

Eye Opener

By David Feddes

We're in a part of the Bible that is full of exciting stories and is a very eye-opening part of the Bible because it reveals so much about God—who he is, his ways with us—and gives us some previews of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're in a part of the Bible where Elijah and Elisha, two mighty prophets, have been very active in preaching God's message as well as in doing mighty miracles. These miracles, especially in the life of Elisha, give us a preview of what Jesus will do when he comes—the first time as well as when he comes again.

Sometimes that's called a "type." Before Jesus came, there were various types or pictures or foreshadowings of who Jesus would be. The Old Testament has predictions—where it says he's going to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), or he's going to be pierced (Zechariah 12:10)—but there are also foreshadowings: people who, in some aspect of their life, are a picture of what God is going to be like when he comes to earth in the person of Jesus. And there is no type that is more like Jesus in that regard than Elisha, especially in the miracles that he did.

We're going to read about one of his great, eye-opening miracles. But I just want to give a quick overview in case Elisha is a new figure to you. Here are some of the things that the Bible tells us God did through him.

Amazing Miracles

Elisha picked up literally the mantle from Elijah. He was the successor of the prophet Elijah. When Elijah was going to leave this earth, he and Elisha walked through the Jordan River, and the water parted—just as the Red Sea years earlier had parted for the Israelites (2 Kings 2:8; Exodus 14:21-22). They walked through the Jordan River, and then Elijah was taken away by a whirlwind with horses and chariots of fire into heaven without ever dying (2 Kings 2:11). As he was going up, his mantle fell, and that cloak was picked up by Elisha. Elijah had divided the waters of the Jordan on the way across, and then when Elisha was coming back, he grabbed the cloak and hit the water with it and said, "Where now is the God of Elijah?" (2 Kings 2:14). And he was right there, because the water parted again and Elisha was picking up where Elijah had left off.

When he got back across the Jordan, he came near to the city of Jericho. Jericho was the first city that had been destroyed when the Israelites originally entered Canaan (Joshua 6:20-21), and a curse had been pronounced upon it (Joshua 6:26). It had been utterly destroyed. But during the time of wicked King Ahab, the city was rebuilt (1 Kings 16:34), but a curse still rested on that area and on those waters. The water from the spring was no good. That was told to Elisha, and he took some salt and symbolically poured it in the water. The spring became good, and it's been good ever since, says the Bible (2 Kings 2:19-22). It's still good to this day. Jericho is the city of palms, a city with great fresh water. He did a great miracle of healing some waters.

Then he got near the town of Bethel, where a golden calf had been set up for years that the Israelites were worshiping (1 Kings 12:28-29). They didn't like a prophet coming near their town. A bunch of the young toughs from Bethel came out and started mocking him, saying,

“Blast off, baldy! Blast off, baldy!” They wanted him to go away, apparently like Elijah had. So Elisha turned on them and cursed them in the name of the Lord. All of a sudden, two big she-bears came out of the woods and tore apart 42 of those kids (2 Kings 2:23-24). Not everybody’s favorite miracle, but when you trifle with God’s spokesman and with God’s Word, sometimes there is immediate retribution. Sometimes God, in his mercy, spares you for another day. But people took Elisha a little more seriously after that.

There was a widow—the widow of one of the prophets who had been learning and working with Elijah and Elisha. That prophet died, and she was in a fix. She owed a bunch of money, and the creditor would not let any of the debt go. He said she had to sell her two boys as slaves to pay the debt—a very cold-hearted man. She came to Elisha, and he said, “What have you got? What do you still have?” She said, “I’ve got one jug with some olive oil in it.” Elisha said, “Well, I’ll tell you what to do: go get more jugs, go get more pots, go get all the jars you can get your hands on. Don’t get just a few—get all the ones you can get” (2 Kings 4:1-7).

So they did it. Then Elisha said, “Now start pouring.” And they poured, and they poured, and they poured, and they poured until all of those jugs were full of oil. When the last one was full, then all of a sudden the oil stopped flowing. Elisha said, “Now go sell all that oil, pay off that guy, and live on the proceeds you have from the rest of that oil.” A great miracle of God’s provision for somebody in desperate circumstances.

Elisha had some wealthy friends, and they decided to make a little room for him when he was passing through. They had this special room, and he enjoyed it very much. After a while, Elisha said, “Boy, you people have done a lot for me. What can I do for you?” They said, “Well, really nothing. We’ve got everything money can buy. We’re doing great.” But Elisha’s assistant said to him, “They don’t have a kid, and they would really like to have one.” So Elisha said, “I’ll tell you what—this time next year, you’re going to be nursing a baby.” And she said, “Oh, man of God, don’t say that! Don’t get my hopes up!” (2 Kings 4:8-17).

But she had that baby, and they rejoiced in having that baby. Then one day, when he grew up a little bit, he was out in the field working with his dad and the harvesters, and he got sunstroke or something. He said, “My head! My head!” and he collapsed. He died (2 Kings 4:18-20).

His mom went to Elisha, and Elisha came and prayed for that boy. Then he lay on that boy, and as he prayed, the life of God came through Elisha back into that boy. He came back to life again and was restored to his parents (2 Kings 4:32-37). Just like Elijah earlier had raised a boy from death (1 Kings 17:17-24), now Elisha did. I told you before that Elisha is a great type of Christ—a picture of what Jesus is going to do when he comes, and Christ raising people from the dead (Luke 7:11-15; John 11:43-44).

He was out with the prophets one day, and somebody got a little careless with the soup. You’ve heard the story of stone soup maybe, where everybody just throws something in and before long you’ve got some soup. Well, somebody out there with good intentions grabbed a gourd that nobody recognized and chopped it up and threw it in the soup. They started eating the soup and said, “There’s poison!” They said, “There’s death in the pot!” So Elisha took a little flour, chucked his little contribution into the soup, and then it was good soup (2 Kings 4:38-41).

Elisha was one of these guys who had power from God to do miracle after miracle in very tough situations. One day they were without enough food—one hundred of the prophets and they’d only got a little bit of bread. Elisha said, “Well, start sharing and spread it around,” and sure enough, a little bit of bread turned into a lot (2 Kings 4:42-44). Now is any of this sounding kind of familiar? It was only 100 with Elisha, 5,000 with Jesus (Matthew 14:13-21), but nonetheless, you get the pattern of the miracles that God is doing.

There was an enemy general who had a terrible skin disease—leprosy. His servant girl, who was captured from Israel, said, “Well, I know of a prophet in Israel who could do something about that” (2 Kings 5:1-3). So after a bunch of different events, Naaman went to Elisha. Elisha wanted this big shot to be a little humbler, so he just sent his servant boy to the door and said, “Hey, go jump in a lake—go wash in the Jordan River seven times and you’ll be cured.” Naaman was furious. He said, “I expected him to come out and call on the name of the Lord his God and wave his hands over me. We’ve got better rivers back where I come from!” (2 Kings 5:10-12).

So he went off in a huff. But his servants said, “Well, sir, there’s one little issue—you’ve still got leprosy. Would it hurt to give it a shot?” Finally, he simmered down, went into the Jordan, and on the seventh time out of the water, his skin was pure and as healthy as a young boy. He was healed of leprosy (2 Kings 5:13-14).

Once again, Jesus was a great healer of many people and diseases—especially people with leprosy (Luke 5:12-13; Matthew 8:2-3).

Then there's a really oddball miracle where the sons of the prophets are saying, “Hey, things are going great! We need a building expansion.” The people working with Elisha are growing in number, and more and more people are learning the Word of God and spreading it. So they take some axes and are going to cut down some trees and build a better school for themselves. But while one of them is working, the head flies off his axe and goes into the water, and they can’t find it.

He had borrowed it, and an axe head wasn’t something you could just run down to the hardware store and buy for a few bucks. Those were extremely pricey, and he was going to be in a pickle. So he tells Elisha about it. Elisha throws a stick into the water, and the forces of gravity take a bit of a vacation—the axe head rises to the surface of the water. They grab it, and all is well (2 Kings 6:1-7).

Now, that little miracle is kind of a funny one. We like the big miracles—where the whole nation marches through the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21-22), or where you feed 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21)—not a dinky little axe head popping to the surface at somebody’s convenience. But you might want to consider that God pays attention to little people and little things, as well as the affairs of the nations and the big shots.

Anyway, those are some of the miracles that Elisha does. Then, after the chapter we’re going to look at, he’s dealing with a great army that has surrounded the city. Dove’s dung was selling for lots of money. People were eating it. Donkey heads were selling for an obscene amount—that’s how hungry they were in that siege (2 Kings 6:24-25). Elisha says, “By this time tomorrow, food

is going to be cheap, and there's going to be food all over the place." The king's chief of staff says, "No way. Even if the Lord opened the floodgates of heaven, that could never happen." Elisha says, "It'll happen, but you'll see it and not taste it" (2 Kings 7:1–2). That night, the Lord sends a panic into the enemy camp. In the morning they go out and discover the camp is empty—but all the food got left behind. So the people are eating and eating. There's a big stampede out of the city gates to get the food, and the king's officer who said, "No way," gets trampled by the crowd and dies (2 Kings 7:16–20). Once again, a great miracle of provision, but also a sobering miracle of judgment.

Eye opener

Now we're going to read today from 2 Kings 6:8–23, and this story—many of these miracles are eye-opening—but this one is literally about the opening of eyes.

Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I'll set up my camp in such and such a place." The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places.

This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Tell me! Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?"

"None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha the prophet who is in Israel tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

"Go find where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him."

The report came back: "He is in Dothan."

Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city.

"Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked.

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see."

Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2 Kings 6:8–17).

As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, “Strike this army with blindness.” So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.

Elisha told them, “This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for.” So he led them to Samaria. Being struck with blindness probably means they’re just bedazzled or don’t have a clue what’s going on—because they can follow Elisha, but they’re kept from recognizing him or from seeing what’s really involved in their situation.

After they entered the city of Samaria, Elisha said, “Lord, open the eyes of these men so that they can see.” Then the Lord opened their eyes, and they looked—and there they were, inside Samaria, the capital of Israel, surrounded by all the Israelite troops. Well, that’s a little inconvenient for those enemy soldiers.

When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, “Shall I kill them, my father? Shall I kill them?”

“Do not kill them,” he answered. “Would you kill those you’ve captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master.” So he prepared a great feast for them. And after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel’s territory (2 Kings 6:18–23).

Eyes Open to God

- Knows all
- Answers prayer
- Rules creation
- Orders angels
- Saves helpless
- Judges wicked
- Extends grace
- Feeds hungry
- Heals sick
- Raises dead

Elisha prayed, “Lord, open their eyes.” I want to think with you about having our eyes opened to the reality—the heavenly reality—of God and of all that he does. I want to focus on a number of things, because many of us go through life without our eyes open to the realities around us.

Knows All

One reality is that God knows everything. God knows all. You read this story—there’s a king being very secretive, very security-conscious. He doesn’t want to let anything out to the spies. He’s wasting his time, because God knows. And God is passing along to Elisha what the king is up to (2 Kings 6:12).

God knew, when he spoke during that siege and said, “There’s going to be food all over the place,” before it ever happened (2 Kings 7:1–2). God knows everything. When Elisha goes to anoint Hazael king of Syria (2 Kings 8:7–13), he’s doing what God commissioned Elijah to do (1 Kings 19:15), but Elisha carries it out. He’s anointing this man who is an official for the Syrian king, and suddenly Elisha starts crying and crying. Hazael—the man he’s anointing—says, “Why are you crying?” Elisha says, “Because I see what you’re going to do. I see all the people you’re going to kill, all the women you’re going to mistreat.” He sees it all before it ever happens.

We need to understand that God is never taken by surprise. God knows everything, and we need to have our eyes opened to the reality that nothing happens in this world apart from God’s knowledge or appointment.

Answers prayer

He’s also a God who answers prayer. He is involved in this story. Elisha prays, “Lord, open the servant’s eyes.” Then, “Lord, blind that army.” Later, “Lord, open their eyes.” When he was dealing with the dead son of the Shunammite woman, he didn’t just do a great healing—he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord answered (2 Kings 4:32–35).

Deism is the notion that there is a God, and that God made everything—kind of wound it up and then let it go. It just runs like a machine after that. That is not reality. The living God interacts with people. He listens to prayer. He answers prayer. And we need to have that reality in our minds: “God, open our eyes to the fact that you answer prayer, that you hear.”

Rules creation

We also need God to open our eyes to the fact that he rules creation. Just look at the miracles of Elisha. He prays—and what does God do? God answers. He shows his rule over creation. Elisha starts out by splitting the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:14). A river is under God’s command. A spring that had bad water turns into good water at God’s command (2 Kings 2:21–22). Two she-bears do what God says (2 Kings 2:24). When Elijah prays for a drought, there’s no rain. When he prays for rain, it pours (1 Kings 17:1; 18:42–45). That’s not because Elijah is so great. These miracles of Elisha aren’t because he has magical powers. They are because God rules creation. And he gave these prophets special ability when they prayed to him.

An axe head floats (2 Kings 6:6). I mean, the law of gravity—we always talk about the laws of nature now. We talk about the laws of nature as though God is ruled by the laws of nature—as though God can’t do a miracle. Who do you think made everything? The one who made everything can do as he pleases with what he’s made. And again, we can’t be just practicing deists—acting as though God is not governing the world anymore. We need to understand that he rules this whole physical creation around us.

Orders angels

We also need to understand that God orders the creation that we don't see. He orders and directs the angels. That's what Elisha prays that his servant will recognize. Because when Elisha says, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kings 6:16), the servant must have been thinking, "Yeah, right. I can count. There's you, and there's me. I've got two. Now I'm looking around the city—one, two, three, four... fifty... eighty... hundred... two, three... It's hundreds to two, and you say we've got more than they do?" He's panicking. Elisha says, "Lord, please open his eyes." Then the servant sees the chariots and the horsemen of fire, God's angelic hosts surrounding them (2 Kings 6:17).

"I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?" (Psalm 121:1). Well, those hills are full of the horses and chariots of fire—those same horses and chariots that took Elijah safely to heaven (2 Kings 2:11). You're not going to heaven—you're not leaving this world—until God says so, until the chariots of fire say so. And when you're surrounded by the chariots of fire, they're either going to escort you to glory if you're his child, or they're going to keep you alive here on this earth. Those are the options.

God rules the physical creation. God orders the angels. Psalm 91 says that he will give his angels charge concerning you to keep you in all your ways (Psalm 91:11). "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them" (Psalm 34:7).

And this is all the more striking when you think ahead to Jesus. Angels accompanied him in a lot of what he did. When Jesus was born, the angels sang his praises (Luke 2:13–14). When Jesus was out in the wilderness being tempted by the devil and successfully overcame him, then the angels came and ministered to him (Matthew 4:11). When Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was going to go to the cross, an angel came and ministered to him (Luke 22:43).

And the angels were there—that mighty host—when Jesus went to the cross. And when one of his disciples whipped out his sword to try to defend Jesus, Jesus said, "Do you not think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53). They were there. They were ready for the order. And the order never came, because though Jesus was surrounded by the legion of angels, he knew that it was his Father's purpose that he go to the cross and accomplish God's purpose of salvation.

But it's so very important that we understand we live in a world surrounded by divine reality and surrounded by angelic reality. We don't have eyes to see it much of the time, but that's why we have the Bible. That's why we have God's revelation—so that we know they are there, even when we don't see the angels at work.

I don't want to make this sermon too long—I could start to tell you of people who actually did believe that they were rescued by angels in very challenging circumstances. But just suffice it to say: the angel of the Lord surrounds his people. And sometimes, as in the case of Jesus, he may have other purposes than just rescuing you from suffering or pain. But the angels are there.

We sometimes think of heaven as a realm way, way, way, way up there—and then earth is down here—and there's this enormous gap. The Bible says that heaven is right here around us too. It is the abode of God and the angels. But that abode, that home, is very near to us at all times. It's just that we don't quite have the senses—or the good sense, maybe—to be alert to those realities all the time. And so we need to do what Elisha did when he prayed, “Lord, open his eyes” (2 Kings 6:17). Each of us can pray, “Lord, open my eyes, so that I can be more alert to you, so that I can be more alert to your heavenly host, to your heavenly forces.”

Saves helpless

The Lord is a God who saves the helpless. Those angels were there for a reason. They were there to protect and defend and to carry out God's orders. He saves the helpless. When Elisha and his servant are surrounded, God rescues them from the army that wants to capture them (2 Kings 6:18–23).

It's almost funny sometimes to read these stories. The king of Aram is plotting against the king of Israel, and his plots are always foiled because Elisha knows what he's doing. But now, all of a sudden, thinks he's going to capture Elisha, and Elisha is just going to be clueless about it? He's not going to know it's coming? He's not going to be able to do anything about it? Elisha knows it's coming. And he knows God is going to do something about it.

God saves the helpless. He saved Elisha and his servant. When that widow and her sons were going to either starve or be sold into slavery, God provided that flow of oil to rescue them (2 Kings 4:1–7). When they were out in the desert facing enemy armies and had no water, God gave a word through Elisha, and water flowed in the desert (2 Kings 3:16–20). There are so many examples of how God rescues helpless people.

Christ himself said, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10)—to help the helpless, to help those who have no other helper.

Judges wicked

But he's not just the God who rescues and saves and rules. He's also a God who judges the wicked. We've seen that terrible story of the two she-bears who ripped into that group of youths who were challenging and mocking Elisha (2 Kings 2:23–24). We read the story where an enemy army going up against God's spokesman is suddenly blinded (2 Kings 6:18).

We read a harsher story yet of Elijah, where he sends a message to the king of Israel that he is going to die for consulting a false god. The king sends a captain and fifty troops to capture him. They say, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’” Elijah says, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” And fire comes down and consumes them (2 Kings 1:9–10).

Slow learner, the king. He sends another captain, another fifty. Same song, second verse. “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’” Elijah says, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Boom—they're gone too (2 Kings 1:11–12).

By the third time, the latest captain has gotten the message. He says, “Oh please, please, please, man of God, no more fire, please—but it would be really, really nice if you would come along with us.” And God says, “Go with him.” So Elijah goes with him and gives the king the same message he had originally given. Those kings back in those days had that “shoot the messenger” mentality. Elijah had said, “King, you’re going to die.” The king didn’t like that message, so he sent those captains to capture Elijah. But when Elijah goes again to the king, he gives the exact same, word-for-word message: “King, you’re going to die.” And the king dies (2 Kings 1:3–17).

When we think that God can just be trifled with, we need to read these stories. God is not to be messed with. He’s gracious and merciful, slow to anger (Exodus 34:6)—we’ll see more about his grace and generosity in a moment. But these stories of judgment are part of the Bible too. When you think you can boss around the man of God and say, “Hey, the king’s in charge—you do what the king says,” or when you think you’ve got him surrounded—well, God can strike you blind. But God can also extend grace.

Extends grace

There’s a great story in the New Testament about someone who is struck blind—Saul, a terrible enemy of the gospel who’s hunting down Christians, wanting to kill them. Suddenly, Jesus appears, and Saul is blinded and flattened. Three days later, his sight is restored, and he’s launched into being an ambassador of the gospel (Acts 9:1–19).

Something similar happens in this story. Elisha prays that this whole army will be blinded (2 Kings 6:18). But then he extends grace to that army. When the king of Israel has them right where he wants them, surrounded, he says, “Shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?” Elisha says, “No, no. You wouldn’t even treat prisoners of war that way. And you didn’t capture these people—Somebody else did. Now let’s feed them and send them home.” He extends that grace to them (2 Kings 6:21–23).

In the stories of Elijah and Elisha, God does that again and again—with undeserving people, but also with people who were foreigners, who were not part of the nation of Israel, the Jewish people. Naaman was an Aramean—or Syrian—general. So he was a general of the armies that had actually been attacking Israel. He’s not only a foreigner, he’s an enemy foreigner. And the Lord gives him healing of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:1–14).

When Elijah traveled outside the nation, he went to a widow from Zarephath, which was Gentile territory, and he provided food for her by the Lord’s hand and raised her son from the dead (1 Kings 17:8–24). She was a foreigner. By the way, Jesus comments on both of those. He says, “There were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time...yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy...yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:25–27).

That was not Jesus’ most popular sermon. He gave that sermon, and they wanted to grab him and throw him off a cliff (Luke 4:28–29). That’s how much nice religious people sometimes like foreigners. We don’t like it when God is extending his grace beyond where we would like it.

Or the story of Jonah. Jonah just wishes—oh, does he wish—that Nineveh would be blotted from the face of the earth. But God spares the city (Jonah 3–4).

Again and again, God extends grace to foreigners and to people who just plain don't deserve it, because they're on the wrong team, and they've been attacking God's people.

But what does Jesus say? "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:43–44). Romans 12 says, "Do not take revenge... If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink" (Romans 12:19–20). We have that all in action right here. Elisha has an enemy. He feeds them. He gives them something to drink. He heaps burning coals on their heads and sends them home—embarrassed that they came to try to kill that man. He sent them home with a banquet (2 Kings 6:21–23).

So it is with all of us. We're a lot like that army. If God does open our eyes, one of the first things you realize is how dense you've been—and how much trouble you're in. When God's Holy Spirit works in your heart and opens your eyes, and you begin to see your sinfulness, and you begin to see what God's judgment against sin could be if he just gave you what you deserve—that's a very scary thing.

That's about as nice as just walking along blindly and then opening your eyes and you're in the capital city of the enemy with all their spears pointing at you (2 Kings 6:20). That is very, very bad news. Many people don't want to face the bad news. But when God opens our eyes to our predicament, we realize we can't be fooling ourselves anymore. We are in a world of trouble. We are dead meat.

But then God gives us what we don't expect. He opens our eyes to our problem and our predicament—but then he provides himself as our food. And he gives those who deserve death—eternal death, damnation—a feast instead.

I told you Elisha is a type of Christ. God has all those angels, he has his wrath and his judgment to surround us—and then instead of giving death, he grants a feast through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ crucified.

Feeds hungry

God not only extends his grace; he feeds the hungry. You see that again and again. Elisha feeds the hundred people (2 Kings 4:42–44). He turns the poison food into good food (2 Kings 4:38–41). He makes the water flow and makes it healthy (2 Kings 2:19–22).

What did Jesus say? "If you knew who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10). "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). And he proved it by feeding 5,000 (John 6:1–13). But he said, "Don't get too focused on the loaves here. The loaves are to make a point. I'm the bread of life" (John 6:26–27, 35). You can pray to God for your daily bread—

that's fine. And he can even give you miracle bread. But what you really need is him as your food and as your drink.

Heals sick

Christ feeds the hungry, and he heals the sick. We know the great stories of Jesus' miracles. In the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, the poison pot is healed (2 Kings 4:38–41), and the leper is healed (2 Kings 5:1–14). God's healing power goes forth.

As you hear these stories, you need to realize again that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). When you're in a pickle that you think there's no way out of, you need to hear the words: "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kings 6:16). And you need to pray, "Lord, open my eyes to see you in this situation, to see what you're doing."

When you think there's a terrible lack and not enough provision, realize that God can provide. He can take cities under siege that are paying top dollar for donkey head and have a rich feast by the next day (2 Kings 6:25; 7:1–2, 16). God can do amazing things.

And so, our calling is to have our eyes open to him. And the only way that's going to happen is if he opens the eyes of our heart. He's the one who heals the sick. He's the one who raises the dead.

Raises dead

That's probably the supreme type of Elijah and Elisha. John the Baptist, in a sense, was an Elijah who came to prepare the way for Jesus (Luke 1:17; Matthew 11:14), just as Elijah came, and then his successor Jesus had a greater measure of his spirit and did even greater miracles. Elijah and Elisha raised the dead (1 Kings 17:17–24; 2 Kings 4:32–37). Jesus raised a dead girl to life (Mark 5:35–43). He raised a widow's son back to life (Luke 7:11–15). He raised his friend Lazarus back to life (John 11:38–44). And his disciple Peter raised a dead woman back to life by Jesus' power (Acts 9:36–41).

The power of Jesus to raise the dead is given a preview in the life of Elisha. And there's one other story that comes a little later in the book of 2 Kings. Elisha has died. Unlike Elijah, he goes through physical death. Elijah went straight to heaven—one of only two people, along with Enoch, who never died at all (2 Kings 2:11; Genesis 5:24). But Elisha dies and he's in a tomb.

Then one day, there are a gang of muggers on the loose. They attack a funeral procession. The friends of the dead guy want to get out of there in a hurry, so they throw their friend's body into a tomb. It happens to be Elisha's tomb. The dead man lands on Elisha's bones, and the man comes back to life (2 Kings 13:20–21).

What happened at the moment Jesus died? The Bible says the sky was dark, the earth quaked, the veil of the temple was torn in two, and many holy people were raised from their graves (Matthew

27:50–53). The moment that Jesus Christ died—like the dead bones of Elisha bringing life—the death of Jesus meant life for others.

These are some of the realities that come through to us in the Scriptures. Sometimes we can ponder the fine details of this or that important doctrine. But sometimes it is so important that we simply pray to God and say, “Lord, open our eyes, so that we know the heavenly, the divine, the eternal reality.”

“We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18). The Bible says that God opens the eyes of our heart. Ephesians 1, there's a prayer asking the Lord to give the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we'll know him better, and that the eyes of our heart may be enlightened (Ephesians 1:17–18). God makes his light shine in our hearts so that we can see the light of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

We can stumble through life like a deist, who thinks there's a God out there somewhere who got things rolling but has lost track of his active reality in the world today. We can mosey through life as though the laws of nature are controlling God, instead of God governing the laws of nature.

May God open our eyes. Even those of us who are believers still need that. Elisha's servant was a believer, but he still needed his eyes opened (2 Kings 6:17). And you and I need the Holy Spirit again and again and afresh to open our eyes to Jesus, to God's reality, to the wonder of the angelic realm and what God's angels are up to. We believers need to know him better and get the scales removed from our eyes.

If you're an unbeliever, you need that too. There are a couple of miracles of eye-opening here. One is the believing servant who doesn't believe quite enough, doesn't see quite enough, and is kind of clueless. The other is the enemies. If you're an enemy of God and your eyes are opened—well, he may blind you first as an act of judgment and let you get yourself into a world of hurt. And then he may open your eyes just at that moment when all seems lost and all the enemy spears are at your throat—and then comes the grace (2 Kings 6:18–20).

This is a wonderful story. If you follow Jesus, may God help your eyes to be open. And if you don't follow Jesus, may God open your eyes to the danger of being without him, but also open your eyes to the feast—the bread of life, the water of life: Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Father, help us to see the unseen realm, that we may walk by faith and not just by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). We pray, Father, that where our hearts have grown cold, where our eyes have grown dim, you will help us afresh to know you—to know your mighty angelic armies at your disposal, and above all to know Jesus Christ, the one who fulfills all that the prophets came to foreshadow. We pray in his name. Amen.

Eye Opener
By David Feddes
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