).

What this means for my life today: _____

_____

_____

_____.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 19.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.