

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.3, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 3 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.3, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture analyzes the biblical account of Elisha's ministry in 2 Kings 6-8, focusing on the story of the Shunammite woman and its theological implications. He emphasizes how God provides for those who trust in Him, even amidst famine, while the story illustrates themes of resurrection and restoration, demonstrating Yahweh's power over death and impossibility. Oswalt considers the role of prophecy, contrasting it with pagan notions of predetermined fate, and suggests biblical prophecy is contingent on human response. The lecture explores the possibility of Gehazi's healing and repentance, as well as questioning the repentance of others, and encourages listeners to consider how God desires to restore life in their own lives, highlighting the ongoing availability of spiritual miracles.

2. 10 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.3 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).



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on20_3.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.3, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 3

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 2 Kings 6-8, Part 3.

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 6-8 (Part 3)

Source: Excerpts from "Oswalt_Kings_EN_Session20_3.pdf"

Main Themes:

- **God's Deliverance and Provision:** The central theme is Elisha's ministry as one of deliverance and provision, showcasing Yahweh's power to accomplish the impossible, contrasting with the impotence of Baal. The story of the Shunammite woman, who is aided and protected by God (through Elisha), is a key illustration of this theme.
- **Faith and Obedience:** The Shunammite woman's immediate and unquestioning obedience to Elisha's warning about the famine is highlighted as an example of the kind of faith God desires.
- **The Nature of Biblical Prophecy:** Oswalt emphasizes that biblical prophecy is often conditional, dependent on human response (obedience or disobedience). He contrasts this with pagan prophecy, which he characterizes as predetermined and unavoidable.
- **Restoration and Repentance:** The lecture explores the possibility of individual and national restoration through repentance and faith. While the king seems more interested in the spectacle of miracles than in Yahweh himself, the possibility of personal transformation, like Gehazi potentially being healed of leprosy, is explored. The repeated emphasis on Elisha restoring the Shunammite woman's son to life is interpreted as a symbolic question: "Could Yahweh restore Israel to life? Yes, he could."
- **The Availability of God's Miracles Today:** Oswalt concludes by emphasizing that while visible miracles like those performed by Elisha may have been specific to that time, the miracle of new life and redemption is available to believers today.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **The Shunammite Woman:** Her story, spanning 2 Kings 4 and revisited in chapters 6-8, is intentionally placed in the narrative to highlight God's protection and provision for those who trust in Him. Her initial act of providing lodging for Elisha, the miraculous birth and subsequent restoration of her son, and her obedience to Elisha's warning about the famine all contribute to this central theme.
- "We first saw the Shunammite woman back in 2 Kings 4... And she made a room on the roof of her house for Elisha whenever he would come by that way. And that Elisha promised her a son... And ultimately, the boy's life was restored."
- "Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life... Go away with your family and stay for a while wherever you can because the Lord has decreed a famine in the land that will last seven years. The woman proceeded to do as the man of God said."
- **The Significance of Famine:** Oswalt raises the question of whether God directly caused the famine. He suggests it may be a natural occurrence that God foresaw and used to protect the Shunammite woman.
- "Did God send the famine? I don't think so... So, God says a famine's coming, and I want you to warn that good lady."
- **Land and Inheritance:** The lecture mentions the importance of family land in Israelite society, referencing the story of Naboth's vineyard. When the Shunammite woman returns after the famine, she must appeal to the king to reclaim her land, as it seemingly became royal property after being abandoned.
- "Do you remember when we talked about Naboth and his vineyard? Land had to stay in the family. It didn't belong to the Israelites. It belonged to the Lord, and he gave them the use of the land."
- **Gehazi's Possible Healing:** Oswalt proposes the possibility that Gehazi, who was afflicted with leprosy after the Naaman incident, may have repented and been healed. This idea challenges the notion of predetermined punishment and emphasizes the potential for change through faith.
- "But another possibility is that Gehazi has been healed. Let me talk about that for a moment. I think this is an important element in biblical prophecy."
- **Conditional Prophecy vs. Predestination:** Oswalt makes a key distinction between biblical prophecy, which is often contingent on human action, and pagan

prophecy, which is seen as predetermined. He uses examples like the prophecies about Jerusalem and the judgment on Gehazi's family to illustrate this point.

- "Biblical prophecy tells us what will happen if. And that if is always dependent on us... Nothing has to happen."
- "Gehazi, you're going to be lepers forever unless you turn to God in repentance and faith. I don't know what happened here. But I think it's entirely possible that, in fact, Gehazi has been healed."
- **The King's Interest in Miracles:** Oswalt suggests the king's interest in Elisha's miracles may be superficial, lacking a genuine desire to know Yahweh. This highlights the importance of true repentance and faith over simply being impressed by miraculous events.
- "He doesn't say, tell me about Yahweh, who has inspired Elisha to do these wonderful things. He doesn't want to know about Yahweh. He wants to know about Elisha."
- **Symbolic Restoration:** The repeated phrase "restored to life" regarding the Shunammite woman's son is interpreted as a symbolic question. It suggests Yahweh's ability to restore Israel if they repent and believe.
- "By my count, four times. Restored to life, restored to life, restored to life. Do you think they're trying to make a point? Yeah. Could Yahweh restore Israel to life? Yes, he could."
- **Relevance for Today:** Oswalt concludes by emphasizing the ongoing availability of God's grace and the miracle of new life for believers today.
- "And those miracles are as much available to you and me today as they ever were then... But what I want to say to you is the miracle of new life, the miracle of redeemed life, the miracle of life brought back from the death of sin and hell. That's a miracle that is available to you and me every day."

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.3, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 3

The Ministry of Elisha: Deliverance, Faith, and Restoration

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the provided text.

1. What is the significance of the Shunammite woman's story appearing both in 2 Kings 4 and again later in the narrative, according to Oswalt?
2. According to Oswalt, what two things did Yahweh do for the widow and the Shunammite woman that Baal could never do?
3. What two possible explanations does Oswalt suggest regarding Gehazi's presence in 2 Kings 8, despite having leprosy in chapter 5?
4. How does biblical prophecy differ from pagan prophecy, according to Oswalt?
5. What example does Oswalt use to illustrate that a prophecy from God may not come to pass?
6. What does Oswalt suggest might have happened to Gehazi?
7. What does the king want to know about Elisha?
8. What connection does Oswalt make between the restoration of the Shunammite woman's son and the potential restoration of Israel?
9. How does Oswalt characterize the king's actions towards the Shunammite woman when she returns to claim her land?
10. What kind of miracles are available to us today?

Answer Key

1. Oswalt believes that the Shunammite woman's story is not accidental, and serves a specific purpose in the narrative. Its inclusion highlights God's care for his own and emphasizes the themes of deliverance, faith, and the possibility of restoration.
2. According to Oswalt, Yahweh can bring endless abundance and raise the dead, abilities that Baal could never perform. This comparison highlights Yahweh's superior power and ability to provide for and restore life.

3. Oswalt suggests either that the story in 2 Kings 8 occurs before the Naaman incident (and is placed out of order for theological reasons) or that Gehazi has been healed of his leprosy, potentially through repentance and faith.
4. Biblical prophecy, according to Oswalt, is conditional and dependent on human actions (obedience or disobedience), while pagan prophecy is deterministic and predetermined by fate or external forces.
5. Oswalt uses the prophecy that Jerusalem will never fall again as an example. Despite the prophecy, Jerusalem has fallen multiple times throughout history, demonstrating that prophecies can be conditional.
6. Oswalt suggests the possibility that Gehazi may have repented and turned to God in faith, leading to his healing from leprosy, although this is not explicitly stated in the text.
7. The king is interested in hearing about the exciting and strange miracles that Elisha performed. However, he does not seem interested in Yahweh, the source of Elisha's power and inspiration.
8. Oswalt connects the restoration of the Shunammite woman's son to the potential restoration of Israel. He suggests that just as Yahweh restored the boy to life, he could also restore Israel if they repented and believed.
9. Oswalt characterizes the king's actions as generous but lacking in repentance and faith. While the king restores the woman's property and income, he shows no evidence of a deeper spiritual change or recognition of God's power.
10. Oswalt states that miracles of new life and redeemed life are available to all believers daily. These miracles come through the forgiveness of sins.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the Shunammite woman's story as a recurring motif in 2 Kings 4 and 2 Kings 8. How does her faith and actions serve as an example for the Israelites and for modern readers?
2. Compare and contrast the characteristics of pagan prophecy with those of biblical prophecy, as described by Oswalt. How does this distinction impact our understanding of God's sovereignty and human agency?
3. Analyze the character of Gehazi. Is there evidence to suggest he repented? Explain the possibilities.
4. Explore the theme of restoration in the context of 2 Kings 6-8. How is the potential for restoration presented on both individual and national levels?
5. Discuss the relationship between miracles and faith. According to Oswalt, what is the ultimate source of miracles, and how are they relevant to believers today?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Shunammite Woman:** A woman who demonstrates great hospitality towards Elisha and whose son is miraculously restored to life. Her story highlights themes of faith, reward, and God's provision.
- **Elisha:** A prophet of God who succeeds Elijah. Elisha's ministry is characterized by miracles, deliverance, and warnings to the kings of Israel.
- **Gehazi:** Elisha's servant who is struck with leprosy as a consequence for his greed and deception. His character provides a contrast to Elisha's integrity and raises questions about repentance and forgiveness.
- **Naaman:** A Syrian army commander who is healed of leprosy by Elisha. His story highlights the universality of God's grace and the importance of obedience.
- **Baalism:** The worship of the Canaanite god Baal, a fertility deity often associated with rain and agricultural abundance. It was a rival religion to Yahwism (the worship of Yahweh) in ancient Israel.
- **Restoration:** The act of bringing something back to its original or intended state. In the context of 2 Kings, it refers to the restoration of life, property, and the potential restoration of Israel's relationship with God.
- **Prophecy:** A message from God, often delivered through a prophet, that reveals future events or provides guidance for the present. Biblical prophecy is often conditional, dependent on human actions.
- **Repentance:** A turning away from sin and a turning towards God, often involving a change of heart and behavior. It is a necessary condition for forgiveness and restoration in the biblical narrative.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible. The God of Israel, who is portrayed as powerful, compassionate, and just.
- **Miracle:** An extraordinary event that is attributed to divine intervention. In 2 Kings, miracles demonstrate God's power and his ability to intervene in human affairs.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 20.3, 2 Kings 6-8, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Elisha's Ministry and Deliverance

- **What is the overarching theme of Elisha's ministry as portrayed in 2 Kings 6-8?**
- The primary theme is Elisha's ministry of deliverance, showcasing God's power to deliver His people from dire situations, particularly famine and siege. Elisha's acts, like restoring the Shunammite woman's son to life, highlight Yahweh's capacity to accomplish the impossible, including resurrection and providing abundance, contrasting sharply with the impotence of Baal worship. These miracles suggest the possibility of Israel's restoration through repentance and faith.
- **What significance does the Shunammite woman's story hold within the broader narrative?**
- The Shunammite woman's story, appearing multiple times, is not accidental. It emphasizes the themes of resurrection, the accomplishment of the impossible, and God looking out for his own. Her obedience to Elisha's warning about the famine exemplifies unwavering faith and prompt action in response to God's word. Her story serves as a reminder that God can restore what has been, what should be, and what can be in our lives.
- **How does the famine serve as a test of faith, and what does it reveal about God's character?**
- The famine serves as a test of faith, particularly for the Shunammite woman, who acts immediately upon Elisha's warning. This illustrates God's foreknowledge and protection for those who trust and obey Him. While the source doesn't explicitly state God *caused* the famine, it suggests God uses natural events to test and refine faith, and provides a way of escape for the faithful. The famine reveals God's caring character, as He warns and protects those who are His.
- **What is the difference between biblical prophecy and pagan prophecy?**
- Biblical prophecy differs significantly from pagan prophecy. Pagan prophecy often dictates predetermined, unchangeable events based on external factors like the stars. In contrast, biblical prophecy is conditional, contingent upon human response – specifically obedience or disobedience to God. This "if" introduces an

element of human agency and the potential for alteration based on choices made.

- **Is Gehazi's leprosy a fixed, unchangeable judgment, or is there potential for healing and restoration?**
- While it is stated that Gehazi and his descendants will be lepers forever, it is suggested there might be a possibility of healing through repentance and faith in God. This is because biblical prophecy can be conditional. This possibility is raised because Gehazi is interacting with the King later on, and the text suggests that perhaps he was healed. Even statements that seem absolute might be averted through genuine repentance and a change in behavior, as exemplified by the discussion of Jerusalem's repeated falls despite prophecies suggesting otherwise.
- **Why is the king interested in hearing about Elisha's miracles?**
- The king's interest in Elisha's miracles is portrayed as potentially superficial. Instead of seeking to understand the source of Elisha's power (Yahweh) or seeking a genuine spiritual transformation, the king may simply be interested in the spectacle and excitement of miraculous events. This highlights a potential disconnect between witnessing miracles and experiencing true repentance and faith.
- **How can the stories of restoration in 2 Kings 6-8 be applied to our lives today?**
- The stories of restoration in 2 Kings 6-8, particularly the restoration of the Shunammite woman's son, serve as a reminder of God's power to restore what has been lost or broken in our lives. While we may not experience the same visible miracles as Elisha performed, the miracle of new life, redeemed life, and freedom from sin and hell are available to everyone every day. These stories serve as an encouragement to look to God for restoration and transformation.
- **What does the passage suggest about the possibility of national restoration for Israel?**
- The repeated emphasis on Elisha restoring the Shunammite woman's son to life serves as an analogy for the potential restoration of Israel. Just as Yahweh demonstrated His power to bring life back to the boy, He also has the power to restore Israel, if they turn to Him in repentance and faith. The question is whether Israel will choose to repent and believe, paving the way for their national restoration.