



# Bible Study

2 KINGS 5:1-14



Canadian Lutheran  
World Relief

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## CLWR BIBLE STUDIES

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CLWR's Bible Studies have been designed to help congregations delve deeper into the challenges leading to injustices around the world, to explore related Bible stories, to discuss how these connect and how God calls us to act together.

These studies are meant to be adapted for your congregation's needs and are free to use. Each study includes discussion questions for children to adults, as well as suggestions to connect this discussion to action.

As CLWR continues to grow our resource collection, we would love to hear suggestions and insight from you. Please feel free to contact Heidi Van Schaik, our Church Relations Manager at [heidi@clwr.org](mailto:heidi@clwr.org) with ideas and feedback.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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- The books of Kings are found in the Hebrew Bible.
- 2 Kings is the last book of the 'Former Prophets,' along with 1 Kings, Joshua, Judges, and 1 + 2 Samuel.
- It offers background information for the prophetic writings.
- The authors and redactors of this book are known as 'Deuteronomists' because the style of writing, (language and perspectives) are inspired by Deuteronomy.
- This book is broken into 2 parts: chapters 1-17 which is a synchronistic history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel until the fall of Samaria, and chapters 18–25 which focuses on the last 1.5 centuries of the Judean Kingdom until their exile.
- While it is optimal to read 1 + 2 Kings as an entire section as they were originally written as a single document, and even better to start with 1 + 2 Samuel, this study will focus on only a small section of 2 Kings.

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## CULTURAL CONTEXT

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- If we look at the other prophetic writings, we see that in 1 Samuel 8, the Israelites ask God for a King.
- Following Saul, David and Solomon, the kingdom of Israel is divided.
- To see a timeline of the kings check out this link:
  - [www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/116628/The-Kings-of-Israel-and-Judah/#vars!date=0928\\_BC-04-13\\_08:11:19](http://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/116628/The-Kings-of-Israel-and-Judah/#vars!date=0928_BC-04-13_08:11:19)
- There is a dispute between Jeroboam and Rehoboam that divides the kingdom into Israel and Judah in approximately 928BCE.
  - You can read more about this in 1 Kings 11 and 2 Chronicles 7.
  - The Northern Kingdom remains Israel while the Southern Kingdom becomes Judah.
  - It's important to remember that at this time, once the kings were established, there was constant war and discord among even the various smaller communities within the borders of the kingdoms themselves.
- The book of 2 Kings begins during the reign of Ahaziah of Israel and ends with the destruction of Jerusalem and deportation of the Judeans to Babylon (Babylonian exile) where there is a mention of the Babylonian King, Eli-medach, who ruled around 560 CE while others fled to Egypt, creating a deeper schism in the Jewish community.
- Remember... God remains God of all Israelites AND foreigners.

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## SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

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- Naaman is the commander of the army of the king of Aram.
- Aram has recently raided Israel and from the spoils of that war came the girl who becomes servant to the wife of Naaman.
- There is unease between Aram and Israel due to the recent skirmish.
- Naaman means “gracious”.
- Leprosy was a term used for a variety of skin conditions, its precise meaning is uncertain, but given that Naaman was not expelled from society, it is not believed to be the same condition affecting the lepers found in the New Testament.

## 2 Kings 5:1-14

### The Healing of Naaman

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from a skin disease. **2** Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. **3** She said to her mistress, "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his skin disease." **4** So Naaman[a] went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. **5** And the king of Aram said, "Go, then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel."

He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. **6** He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his skin disease." **7** When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his skin disease? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me."

8 But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel.” 9 So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and halted at the entrance of Elisha’s house. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.” 11 But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, “I thought that for me he would surely come out and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God and would wave his hand over the spot and cure the skin disease! 12 Are not Abana[b] and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” He turned and went away in a rage. 13 But his servants approached and said to him, “Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, ‘Wash, and be clean?’” 14 So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

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## STUDY

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Read 2 Kings 5:1-14

*Why might Naaman have high favour with the King of Aram?*

- The king feels God gave Aram victory in their latest skirmish through the leadership of Naaman.

*How might the servant girl know of a possible cure for Naaman's leprosy?*

- She was a captive from Israel.
- She knows the healing power of Elisha from her time in Israel (2 Kings 4).
- She has faith in God through Elisha.

*How does the servant girl help Naaman?*

- She suggests to Naaman's wife that he go see Elisha for healing.

*Why might the servant girl have offered to help Naaman, even though she was a captured servant?*

- Her faith.
- Her understanding of her call to help others.
- Her understanding that God was God of all and not just of one group of people.

*What might prevent Naaman from going to see Elisha?*

- Pride – What would the prophet of our enemy know?
- Distrust – What does this servant girl know? What does a servant girl from Israel know!?
- Logistics – There is tension between Aram and Israel – after all... the servant girl is a spoil of war.

*How does Naaman find his way to Elisha?*

- He approaches his ruler for permission to go.
- The ruler gives permission and a letter of peace.
- Naaman goes to the King of Israel to ask for Elisha's healing.
- The King is uneasy – he thinks this is bait into further conflict.
- Elisha hears the commotion and sends instructions for Naaman.

*Why might Naaman be angry with the instructions?*

- Pride – this isn't how he's normally treated.
- Distrust – this is too simple, is this a trick to humiliate me?

*What was the result of doing the simple thing the prophet instructed him to do?*

- He was healed.

Naaman had to do something easy to be healed.

*What easy things can we do to offer health and healing to others?*

### Did You Know:

- April 7 is World Health Day
- The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in Article 25:
  - Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- Overall health and wellbeing are imperative to sustaining the life and dignity of all human beings.
- Many factors contribute to a decrease in overall health around the world including:
  - Limited or no access to safe clean drinking water
  - Lack of access to information and facilities for proper hygiene
  - Insecure and unaffordable sources of nutritious food
  - Unavailability of medicine, vaccinations, and adequate medical services
- CLWR's vision is that of a healthy and sustainable world where people live in peace with hope, justice, dignity, and equality.

1. <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day>

2. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>

3. <https://www.clwr.org/who/mission-vision-values>

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## WONDERINGS

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Consider your local community: Who is facing health challenges in your community?

Consider Canada: Who might be facing health challenges in this country?

Consider the world: What factors might contribute to health challenges globally?

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## ACTION BRAINSTORM

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How can you/your parish support healthy living locally?

How can you/your parish support healthy living nationally?

How can you/your parish support healthy living globally?

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## ACTION SUGGESTIONS

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Offer space to local growers to sell their fresh produce in an affordable market this spring/summer/fall.

Work with local organizations or community members to offer canning/preserving classes to help people in your community learn how to safely store food for the winter. (Someone who teaches in a culinary or high school setting, or some of the elders in your congregation will likely have wisdom on this topic!)

Work with local organizations or community members to offer meal planning courses.

Create a community garden on your church property. Options include: a plot that everyone tends to and takes what they need from, with leftovers being donated, or a rental plot for people in the community to tend for themselves, with proceeds being donated to fund CLWR initiatives and local food banks. Be prepared to cover any additional water bill increase.

Work with your city or town to offer a drinking water station that is accessible to everyone at all times.

Work with your city or town to offer the public clean, safe, accessible and sanitary toilet facilities available to everyone at all times.

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## ACTION SUGGESTIONS (CONTINUED)

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Volunteer to be a driver for Wheels of Hope, driving cancer patients to their appointments.

- <https://csl.cancer.ca/en/Detail/db51b318-81fe-e811-a98d-000d3a36f968>

Connect with your local dialysis unit and work out a driving schedule for patients that need help with transportation.

Volunteer at your local hospital.

Organize a meal train for a family in your parish dealing with an illness, or someone who recently had surgery. Consider using an online organizational tool.

- <https://www.mealtrain.com/>

Support CLWR by:

- Hosting an event (a meal, plant sale, concert, etc.) with financial proceeds going towards supporting CLWR's vision and mission to be partners with God in creating a safe and healthy environment for all of God's people.
- You can also visit the resources page on CLWR's website, for ways you and your community can support this mission.
  - <https://www.clwr.org/resources>

Ask children if they have ever been sick.

Ask children what made them feel better when they were sick.

*Was it something that was easy to do or hard to do?*

Share the story of Naaman. Naaman was asked to do something simple and was healed. Sometimes, we only need simple things to help us to feel better – like a hug, or the special soup your parent or grandparent or guardian makes.

*What simple thing can you do to help someone feel better when they are sick?*

- Make a card, send a note, or call, Facetime or visit.
- If there is a friend who must attend dialysis or infusion treatments, play online games with them from home, if the timing works. Share favourite movies or books. Make an activities kit to send with your friend to their treatment.
- If a friend's parent is unwell or healing from surgery, organize a playdate or even a sleepover.

As a Sunday School or Children's Program, organize a 'get well soon' card drive. Have children create and decorate greeting cards or artwork with 'get well soon' messages. Make them available for parishioners to pick up on a Sunday morning to distribute to others, or donate them to a local hospital to be handed out to patients. This could also be run as a fundraiser where the artwork or cards are sold, with proceeds going to a CLWR initiative such as an Infant Hygiene kit (\$20) or Dialysis for a Child (suggested donation \$500).

- <https://www.clwr.org/products/share-the-gift-of-health>

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PRAYER

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Healing God,

We know all good things come from you.

We know that sometimes health comes easily  
and sometimes it's more of a challenge.

We give you thanks for the good times  
and ask you to be with us when we are challenged.

Help us to know that we are not alone.

Help us to feel your healing hands on us.

Bring us peace and comfort when we are in distress.

Give us willing hearts and hands  
to help others when they need it.

Amen.