

EPISODE NO. 179

2 Kings 5:1-27

Naaman Was Cured of Leprosy

1 Naaman was the general over the army of the king of Syria. To his master, Naaman was a great man. He had much honor because Yahweh had used him to give victory to Syria. Naaman was a strong warrior. However, Naaman had leprosy.

2 The Syrians used to go out to raid the Israelites. In so doing, they captured a little girl from the land of Israel. She became a servant girl to Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her owner, "I wish that my master would meet the prophet who lives in Samaria! Then he would heal the skin disease of Naaman!"

4 So, Naaman went to the king of Syria, and Naaman told him what the Israelite girl had said. 5 The king of Syria said, "Go on; enter the land of Israel. I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So, Naaman left on the trip. And, for gifts, he took with him about 750 pounds of silver. He also took along with him about 150 pounds of gold as a gift, and 10 sets of clothes. 6 Naaman brought the official letter to the king of Israel. It read: "Listen, I am hereby sending my servant Naaman to you with this letter, so that YOU can heal him of his skin disease!"

7 After the king of Israel read the letter, he ripped his clothes. He said, "I am NOT the one true God! I cannot give life or take it away! Why does this man send someone with such a bad skin disease for ME to heal!? You can see that the king of Syria is trying to pick a fight with me!"

8 Elisha, the man of the one true God, heard that the king of Israel had ripped his clothes. So, Elisha sent a message to the king, saying: "Why have you become so upset? Please let Naaman come to ME! Then the king of Syria will know there IS a true prophet in Israel!"

9 So Naaman, along with his horses and his chariot, went to Elisha's house. And, Naaman stood outside his door.

10 Elisha sent out a messenger to Naaman. The messenger said, "Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be cured!"

11 Naaman became angry and left. He thought to himself: “Look, I thought that Elisha would surely come outside and stand here, and that he would call upon the Name of Yahweh, his god. Then, he would wave his hand over the leprous spot and cure my skin disease! 12 Abana and Pharpar are the rivers of Damascus in my home country. They are better rivers than all the waters of Israel! Why couldn’t I wash in those rivers and be cured?” So, Naaman turned and went away mad.

13 But Naaman’s servants came up and talked to him. They reasoned: “My father, if that prophet had told you to do some great thing, wouldn’t you have done it? Of course, you would! Therefore, it makes sense just to DO it. It’s simple. The only thing he told you was: ‘Wash in the Jordan, and you will be cured!’ ” 14 So, Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times. He did exactly as Elisha, the man of the one true God, had said. Then Naaman’s skin was restored; it became like the skin of a little boy. And, Naaman was cured!

15 Then Naaman and his entire group went back to the man of the one true God. He came and stood in the presence of Elisha and said, “Listen, now I KNOW there is no God in all the earth except in Israel! Please accept a gift from me now!”

16 But Elisha said, “I serve Yahweh. As surely as the Always-Present One lives, I will NOT accept anything!” Naaman urged him to take the gift, but Elisha refused.

17 Then Naaman said, “Since you won’t take the gift, please give ME some dirt from the land of Israel. Give me as much as two of my mules can carry. From now on, I will NOT offer any whole burnt-offering or sacrifice to any other gods! I will worship only Yahweh! 18 May Yahweh pardon me for doing this one thing: My master, the king, goes into the temple of his god Rimmon to worship. When he goes there, he will lean on my arm. Then I must bow down in that temple of Rimmon, too. May Yahweh forgive me whenever I do that!”

19 And Elisha said to him, “Go in peace.”

Then Naaman left Elisha, and traveled a short distance.

Gehazi Was Greedy and Deceitful

20 Gehazi was the servant of Elisha, the man of the one true God. Gehazi thought: “Behold, my master has not accepted what Naaman the Syrian brought. As surely as the Always-Present One lives, I will run after Naaman. I’ll obtain something from him!”

21 So, Gehazi chased after Naaman.

When Naaman saw someone running after him, Naaman got off the chariot to meet Gehazi. He said, “Is everything all right?”

22 Gehazi said, “Everything is all right. My master d has sent me. Elisha said, ‘Listen now, two young men just came to me. They are from the group of the prophets in the hill-country of Ephraim. Please give them 75 pounds of silver and two changes of clothes.’ ”

23 Naaman said, “Please take 150 pounds.” And he urged Gehazi to take it. He tied 150 pounds of silver in two bags with two changes of clothes. Then he gave them to two of Naaman’s servants. They carried them ahead of Gehazi. 24 When they came to the hill, Gehazi took these things from Naaman’s servants. And, Gehazi put them in his house. He let Naaman’s servants go, and they left.

25 Then Gehazi went in and stood in the presence of his master. Elisha said to him, “Where have you been, Gehazi?”

Gehazi said, “I didn’t go anywhere.”

26 But Elisha said to him, “My spirit was with you. I KNEW when Naaman turned around from his chariot to meet you. It is not the proper time to receive money, clothes, olives, or grapes. It is not a time to receive sheep, goats, oxen, male servants, or female servants. 27 Naaman’s leprosy will come on you and your children forever!” When Gehazi left Elisha, he had the skin disease. He was as white as snow!