

# THE POWER OF THE LORD



## **Bird's Eye View of Lesson**

Throughout the Word the Lord's Divine power is demonstrated through miracles. The prophets represent the Lord's Word and their healing acts are manifestations of His Divine power. Elisha the prophet restores the Shunammite's son to life when he seems dead. Similarly, Jairus begs Jesus to heal his sick daughter. The girl dies but is brought back to life by Jesus. In the Word, the healing of sick children pictures the way the Lord can heal our spiritual lives when they appear to be dead. His power continually flows into our lives, offering to restore our love for what is good and true. We need only turn to Him, ask for help, and respond to His healing truths.

## READINGS FROM THE WORD

*Throughout the Word, the Lord's Divine power is demonstrated through miracles. Today we focus on the Lord's miraculous power to save from death. As you read these stories, think about how the Lord's saving power works in your life.*

### **Elisha Restores the Shunammite's Son**

Today we know the Lord through His written Word. During the reign of the kings of Israel the Lord spoke to people through His prophets. *Apocalypse Explained* 624:4 tells us that prophets picture the Lord's truth in His Word, and also teaching from the Word. The miracles performed by the prophets were really done *by the Lord through them*.

The prophet Elisha traveled regularly to serve the Lord. A noble woman proposed that she and her husband build a room in their house for him to stay in. As a reward the Lord gave her a son. One day the boy went out into the field. Complaining of a headache, he collapsed and within several hours had died. Laying him on Elisha's bed and shutting the door, his mother rushed to find Elisha.

[W]hen the man of God saw her...he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman! Please run now to meet her, and say to her, 'Is it well with you...? And she answered, "It is well." Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet.... But the man of God said, "... her soul is in deep distress, and the Lord has hidden it from me...."



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So she said, “Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me’?” Then he said to Gehazi, “Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way...lay my staff on the face of the child...” Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back...and told him, saying, “The child has not awakened.” When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the Lord. And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes (2 Kings 4:25-35).

### Jesus Raises a Little Girl

Jesus performed many miracles. His touch healed the sick and raised the dead. His voice calmed storms and cast out demons. One day, as a large crowd gathered around the Lord, a ruler named Jairus fell at His feet and pleaded with Him, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live” (Mark 5:23). Jesus lingered to talk to a sick woman and a man came from Jairus’s house announcing “Your daughter is dead.... Why trouble the Teacher any further?” (Mark 5:35).

As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not be afraid; only believe....” Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.” And...He took the father and the mother of the child...and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” Immediately the girl arose and walked.... And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat (Mark 5:36-42).

### The Lord’s Saving Power

In both of these stories a child dies. When the parents ask for the Lord’s help and trust that He can save them, the children are brought back to life.

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We can feel dead spiritually when we focus our thoughts on ourselves more than anything else. This prevents the Lord's power from working within us. But we can be restored to life again by recognizing that we need the Lord to save us, asking for His help and receiving His saving power.

All people without exception are withheld from evils by the Lord, and this by a mightier force than a person can ever believe. For the effort of every one is continually toward evil, and this both from what is hereditary, into which he is born, and from what is actual.... And this is the case to such a degree that if he were not withheld by the Lord, he would rush headlong every moment toward the lowest hell. But the mercy of the Lord is so great that at every moment, even the least, the person is uplifted and held back, to prevent him from rushing to there (*Arcana Coelestia* 2406.2).

It is by means of the truths in a person that the Lord has the power to save him. For a person is reformed and regenerated...by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word (*Sacred Scripture* 49).

## OPTIONAL READING

By the Lord's Divine power one should here understand Divine truth emanating from the Lord, for power resides within Divine truth to such an extent that it is power itself. Divine truth emanating from the Lord flows into every person...and stirs to life things attuned to it in their proper order (*Arcana Coelestia* 6948:2).

It was often said by the Lord, when the sick were healed, that they should "have faith," and that it would be done to them "according to their faith." The reason was that the first of all is to acknowledge that the Lord is the Savior of the world, for without this acknowledgment no one can receive anything of truth and good from heaven, thus no faith. And because this is the first and most essential thing of all, therefore in order that the Lord might be acknowledged when He came into the world, in healing the sick He questioned them concerning their faith, and those who had faith were healed. The faith was that He was the Son of God who was to come into the world, and that He had power to heal and to save. Moreover, all the healings of diseases by the Lord, when He was in the world, symbolized healings of the spiritual life, thus the things that belong to salvation (*Arcana Coelestia* 10083.5).

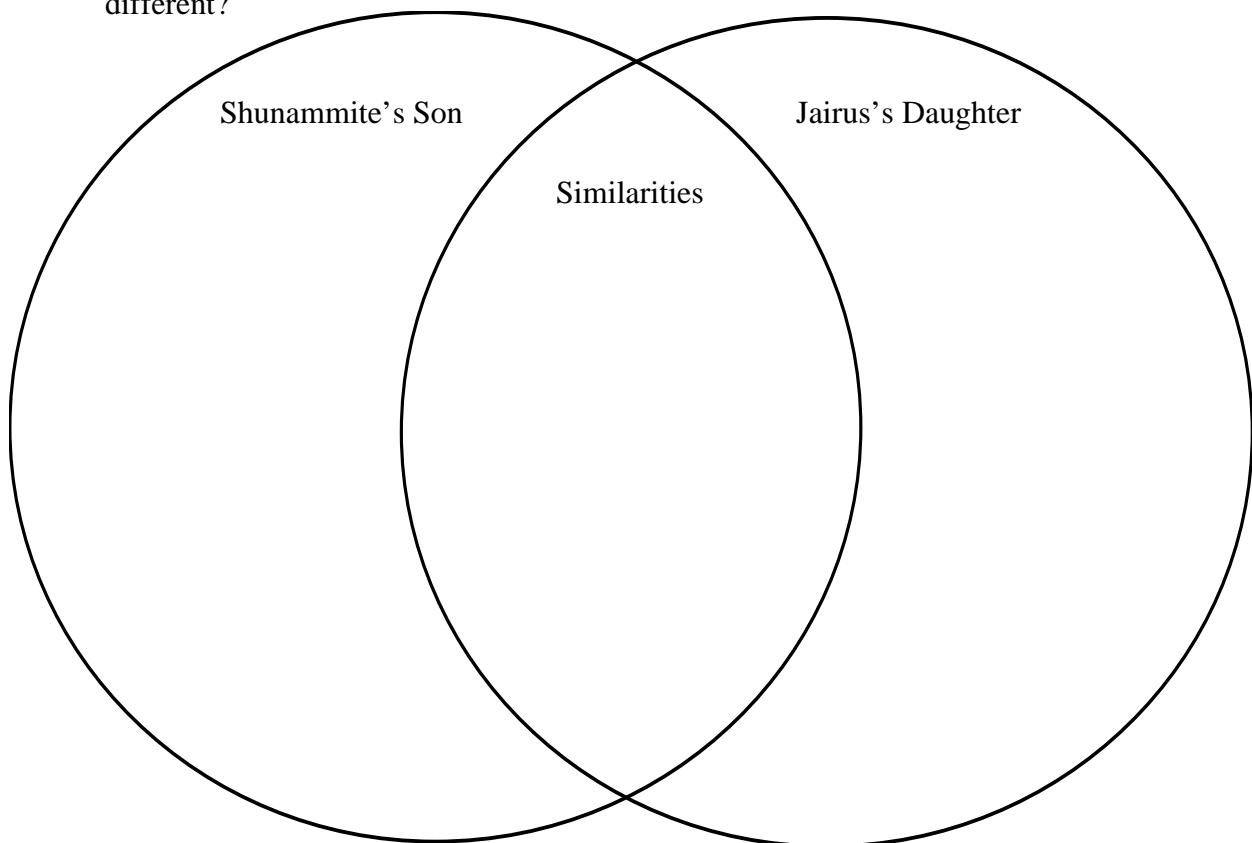


## FOCUS POINTS

1. Why did the Shunammite woman insist on seeing Elisha when her son died?
2. What do you think she meant by saying “It is well” to Gehazi (Elisha’s servant)?

- She trusted Elisha       She had accepted her son’s death       She hoped for a miracle       She had faith in God

3. Compare the story of Elisha raising of the Shunammite’s son and the story of Jesus raising of Jairus’s daughter. In what ways are they alike? How are they different?



4. Sometimes people have experiences that make them see life in a new perspective. They feel that they have been given a second chance after going through a hard time—a time that feels like a ‘death.’ Has this happened to you or to someone you know? What part do you think the Lord’s power played in this renewal?
5. How could someone’s life change by learning about the Lord’s power? How could your life change now that you are more aware of it?

## Activity 1

# FACING FIRE



The book of Daniel tells the story of a group of young men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego—who had the courage to stand up for their beliefs even though they were threatened with death. They refused to bow down and worship King Nebuchadnezzar’s golden statue (Daniel 3). As a consequence, they were thrown into a hot furnace but they had confidence in the Lord’s power to save them. When the king looked into the furnace, he saw three men and a fourth who looked like the Son of God walking with them (Daniel 3:25).

1. Think about a time when you stood up for what you knew to be true and good. How did your experience compare with what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego did? Do you think it was easier for these three men than it is for you? Why or why not?
2. How do we experience the Lord’s power when we put our trust in Him? Can He save us like He saved these brave men? How?
3. We may feel as if we are about to be thrown into a furnace when we are asked to talk about subjects that are difficult to discuss in a group with people who hold very different opinions. Which of these topics would you discuss with a group of people you do not know? Why or why not?

gay rights	prayer	abortion	the Bible
married love	gender issues	homosexuality	divorce
faith in God	teen sex	life after death	dating

### Unlocking the Deeper Meaning\*

Here are a few things that are mentioned in the story of Daniel and their deeper meanings. Use them as keys to unlock the message of this story.

***Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon Babylon***, which captured Judah, stands for selfish love which captivates us when we turn from the Lord. The **king** of Babylon is a symbol of the power of that selfish love as it tries to dominate and control our life.

***The Golden Image*** Images are man-made gods. They symbolize the truths that we misconstrue or twist to favor a selfish desire and selfish behavior. The result is something that may sound good or look good, but is really a clever sham. (Truth that is twisted like this is “falsity.”)

***Bowing Down to the Image*** Worshiping images (false gods) means giving more respect to ideas that favor our selfish wishes than we do to ideas that are true and guide us to resist evil and do the right thing. These false ideas may be attractive to some part of us.

***The Jews: Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego*** The Jews stand for people of the church—or that part of us that loves the Lord and our neighbor and stands up for what is true.

***Fiery Furnace*** Fire is a symbol of love—either good love or evil love. Here it stands for evil love that threatens to destroy our spiritual life. The “furnace” is a mental state of hell—when we are caught in ugly and selfish feelings and are tempted to act on them.

***One Like the Son of Man*** This refers to the Lord or one of His angels (messengers). The Lord, along with angels, is with us in our struggles and protects those who hold fast and believe in Him.

\*For more information, see Last Judgment 54; Apocalypse Explained 1029, 504; Arcana Coelestia 9807.



## MOVING MOUNTAINS

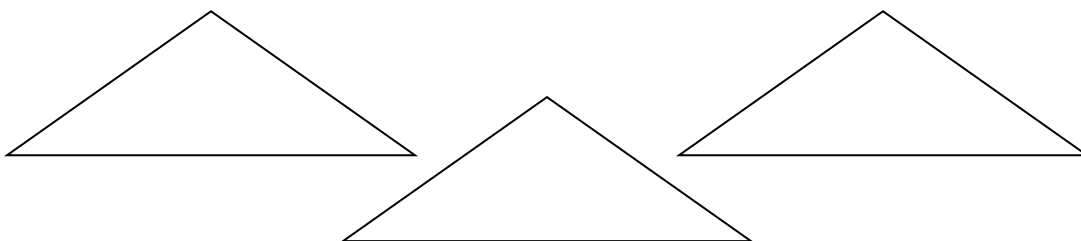
### Activity 2

Have you ever tried to lift a heavy object? It can be very difficult. But Jesus said,

“[I]f you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20).

Try this experiment and talk about what you find out.

1. Try to lift a heavy stone or other similar object without help. Think about the weight of the rock, the ease of lifting it, *etc.* while trying to move it. Some people may be able to lift it a little, some a lot, and some people may not be able to lift it at all. Now try to lift it again using a plank of wood and a smaller rock as a lever. Think or talk about what it felt like to lift the rock with and without the lever.
2. A person who wants to raise her life from being centered on worldly and selfish things to spiritual things can be compared to someone who is trying to lift a heavy load in her mind by herself. What can she do to change this situation?
3. What kinds of spiritual levers can we use to access the Lord’s power in our lives?
4. Brainstorm some “mountains” or what may seem to be impossible situations. Write these situations in or below the triangles to picture the “mountains”.



5. Choose one of the “mountains” and explain how one of the spiritual levers might be able to help someone access the Lord’s power to help.
6. The mountains Jesus spoke about moving in Matthew 17 symbolize loving ourselves and worldly things above other things. When we are troubled by selfish thoughts, we can take comfort in the Lord’s words: “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20).

### Activity 3

## THE SOURCE OF POWER



Divine truth has power in itself, and by means of it, heaven was created and the world with all things therein. That there is such power latent in Divine truth may be illustrated by two comparisons: by the power of truth and good in people and by the power of light and heat from the sun in the world (see *Heaven and Hell* 137:7).

1. Take the batteries out of a flashlight (or torch) and try to turn it on.
2. Consider the following questions:
  - Is the flashlight complete without the battery?
  - Is the battery part of the flashlight?
  - Does the flashlight look the same with and without the battery?
  - How can you tell whether the flashlight will work or not?
3. Dig a little deeper:
  - If the battery symbolizes the power of Divine truth, are there times when it seems like there is no spiritual “battery” in your life?
  - Our ability to receive the power of good and truth from the Lord are never restricted by Him. What does limit our ability to access this power?
  - Think about the power of heat and light from the sun. How is the Lord’s creation sustained by heat and light? In what ways do people “harness” the energy or power of the sun for other uses?
  - Now think about the power of good and truth in people. How can we access this power? What can we do with it?



Choose an activity to help bring this lesson into your life.

## Ideas for Journal Entries

- The Lord's Prayer ends with the words: "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory. Amen." What do these words mean to you?
- Think about a time when you experienced the Lord's power, such as watching a thunderstorm or having someone you love escape from being hurt in a dangerous situation. Write about a way in which you have experienced the Lord's power in your life.

## For Reflection

- In the book of Revelation we read, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8). What does this say about the Lord's power?
- It appears as if power is in nature. There are many theories about how the world came into being, and where the power comes from. In reality nature is kept alive by the Lord's power every single moment. Think about how you could explain this to a friend who has a different point of view. Can you demonstrate it?

## Quote Card

Display this quote card where you will see it each day.

### The Lord's Power

"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:19-21).

I will love you, O Lord, my strength.  
The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;  
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust.  
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Psalm 18:1-2).

The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped.  
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,  
And with my song I will praise Him (Psalm 28:7).



## Further Reading

# THE VISIBLE GOD

Further Reading by the Rev. Ormond Odhner

*This New Church is the crown of all the churches that have hitherto existed on the earth, because it is to worship one visible God in whom is the invisible, like the soul in the body (True Christian Religion 787).*

“One *visible* God.” This is the cornerstone of the faith of the New Church, the church to which the Lord Himself calls us. He calls us, and not to be His unseeing, blindly obedient servants, but to be His free and rational and fully human friends.

“The one visible God”—*our* God—is the Lord Jesus Christ, for He was and is the fullness of the Godhead bodily: The Divine Love which was and is and ever will be His very life itself (God the Father); the Divine Wisdom which He taught and still teaches in His Word (God presenting Himself to our view, God the Son); and His Divine Use or Work or Influence, the Divine Truth operating upon us and, through us, upon others for our salvation (God the Holy Spirit)—all visible as one in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This is not merely the Jesus Christ who is revealed in the New Testament. The natural picture of Him given there (the works he did and the things He taught)—will always remain the basic picture of our God. But part of that picture is His promise to come again as the Spirit of Truth, leading us into an understanding of all the Divine Truth that mortal minds can comprehend. This is the one God, at last made fully visible, not merely in His works and words, but as the infinite love, the infinite wisdom, and the infinite purpose within them.

The knowledge of the Divine purpose in creation, and the Lord’s purpose in our lives, is the very thing that makes the Lord Jesus Christ in His new revelation the truly visible God! This purpose is variously phrased in the Writings for the New Church. We read, “The sole end [or purpose] of God’s Divine love, when He created the world, was to conjoin people to Himself and Himself to people, that He might thus dwell with us” (*True Christian Religion* 786). In another place, we read, “The Lord’s Divine Providence has for its end a heaven from the human race” (*Divine Providence* 27).

Heaven, then, is the Lord’s purpose for our lives. Heaven is not some mystical, ethereal place way off somewhere. Indeed, I am not even talking about that heaven of a truly human life-after-death, which has been revealed to us in greater fullness and detail in the Writings and ever before. I am referring to heaven in the present here and now.

A common (and instructive) synonym for heaven is happiness. Think of that for a moment. Heaven is happiness. What else does the word “heaven” mean in the story of the Tower of Babel? When the people said, “Let us build ourselves...a tower whose top is in the heavens” (Genesis 11:4), what did they mean? They meant, let us—people—find our own way to happiness without help or interference from God. Heaven is happiness. And heaven, or happiness, here and now (as a prelude to happiness forever more) is the Lord’s purpose for us in our lives. This is not a fleeting happiness, here today and gone tomorrow. It is not happiness for ourselves alone, for that is not real happiness at all, not even for ourselves. Rather it is the lasting happiness, the eternal happiness, that comes with being truly useful to our fellows through helping them to find such happiness for themselves.

Ours is a visible God, if we will but open the eyes of our hearts and minds to see Him. Ours is His wisdom, just for the taking, if we will but take it. For behold, He stands at the doors of our hearts and knocks, seeking to enter in, so that He may abide in us, and we in Him, cooperating with Him as friends in finding from His Word solutions to the problems of life that confront our world. With Him, we can work to establish those solutions as realities, to establish His kingdom here on the earth, as it is already established in the heaven that awaits us after death.

***Readings:*** John 15:1-17, *True Christian Religion* 787