

2 Kings Lesson 5

2 Kings Chapter 5

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Memory verses for this week: **Mal 3:1** *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Introduction: In last week's lesson, we studied many miracles performed by God through Elisha including the one about the way the widow received a great increase in oil after she by faith filled numerous empty vessels from the oil she had in her own pot. There was enough oil to sell to provide money to pay off her creditors and to provide for her family's living. Chapter 5 presents the story of the healing of Naaman and the folly of Gehazi.

I. The Healing of Naaman

2Ki 5:1 *Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.*

The focus of the text now shifts to Syria where Naaman was the chief general of Syria and answered only to the King. It is thought that Naaman was considered honorable in that it was he who had defeated Israel. Jewish tradition holds that it was he who had slain Ahab. However, the text makes it clear that he did so by God's providence. Although a great man of valour, Naaman was a leper.

2Ki 5:2 *And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.*
2Ki 5:3 *And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.*
2Ki 5:4 *And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.*

God's providence is evident in the little maid mentioned here. A marauding band of Syrians had snatched a little Hebrew girl out of Israel and sold her as a slave in Syria. This little girl became the maid of Naaman's wife, no doubt in the perfect timing of God.

It is evident that there was a pleasant relationship between this young maid and the family she served. She spoke to her mistress concerning Naaman's condition. If the Lord so willed it, Naaman would be cured by means of the prophet Elisha. News of this conversation made it to the king. It is apparent that the king of Syria did not have a clue as to where the real source of help lay.

2Ki 5:5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

2Ki 5:6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

In verse 5, the king of Syria sends Naaman along with ten talents of silver, six thousand *pieces* of gold, ten changes of raiment and a letter to the king of Israel.

“I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy”.

Either the king of Syria did not understand the matter or perhaps he simply dumped it into the lap of the king of Israel for him to deal with it. In any event, he sent a substantial sum of money to the king of Israel and even new clothing to effect the healing of Naaman.

Albert Barnes in his commentary said this about the gold and gifts sent to Jehoram.

2 Kings 5:5

Six thousand pieces of gold - Rather, “six thousand shekels of gold.” Coined money did not exist as yet, and was not introduced into Judea until the time of Cyrus. Gold was carried in bars, from which portions were cut when need arose, and the value was ascertained by weighing. If the gold shekel of the Jews corresponded, as some think, to the doric of the Persians, the value of the 6,000 shekels would be about 6,837 British pounds. If the weight was the same as that of the silver shekel (see [Exo 38:24](#) note), the value would exceed 12,000 British pounds.

The ancient practice of including clothes among gifts of honor in the East [Gen 41:42](#); [Est 6:8](#); [Dan 5:7](#) continues to the present day.

2Ki 5:7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

2Ki 5:8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

2Ki 5:9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

We find in verse 5, that Jehoram, king of Israel, was exasperated. In frustration he rent his clothing, a middle-eastern symbol of bitter emotion. Moreover, he rightly asked if he were as God to heal the man. He suspected that Syria was trying to provoke a fight and make this an international incident.

However, God's man Elisha saw the situation differently. He saw an opportunity to demonstrate the power of God and be a testimony for Him. Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. Implicit is pomp and pride as Naaman rode up to Elisha's house with his entourage.

2Ki 5:10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

2Ki 5:11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

2Ki 5:12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

Elisha did not even come out of his house. He sent a messenger out to the proud Syrian general. That in itself must have angered Naaman. Elisha's directive for Naaman was simple. Go wash in the a Jordan River seven times.

We are not told where Elisha was living at the time. The last place mentioned was Gilgal in I Kings 4:38. It may be that Elisha was still there. If so, the Jordan River was nearby. In verse 11, it says Naaman was angered by this directive. He wanted Elisha to come out with mutual pomp and circumstance and piously heal him. Be very careful in life about things having to be like "you think they should be." Many many times, God will work miracles in your life in ways you would never have thought or conceived.

Not that Naaman's pride was about to preclude his deliverance. He asked *"are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?"*

The Jordan River has historically been a muddy river. Naaman knew that. Furthermore, rivers to the north in Syria tended to be clean and clear. He turned on his heel and stomped away enraged.

2Ki 5:13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

2Ki 5:14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

The servants of Naaman had more humility than he. Moreover, they were not afflicted by pride as was their master. They reasoned with Naaman " if the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it?* how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Their advice was simple. Why not do what the prophet has said? You basically have nothing to lose to try, but everything to lose if you go away and never try and return home a

leper.

Undoubtedly with reluctance he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the instructions of the man of God. To his astonishment and delight, upon the seventh time rising from the water, his leprosy was gone. In fact, his skin was as fair as that of a small child. God is pleased when we act in faith. It does not have to be a great thing, but just taking God at His Word is a big thing. And God NEVER fails.

Matthew Henry said this about the servants' advice.

The modest advice which his servants gave him, to observe the prophet's prescriptions, with a tacit reproof of his resentments, [2Ki 5:13](#). Though at other times they kept their distance, and now saw him in a passion, yet, knowing him to be a man that would hear reason at any time, and from any body (a good character of great men, and a very rare one), they drew near, and made bold to argue the matter a little with him. They had conceived a great opinion of the prophet (having, perhaps, heard more of him from the common people, whom they had conversed with, than Naaman had heard from the king and courtiers, whom he had conversed with), and therefore begged of him to consider:

“If the prophet had bidden thee to do some great thing, had ordered thee into a tedious course of physic, or to submit to some painful operation, blistering, or cupping, or salivating, Wouldst thou not have done it? No doubt thou wouldst. And wilt thou not submit to so easy a method as this, Wash and be clean?”

2Ki 5:15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

2Ki 5:16 But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

Returning to Elisha, Naaman testified that only in Israel was the God of all the earth. It is significant that Naaman realized that Jehovah God was not only powerful, but was God of the entire earth. That likely had been the testimony of Israel through the years. It also may be that the little Hebrew maid back home had testified the same to him.

The gentile, pagan Syrians had rejected that truth. However, having witnessed the power of God in his own life, Naaman became a believer. Though Naaman pressed him, Elisha refused to take anything. Elisha even vowed such in the name of Jehovah. When we do a work, and God is one performing the miracle, we should honor and glorify the Lord, not take credit or payment for what God has done. A true preacher, one that is called of God, will reflect all glory back to God just as this great prophet Elisha did.

2Ki 5:17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant

two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

2Ki 5:18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

2Ki 5:19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.

Naaman requested that he be allowed to take with him as much dirt from Israel as two mules could carry. Implied is that when he returned to Syria that he would on that earth build an altar to Jehovah God. Moreover, he indicated that he would no longer offer sacrifices to any other gods. Jewish tradition holds that Naaman became a 'proselyte of righteousness.'

As an officer of the king of Syria, Naaman knew he would be expected to go into the temple of Rimmon, a pagan god of Syria. Moreover, he was expected to steady the king of Syria when he so entered to worship. Naaman asked God's pardon for such duties which were beyond his control. Elisha said unto him, "Go in peace". So he departed from him a little way.

Elisha did not put his blessing upon Naaman's involvement with Rimmon, but he did send him away in peace. Of note is that Naaman only went a short distance and then stopped. I personally believe he paused in his journey and thought deeply on his parting conversation with Elisha

There is little hope for anyone who is more concerned about their dignity than their disease. Blessings are assured to those who humble themselves as a child and walk in the light of God's Word.

II. Gehazi's Sin and its Penalty

2Ki 5:20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.

2Ki 5:21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?

Gehazi, Elisha's servant, foolishly and greedily saw the opportunity for gain and followed Naaman. In seeing him come, Naaman asked if everything was alright.

2Ki 5:22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

2Ki 5:23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.

2Ki 5:24 And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

Not only did Gehazi act in a mercenary fashion, he lied in Elisha's name. When greed gets the best of us, we may do many things we'd never even consider doing when in our right minds. Life is a lot like that song that says "Sin will take you farther than you ever wanted to go."

He also lied about two young prophets in need by asking money and clothing for them. He had quite a story to seek out gain for himself. Naaman offered him two talents whereas Gehazi had only asked for one. Naaman even had two of his servants help carry it all for Gehazi.

It may well be that once Naaman gave Gehazi that which Elisha supposedly requested, that the convictions which halted his journey subsided.

2Ki 5:25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

2Ki 5:26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

2Ki 5:27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

Upon arriving home, Elisha asked where Gehazi went. To this Gehazi lied again and said he went nowhere. His sin was finding him out.

Num 32:23 *But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*

God revealed to Elisha what Gehazi had done. He therefore confronted him with his sin. Elisha noted that his heart went with Gehazi when he went after Naaman. The idea is that Elisha knew what Gehazi had done.

With the honor of Elisha, the testimony of Jehovah, and a new convert all on the line, it was no time for greed and dishonesty. Elisha announced, "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever".

Gehazi went out from Elisha's presence a leper as *white* as snow. What came of Gehazi thereafter is unclear. However, he is again described as Elisha's servant in II Kings 8:4-5.

2Ki 8:4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.

2Ki 8:5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

It is always a point to ponder concerning how sin can be forgiven, but the consequences of the sin will remain. If we plant a harvest of weeds, we wind up reaping a bad harvest, whereas if we plant good, we reap good.

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.