

Naaman and Elisha

2 Kings 5



Why is this man in the river? Is he dirty? Listen to today's story to find out.



The Story

Naaman was a great leader of the army in Syria. He had a bad disease called leprosy.

One day his wife's servant girl said, "Naaman should go to see God's servant in Israel. He would be able to heal him of his leprosy!"

This servant of God was named Elisha. He was a prophet.

Naaman's king thought it was a good idea. He wrote a letter to the king of Israel asking that Naaman might be healed. The king of Israel was worried because he didn't know how to heal anyone.

Elisha said, "Let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

Naaman rode in his chariot pulled by his horses. His servants went along with him. He came to Elisha's house but Elisha didn't come out to meet him. Instead he sent a messenger who told Naaman, "My master said you should go wash in the Jordan River seven times. Then you will be healed."

When Naaman heard this he was very angry. He had expected Elisha to come out of his house and heal him in person. Then Naaman said, "I could have washed in the rivers of my own country and become clean!"

He went away angry. Naaman's servants tried to talk to him. They said, "If the prophet had told you to do something very hard, wouldn't you have done it? So now, just try following his simple directions."

Naaman did it. He went to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times in the water. When he came out, his skin was healed and back to normal. The disease was gone! He went back to Elisha to thank him and give him some gifts. But Elisha would not take the gifts.

As Naaman was leaving to go back to his country, Syria, Elisha's servant, Gehazi, ran after him. Gehazi had a wicked plan to get money from Naaman. He made up a lie and told Naaman that his master had sent him to ask for money and clothing for some young men who needed it. Of course Naaman gladly gave it to him. Gehazi ordered his servants to carry the clothes and money back to Gehazi's tent so Elisha wouldn't see it.

Later Elisha asked Gehazi, "Where did you go?"

Gehazi lied, "I didn't go anywhere."

Elisha knew the truth. He cursed Gehazi and gave him the disease of leprosy.

The Lord, through Elisha healed Naaman of his leprosy.

Activity One

- Color the happy or sad face to show how Naaman felt.



1. Naaman had a disease called leprosy.



2. The servant girl told about a prophet who could heal Naaman.



3. Elisha didn't come out to meet Naaman to heal him in person.



4. Through Elisha, God healed Naaman.

God, through Jesus Christ, has taken away our sins.

Passages

Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

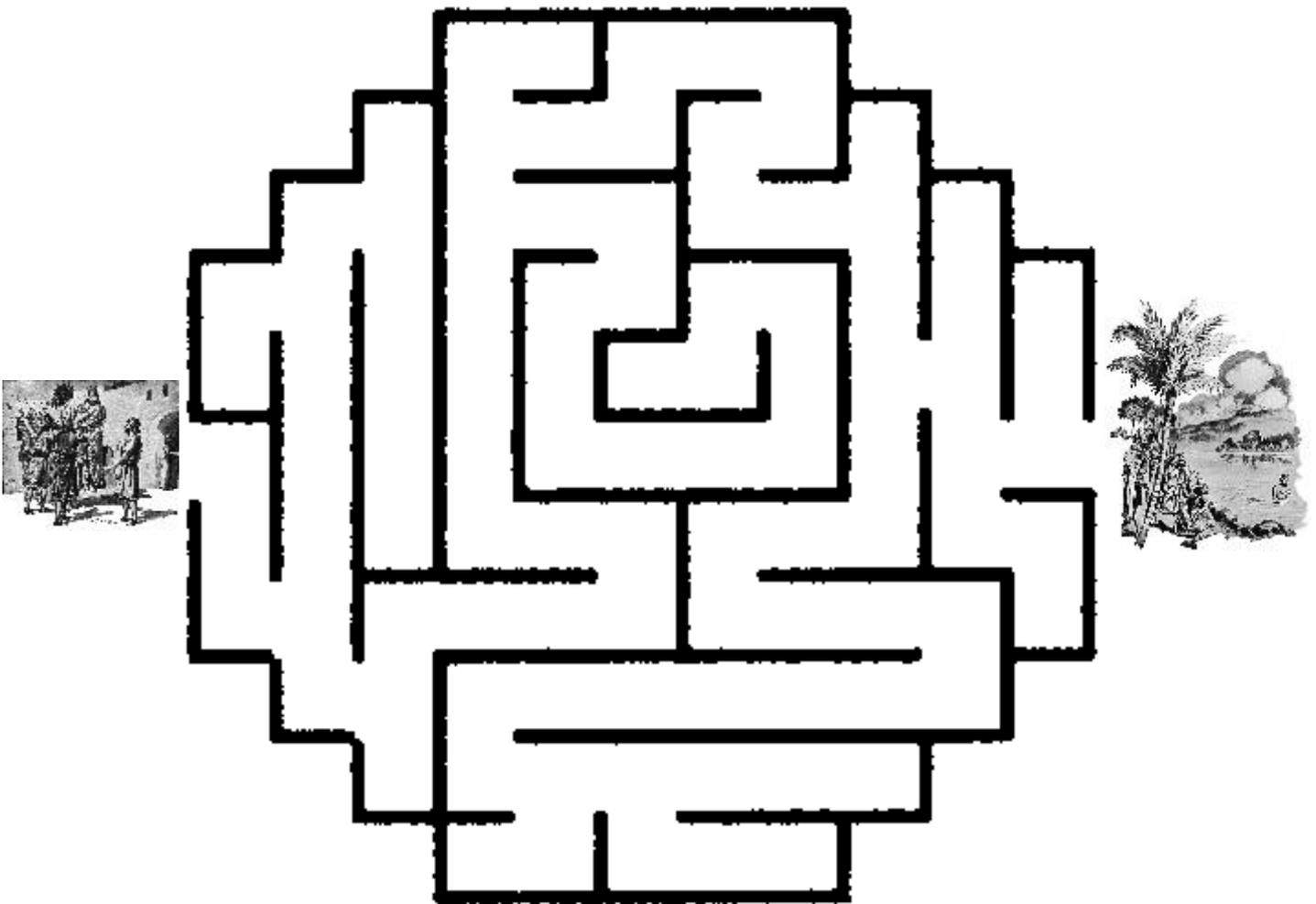
1 John 1:7 - The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Hymn

- TLH #297 v. 1

The Gospel shows the Father's grace,
Who sent His Son to save our race,
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died
That man might thus be justified.

Activity Two - Help Naaman find his way back to Syria.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, sometimes we don't believe in Your Word like we should. Sometimes we are like Naaman who didn't know that the simplest thing to do was just trust in Your Word. Please give us a stronger faith. Help us always to follow You until we see You at last in heaven. Amen.

Naaman and Elisha

2 Kings 5



What is this man doing? Let's read and find out from our story how he followed some very simple directions to solve his big problem.



The Story

There was a man named Naaman who was a commander of the army in the country of Syria. He was a great leader, but he had a terrible disease called leprosy.

Naaman's wife had a young servant girl who heard about Naaman's disease. She had been taken a prisoner from Israel. The girl told her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." The prophet's name was Elisha.

Naaman went to the king of Syria and told him what the little girl had said. The king sent a letter to the king of Israel, along with many gifts, asking him to heal Naaman's leprosy. The king of Israel was upset because he knew he couldn't heal anyone. When Elisha the prophet found out, he told the king to send Naaman to him.

Naaman went with his horses and chariot and stood at the door of Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times and you will be healed."

When Naaman heard this, he was very angry. He expected Elisha to come outside and heal him. He also said, "Aren't the rivers in my country better than all the waters of Israel? I could have washed in them and become clean." Then he went away in a rage.

Naaman's servants went after him and asked, "If the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? Then why not try doing this very simple thing?"

So Naaman went down and dipped

seven times in the Jordan River as Elisha had told him. His skin looked clean and the disease was gone. Naaman went back to Elisha and said, "Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now please accept a gift."

But Elisha would not accept a gift. Naaman asked for some soil to take with him, perhaps to show that nothing in his own country was as good as Israel's, not even the soil. Naaman also asked Elisha to pardon him whenever he needed to assist his master in the temples of false gods. As a new believer in the true God, Naaman did not want to have it on his conscience.

Elisha said, "Go in peace."

After Naaman had gone a short distance, Elisha's servant, Gehazi, thought up a wicked plan. He knew that Elisha had refused the gifts, so in his greed, he wanted to get them. Gehazi ran after Naaman and told a lie. He said that his master had sent him because two young men of the sons of the prophets needed money and clothing. Naaman gladly gave Gehazi the things, even more than he had asked. Gehazi made his servants carry the goods to his house, then he sent them away.

When Gehazi went before his master, Elisha asked, "Where did you go, Gehazi?"

Once again Gehazi lied saying, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

But Elisha knew the truth. Because of Gehazi's greed and lies, Elisha cursed him and his descendants with leprosy. Gehazi left with skin as white as snow.

The Lord through Elisha healed Naaman of his leprosy.

Activity One - Complete the CROSSWORD PUZZLE using the words in the Word Box.

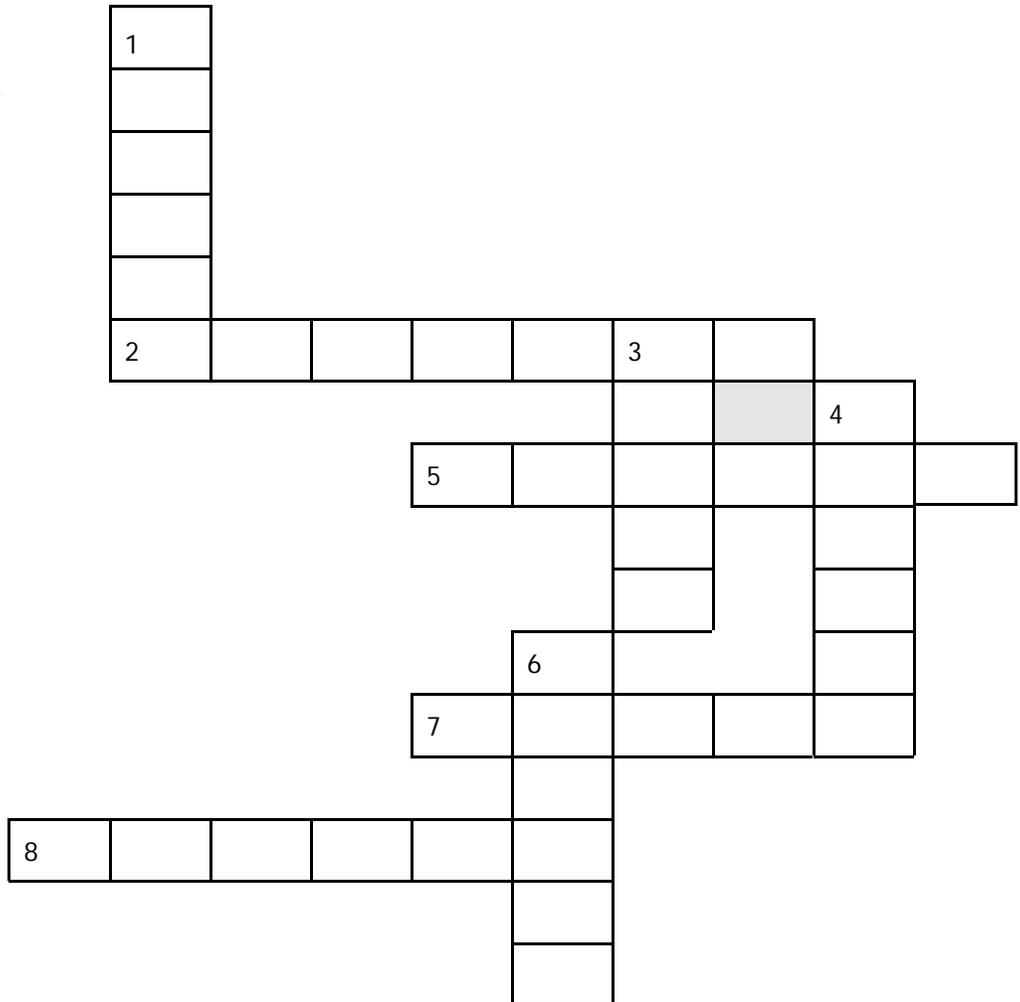
SEVEN NAAMAN ISRAEL ELISHA JORDAN GEHAZI SYRIA LEPROSY

ACROSS

2. The terrible disease that Naaman had.
5. The river in which Naaman was to wash.
7. The number of times Naaman had to wash.
8. The prophet of God.

DOWN

1. The country the servant girl was from.
3. The country Naaman was from.
4. The man with leprosy.
6. The man who was greedy.



Activity Two - Answer the following questions.

1. What was Naaman's big problem?
2. What was the "simple" way to cure it?
3. After Naaman heard about the cure, he was very angry. Why?

4. Who supplied the real cure for Naaman's problem?
5. What did Gehazi want?
6. What were the two lies Gehazi told?
 - a.
 - b.
7. What happened to Gehazi because of his greed and lies?

God, through Jesus Christ, has taken away our sins.

Passages

Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

1 John 1:7 - The blood of Jesus Christ His
Son cleanses us from all sin.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world
that He gave His only begotten Son, that
whoever believes in Him should not perish
but have everlasting life.

Hymn - TLH #297 v. 1, 2

The Gospel shows the Father's grace,
Who sent His Son to save our race,
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died
That man might thus be justified.

It sets the Lamb before our eyes,
Who made the atoning sacrifice,
And calls the souls with guilt opprest
To come and find eternal rest.

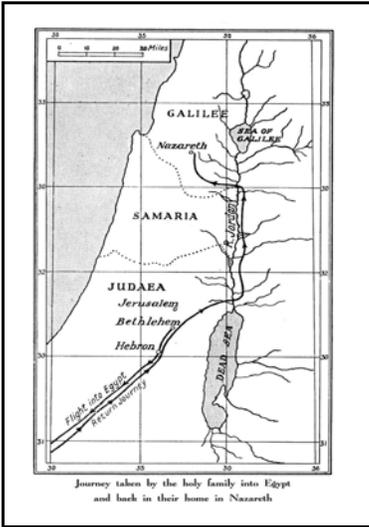
Prayer

Dear Savior Jesus Christ,

We thank You for allowing us to be here today to learn about Your precious Word. Teach us to cherish this Word and never to despise it because it is "too simple"! Make us brave to speak up and tell others about our faith as the little servant girl did. We ask this in Your saving name. Amen.

Naaman and Elisha

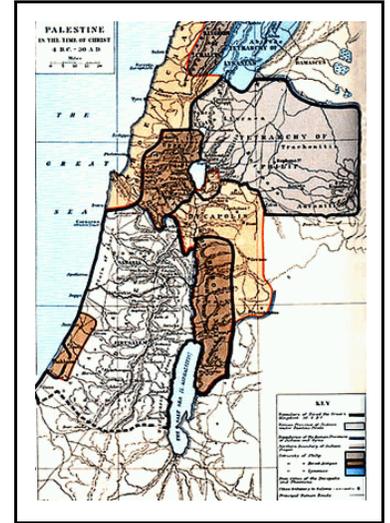
2 Kings 5



Which map would be more easily read to give an idea of the land of Israel? Sometimes the simplest solution is the best solution.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, You have given us the blessing of Your Word. Help us to listen and concentrate today on its message as we learn more about trusting in Your power. Amen.



The Story - summaries and excerpts

At the time of Elisha the prophet in Israel, there was a great commander of the Syrian army named Naaman. He was a mighty man of valor, but was also a leper.

After one of the raids, a young Israelite girl was taken captive as a slave, which was a common practice. This young girl, handmaiden to Naaman's wife, suggested that he go to see Elisha, who she believed would heal him of his leprosy.

The king of Syria (Ben-Hadad II) wrote a letter to Jehoram, the king of Israel, asking for the act of healing for Naaman. Jehoram tore his clothes in frustration, apparently thinking it was up to him to do the healing; the prophet Elisha heard about this and told him to send Naaman to him.

The story continues:

{9} Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. {10} And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."

{11} But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' {12} "Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

{13} And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?"

{14} So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. {15} And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth,



except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant."

{16} But he said, "As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing." And he urged him to take it, but he refused.

{17} So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. {18} "Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon; when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing."

{19} Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a short distance.

The servant of Elisha was named

Gehazi. After Naaman refused a gift in return for healing him of the leprosy, Gehazi had an idea. He ran after Naaman and told a lie, saying that Elisha had sent him because two young men were in need of money and clothing.

Naaman gladly gave him more than he asked for: two talents of silver and two changes of garments. Gehazi gave these things to his servants, who carried them for him so Elisha wouldn't notice them. Then Gehazi hid them in his house and dismissed the servants.

When Elisha asked him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" He said he had not gone anywhere. But Elisha knew the truth. Therefore, he cursed Gehazi and his descendants with the very leprosy of which Naaman had so recently been cured.

What the Story Tells Us - Answer the following questions.

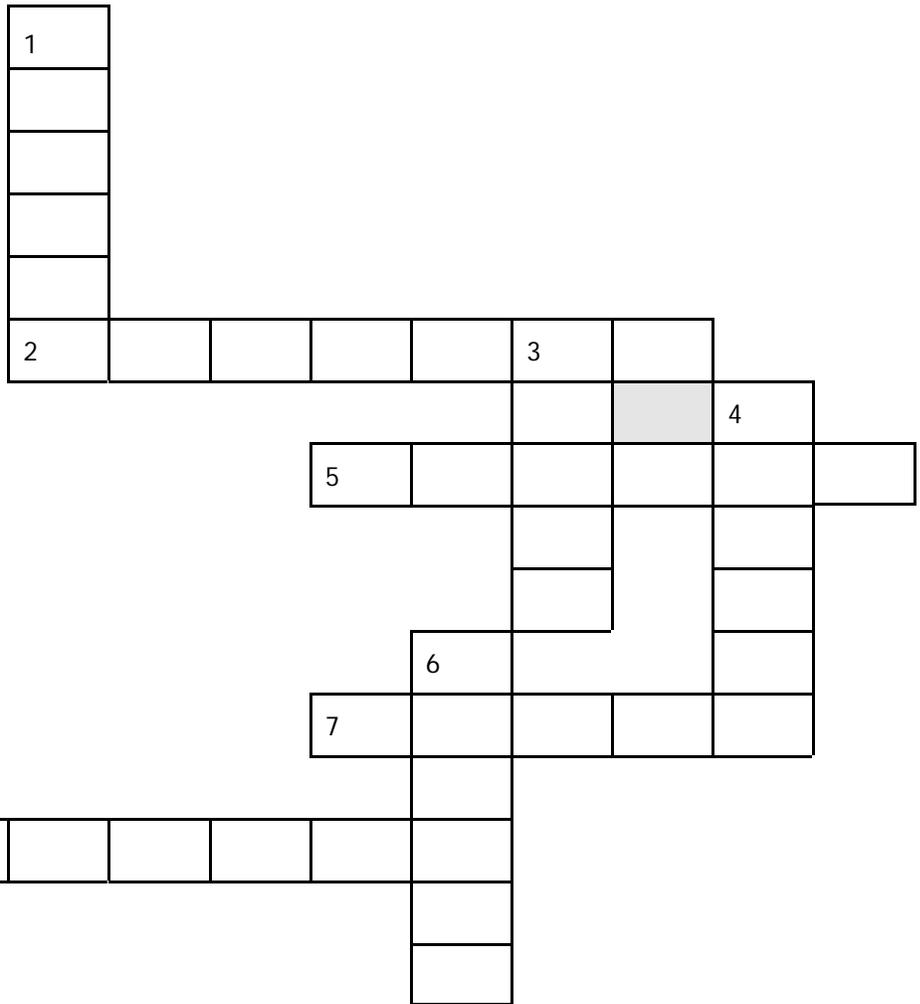
1. How did the servant girl confess her faith?
2. Why did Naaman become "furious" when he heard the instructions to cure his leprosy? (two reasons)
 - a.
 - b.
3. What was Naaman worried about after he was cured?
4. What motivated Gehazi to run after Naaman?

Outer Aim - The Lord through Elisha healed Naaman of his leprosy.

Your Turn - Complete the CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

ACROSS

2. A terrible disease
5. The river in which Naaman was to wash.
7. The number of times Naaman had to wash.
8. The prophet of God.



DOWN

1. The country the servant girl was from.
3. The country Naaman was from.
4. The man with leprosy.
6. The man who was greedy.

Inner Aim - God, through Jesus Christ, has taken away our sins.

What God's Word Tells Us - Look up the following Bible passages. Fill in the missing words and discuss their meaning.

1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the _____ of God is wiser than _____, and the _____ of God is _____ than men.

John 20:31 But these are written that you may _____ that Jesus is the _____, the Son of God, and that _____ you may have _____ in His name.

Passages

2 Timothy 3:15 - and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

1 John 1:7 - The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Hymn - TLH #294 v. 1, 2

O Word of God Incarnate, O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky ---
We praise Thee for the radiance that from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our foot-steps, shines on from age to age.

The Church from her dear Master received the gift divine,
And still that light she lifteth o'er all the earth to shine.
It is the golden casket where gems of truth are stored;
It is the heav'n-drawn picture of Christ, the living Word.

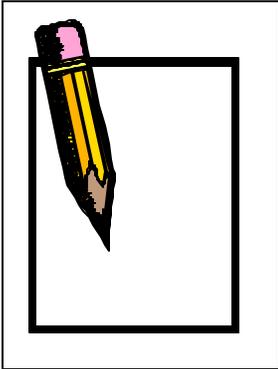
Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven,

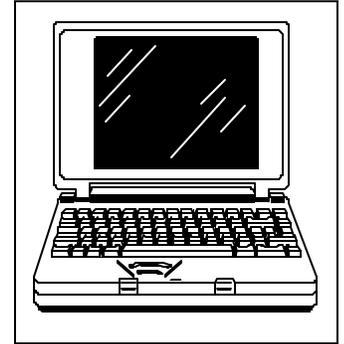
Thank You for giving us Your Son, Jesus Christ, to take away all our sins. Because of what He has done, we can be sure of our place in Heaven with You. Let us never think of the Gospel as "too simple" or foolish for us. It is Your holy Word that leads us to You through the power of Your Holy Spirit! Keep us strong in the faith and help us love You more and more each day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Naaman and Elisha

2 Kings 5



If you had an extremely difficult math problem to solve, which of these tools would you use? Why? In today's story we will see that sometimes the simplest solution is the best solution.



Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven, Thank You for allowing us to gather in Your name today. Bless our study as we learn more about the great power of Your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Story - summaries and excerpts

Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but a leper.

{2} And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. {3} Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy."

{4} And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel."

{5} Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of

Israel." So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. {6}

Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy.

{7} And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me."

{8} So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying,



"Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

{9} Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. {10} And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."

{11} But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' {12} "Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

{13} And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'"

{14} So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. {15} And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant."

{16} But he said, "As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive

nothing." And he urged him to take it, but he refused. {17} So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. {18} "Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon; when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing."

{19} Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a short distance.

Elisha had a servant named Gehazi. After Elisha refused a gift for healing Naaman of the leprosy, Gehazi had an idea. He ran after Naaman and told a lie, saying that Elisha had sent him because two young men were in need of money and clothing (Gehazi was really just being greedy and wanted the goods for himself). Naaman gladly gave him more than he asked for: two talents of silver and two changes of garments. Gehazi gave these things to his servants, who carried them for him so Elisha wouldn't notice them. Then Gehazi hid them in his house and dismissed the servants.

When Elisha asked him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" he said he had not gone anywhere. But Elisha knew the truth. Therefore, he cursed Gehazi and his descendants with the very leprosy of which Naaman had so recently been cured.

Outer Aim - The Lord through Elisha healed Naaman of his leprosy.

What the Story Tells Us - Answer the following questions.

1. How did the Israelite servant girl demonstrate her faith?
2. How did the king of Israel demonstrate his “lack” of faith?
3. God through Elisha told Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River, a simple solution for his problem. Can you think of a “simple” solution to our sin that also involves water? Explain.
4. What difficulty did Naaman foresee would happen after his leprosy was cured? Can you think of a problem that might arise in your life because you are a Christian?
5. Our conscience is a gift from God that warns us when we sin or are being tempted to do so. Explain how one lie led to another for Gehazi.

Inner Aim - God, through Jesus Christ, has taken away our sins.

What God’s Word Tells Us - Look up and copy the following Bible passages. Then explain how they are related to our story.

1 Corinthians 1:16

Passages

2 Timothy 3:15 - and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

1 John 1:7 - The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Hymn - Fill in the blanks from TLH #264 v. 3-4. Then sing it together.

Preserve O Lord, thy _____, Thine own blest heritage;
_____, disperse, and scatter those who against Thee _____.
Let Thy _____ guide us, grant us Thy heavenly food;
Clothe us in Thy rich _____, bought with Thy _____ blood.

Preserve Thy Word and _____, the truth that makes us whole,
The _____ of Thy glory, the _____ that saves the soul.
Oh, may this living water, this dew of _____ grace,
_____ us while here living until we see Thy _____.

Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven, Thank You for giving us Your Son, Jesus Christ, to take away all our sins. Because of what He has done, we can be sure of our place in Heaven with You. Let us never think of the Gospel as "too simple" or foolish for us. It is Your Holy Word that leads us to You through the power of Your Holy Spirit! Keep us strong in the faith and help us love You more and more each day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



STORY

Naaman and Elisha - 2 Kings 5

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Father, In this age of technology and interest in the complex, help me to remember that the gospel message is beautifully simple. As I teach this lesson, allow me to impart the simplicity and the beauty of what *You* have to say. Though Your ways are above our ways, You have graciously revealed to us the mystery of being saved by grace alone. For this I am ever thankful. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Aram - A people and a nation named for Aram, a son of Shem and grandson of Noah. The Aramaean (Aramean) peoples inhabited the areas northeast of Israel (modern day Syria). They developed the Aramaic language much in use during Jesus' day.

Leprosy - A disease undoubtedly different than the disease known today as leprosy (*elephantiasis*

Graecorum). Biblical leprosy referred most often to a whiteness that may have disfigured those who suffered from it, but did not disable them. Interestingly a leper that was completely covered from head to toe by the whiteness of the disease was to be pronounced clean by the priests - apparently an indication that the disease was no longer contagious.

Abana and Pharpar - Rivers of Syria. The Abana is today known as the Barada and flows from the wooded hills of Lebanon into Syria and through Damascus. The Pharpar is a 40 miles long river flowing south of Damascus.

Rimmon - A Syrian idol also known as *Ramman* and *Hadad* - the Syrian Baal. "*Rimmon*" literally means "*pomegranate*" which because of its many seeds was used as a symbol of fertility by pagan cultures.

OUTER AIM

The Lord, through Elisha, heals Naaman of his leprosy.

INNER AIM

Do not despise the gospel for its simplicity.

BACKGROUND (*Rupprecht Volume 1, pages 366-371*)

Verses 1-8

Naaman was the commander of the army of Syria under King Ben-Hadad II. The country is also called Aram (see note above) after the grandson of Noah who settled this region. Note that Naaman was able to hold high office in Syria despite his leprosy, something that would not have been possible in Israel.

"...by him the Lord had given victory to Syria" - it should be neither troubling nor surprising for us to hear that the Lord also grants victories to those nations that have rejected him (cf. Amos 9:7). Against whom these victories were won we do not know, but we can have confidence that they served God's purpose of preserving Israel for the birth of the Promised Messiah.

Slavery was common in those days. Captives were considered war plunder and were sold at the slave markets in Damascus. Note how the young Israelite girl continued to serve to the best of her ability despite being torn from her home and family and sold as a slave. (See application below.)

Though Elisha traveled all over Israel and Judah, he spent most of his time teaching and prophesying among the northern Ten Tribes of Israel (Samaria).

The kings mentioned here were Ben-Hadad II of Syria and Jehoram, the son of Ahab, in Israel. (Jehoram is also called Joram to distinguish him from Jehoram the King of Judah - see notes in previous lesson.)

Tearing his clothes was an act of desperation and frustration on the part of Jehoram. Although he recognized that God (he did not use the more personal name Jehovah) could cure Naaman, he apparently did not expect that God would help him in his hour of need.

Verses 9-19

Elisha does not even appear before Naaman, but sends a messenger out to him with instructions to wash seven times in the Jordan River. Although Naaman was ceremonially unclean to the Jews, it is unlikely that that is the reason Elisha did not appear before him. Elisha wanted Naaman to understand that it was the power of the Lord, not Elisha himself, that would heal him. The 25-mile trip to the Jordan and multiple washings called for trust in the Lord's power.

It is not known whether Naaman's rage was caused by Elisha's breach of protocol by not coming out personally to greet him, or by the logically absurd remedy commanded by Elisha, or by a combination of the two. The point is that the humble simplicity of the cure almost caused Naaman to reject it. As noted by the Inner Aim above, this is the most important lesson of this Bible story. God's simple cure for sin (the gospel) is often rejected for its very simplicity.

Naaman's advisors serve him well. Lacking the pride of high position that had blinded Naaman, they served their master with sound advice.

While the miracle of healing caused Naaman to recognize and accept the supreme and unique power of the one true God, true saving faith comes not through the observance of miracles but through the hearing of the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Salvation came to Old Testament believers through faith in the promise of a Savior.

While Elisha himself appears before Naaman after he is cured, he refuses any gift or payment from him. Elisha wanted nothing to obscure the fact that God, not Elisha, had cured Naaman, and that the gift of healing had been freely given, not earned or purchased.

In asking for soil from Israel, Naaman may have been exemplifying the pagan notion of a localized god who must be worshipped only over native soil. This request may also have been a simple indication that Naaman now believed that nothing in Syria was as good as its counterpart in Israel --not the god Rimmon, not the rivers that he had once thought superior, not even the soil itself. Whatever his thoughts, it should be noted that Elisha does not condemn the request.

Note the character of the man Naaman. During his return trip from the Jordan (about 25 miles) he had time to reflect on how his life had now changed. He recognized the God of Israel as the only true God, but he also understood his duties to King Ben-Hadad II of Syria. Those duties included physically supporting the King as he worshipped the idol Rimmon. Naaman recognized the compromising position into which this service would place him and brought the dilemma to the attention of Elisha. Here, again, Elisha offers no condemnation (see application below). True worship is a matter of the heart.

Verses 20-27

Gehazi, heretofore an exemplary servant of Elisha, gives in to greed. His reference to Naaman as "this Syrian" may also be an indication of bitterness or racial bigotry on his part.

Note how easily lying came to Gehazi after he gave in to the sin of greed.

Gehazi allowed the servants of Naaman to carry the booty, but only so long as Elisha could not see him. Nor did he want Naaman's servants to see that he hid the gifts in his own tent.

As is so often the case, sin begets lying, and one lie often leads to another.

Sin has its consequences. Gehazi was allowed to accept one gift from Naaman - his leprosy.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Father in heaven, There are times when I have a hard time taking You at Your Word. As I grow older and receive more education about this world, I pray that You will help me to continue to put my faith above my head knowledge. Though on my own I would not understand the news of my Savior, yet You have caused me believe it with all of my heart. Help me to treasure that news even when I am confronted by pressure to despise it. Amen.

PRESENTATION

This Bible account is too long to read in class. Assign its reading of this lesson to the students the week before it is presented, and then retell or summarize the story for your students in your own words.

APPLICATION

1. The chief application of this account is the parallel between Naaman's initial rejection of God's simple cure for his leprosy and natural man's rejection of God's simple cure for sin - the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ).
2. Paint a vivid picture in the minds of the students as to the trauma that must have been endured by the young Israelite maiden who was taken captive and sold into slavery. Lead them to imagine themselves in her position. Point out that she served her new masters well by offering advice and was a witness to her God that was above and beyond the call of her duties as a slave. Adverse conditions do not remove our calling as witnesses for our God and Savior. If anything, they make that witness all the more remarkable to the hearer.
3. King Jehoram serves as a negative example of what to do when faced (humanly speaking) with an impossible task. He gave way to despair. Our initial reaction may often be the same. From this lesson we learn to turn all such matters over to our God, for "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)
4. As God through Elisha told Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River, so he at times calls for faithful, trusting obedience from his children in order to bless them. So today we bring our children to be baptized, not understanding how that simple act of applying water in connection with the Word of God can serve as a vehicle for the Holy Spirit and His work of creating saving faith in the human heart.
5. The gospel has been given freely *to* us; freely it should be given *by* us. Though Elisha refused the gifts of Naaman, he did not refuse all compensation. Clarify to the students that pastors and teachers are not paid for preaching and teaching the Word. Rather, the congregation provides for their earthly needs so that the pastors and teachers can carry on the Lord's work of ministry full-time and without distraction.
6. As Naaman recognized the difficulty he would have in carrying out his official secular duties as a new convert to the one true God, so also such dilemmas may well confront us. Ask the students to come up with examples in their own

- lives (e.g., paying taxes to a government that does bad things, defending 1st Amendment rights to free speech, even when what is said is morally wrong, working as a policeman or judge to enforce laws with which he disagrees, etc.)
7. Sin blinds us and makes us do foolish things. Remind the students how Adam, once so wise, tried to hide from God in the Garden after he sinned. Here too note how Gehazi, who had witnessed such great things during his time of service under Elisha, was fooled by his greed into believing that he could fool the Lord whom Elisha served.
 8. The fact that Gehazi had to hide the gifts from Elisha should have convinced him that what he was doing was wrong. Emphasize the need to listen to our conscience, which is a gift from our God to warn us when we sin or are being tempted to do so.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Psalm 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

John 17:3 - And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

1 John 1:7 - The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Middle

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 20:31 - But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

1 Corinthians 1:25 - The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Upper

2 Timothy 3:15 - From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Romans 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

1 Corinthians 1:18 - For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

HYMN CHOICES

Preserve Thy Word, O Savior - TLH #264:4-5

O Word of God Incarnate - TLH #294:1-2

The Gospel Shows the Father's Grace - TLH #297:1-2, 5-6