

Faith in Action: Obedience in the Face of Need

2 Kings 3 & 4

Key Bible Texts

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Key Bible Verse(s)

“But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel’s servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.” (2 Kings 3:11)

Background to the Study

Jehoram, son of Ahab and Jezebel, ruled Israel from 852–841 B.C. Though he tried to remove Baal worship, he continued in the sins of Jeroboam, allowing idol worship to flourish. Jeroboam had originally led Israel astray by setting up golden calves and discouraging worship in Jerusalem, and Jehoram followed in his footsteps (2 Kings 3:3).

During Ahab’s reign, Moab paid heavy tribute to Israel, but after Ahab’s death, King Mesha of Moab rebelled. Jehoram gathered an alliance with Jehoshaphat of Judah and the king of Edom to fight back. Taking a longer route to Moab, their armies ran out of water after seven days. Jehoram despaired and blamed God, but Jehoshaphat sought the Lord. The prophet Elisha, though unimpressed with Jehoram’s idolatry, agreed to help for Jehoshaphat’s sake. As music played, the Spirit of God came upon Elisha, and he instructed the kings to dig ditches that God would miraculously fill with water. He also promised victory over Moab.

The next morning, water flowed into the valley, and in the sunlight it looked like blood. The Moabites assumed the allied armies had destroyed each other, rushed down to plunder them, and instead were ambushed. Israel, Judah, and Edom pursued and devastated Moab’s land, fulfilling Elisha’s prophecy. In desperation, Mesha sacrificed his son to Chemosh, and the sight caused “great indignation against Israel” (3:27). Israel withdrew, and Moab was never again under their control.

Chapters 4–7 record miracles during Jehoram’s reign. In one, a widow facing debt was about to lose her sons to slavery. Elisha told her to gather vessels, and God multiplied her small pot of oil until she had enough to pay her debt and live. In Shunem, a wealthy woman showed hospitality to Elisha by building him a room. God rewarded her with a son, but when the boy later died, she sought Elisha with faith and urgency. Elisha prayed, and God restored the child to life.

Other miracles included making poisoned food safe during a famine, and multiplying a small offering of bread to feed one hundred men. These stories highlight God's power to provide, restore, and multiply when His people act in faith and obedience.

TESTIMONIES FROM OUR DAY

It always began with a call to my husband, Jerry. "Sam," Sister Miller would say—a nickname for "strong man"—"could you stop by after school?" That was her signal that company was coming and furniture needed moving. Though her home was small, it was never too small for others. Ministers, students, relatives, or those recovering from hardship all found a place at the Miller home.

Jerry often laughs recalling one visit when so many guests arrived—a large family, a youth group, and local church youths—that twenty-two people needed seating. Beds were moved to the basement to make room for extra tables. Despite the chaos, Sister Miller never once hinted that guests were a burden. At most, she admitted to a "satisfied weariness" after everyone had been cared for.

Her hospitality was marked by love and excellence: wholesome food, clean rooms, and thoughtful touches like a Bible and a quiet place for reading or writing. She served everyone—hungry students and visiting pastors alike—with the same gracious heart.

Sister Miller reminded me of the Shunammite woman who prepared a room for the prophet Elisha—not seeking reward, but serving out of devotion. Her example taught us that true hospitality springs from love, not obligation.

Now, my husband and I have learned the same joy. Opening our home to others—especially fellow believers—has expanded our circle of prayer and fellowship. Just as God blessed the Shunammite woman, we've found that a hospitable heart brings its own blessing.

Imagine a believer (e.g. Christian family) today who opens their home to missionaries or ministers, not for recognition but out of love for God. When crisis strikes—perhaps a child's illness or a financial burden—their faith remains steady, trusting that "it shall be well" (2 Kings 4:23). Faith that serves quietly and trusts deeply carries the same fragrance as the Shunammite woman's devotion.

A Closer Look

Question 1

Jehoram, king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, joined forces with the king of Edom in an alliance against Moab. When the water supply for their combined armies ran low and the fear of defeat intensified, the kings appealed to the Prophet Elisha concerning their plight. Why did Elisha show regard for King Jehoshaphat but not for King Jehoram? (2 Kings 3:1-3; 2 Chronicles 17:3-6). What lesson can we learn from this?

Question 2

What instructions did Elisha give the kings when their armies had no water, and what does this teach us about trusting God in hard times? 2 Kings 3:16-17

Question 3

Can you think of “impossible” situations—either in your life or someone else’s—where God stepped in and made a way?

Question 4

The first seven verses of chapter 4 describe one of Elisha’s miracles. What occurred in this passage, and what lessons can we learn from it?

Question 5

Chapter 4 goes on to record several other miracles performed by Elisha. List these miracles and describe what they have in common. 2 Kings 4:16-17, 34-35, 38-41, 42-44

Question 6

The Shunammite woman showed hospitality by building a room for Elisha, and later great faith when her son died. What do these actions reveal about her devotion to God? 2 Kings 4:8-10

Take Home

When life throws challenges at us that feel overwhelming, we can lean on God’s Word and seek guidance from those who walk faithfully with Him. Their wisdom can help point us back in the right direction. God also delights in blessing us when we look for ways to show kindness and hospitality to others. And when we bring our needs to Him boldly in prayer, it shows our trust in who He is. We don’t need to hold back—He invites us to come with confidence, knowing He hears and cares.