

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.



Where did Naaman ever get the idea that Elisha would dramatically call on the name of the LORD and strike his hand over the place of his leprosy to recover him from his disease?

In every age there have been false prophets, and teachers. Scripture says, “there were **false** prophets also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” — 2 Peter 2:1. No doubt Naaman had seen his share of false prophets within the ranks of Dagon, Baal and Astaroth. He may have even heard of those within the ranks of Judaism and expected the same from Elisha.

The Scriptures have much to say about false prophets. We are told that “many shall follow their pernicious ways . . . and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: . . . beguiling unstable souls . . . *speaking* great swelling words of vanity. They promise . . . liberty, *but* they themselves are the

servants of corruption. . . . for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Peter 2; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

This lesson will examine Naaman’s healing. He is a Syrian general; an enemy of Israel, but God heals him. In this miracle we find a portrait of grace. That is, we are saved by God’s grace through faith *in Christ*; and that not of ourselves: “it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Yet Satan sought to mar this amazing portrait of grace by using another prophet’s greed to corrupt the work of God.

1. List and discuss the six features given about Naaman in 2 Kings 5:1, 6.

ANSWER:

- a. He was Captain of the Host of the King of Syria – 2 Kings 5:1a

He was a general - a man who had been successful in life. He was disciplined. He was a trained leader. He had risen to the top of his profession.

- b. He was also a servant – 2 Kings 5:6

In verse 6, He is referred to as a servant. A person can never learn to lead unless he knows how to follow. The one true and great mark of a leader is they are a person who has learned to be a follower.

- c. He was a great man with his Master – 2 Kings 5:1b

He was trustworthy, honest. a person that could be depended on.

- d. He was an honorable man – 2 Kings 5:1c

He had a sense of fairness with the people. People liked him. They respected Him. He was a hero among his people. His name means, "pleasant." He probably had a pleasing charismatic personality. You would have liked this man and had no problem following him. He was popular. He is one of the remarkable characters on the page of Scripture.

- e. He was a mighty man of valor – 2 Kings 5:1d

He was brave, a man of battle, a man of action. He was not a pencil pushing general. He was the Douglas MacArthur, George S. Patton, or Norman Schwarzkopf of his day. He was not afraid to get in the trenches. He was a true leader of men.

- f. ". . .but he was a leper. – 2 Kings 5:1e

2. Discuss this phrase, "that by him (Naaman) the LORD had given deliverance to Syria" (2 Kings 5:1c). Syria was a neighbor and enemy of Israel. Even Naaman's wife's servant was an Israelite, captured in a Syrian raid, and sold into slavery. **How could the LORD give deliverance to Syria and at the same time be LORD of Israel?**

ANSWER:

Note, that it says, "that by him (Naaman) the LORD had given deliverance to Syria."

God is not just the God of Israel or the God of America. God takes no sides. He is the God of righteousness and justice and the ruler of all nations. He raises up leaders and nations and He brings them down (See Isaiah 40:15-26).

3. Discuss Naaman's disease and its physical and spiritual relevance to what God is conveying in this account.

ANSWER:

Naaman was the Captain of the Host of the King of Syria, a faithful servant and a great man with his master. He was honorable and a mighty man of valor. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Scriptures had stopped and not said anything else? If we didn't have to put that last "BUT" on the end of the sentence. If it were a fairy tale we could say, "And He lived happily ever after." But this is not a fairy tale, it is a true-life story of a real man, so it records the "BUT, he was a leper."

His condition is a parallel picture of the human race. The Bible gives leprosy as an exact picture of sin. What leprosy does to the physical body - sin does to the spiritual body. You can list all the fine qualities of a person today but you have to add . . . the "BUT." But he/she is a sinner. The wages of sin is death. We live in a day that historians delight in digging up dirt on all the great men — Washington, Lincoln, Jackson. etc. If the truth be told, every politician, every leader, every person has some skeleton in their closet. After studying history all his life, James Truslow Adams, the Pulitzer Prize winning historian from Connecticut wrote . . .

There is so much good in the worst of us,
and so much bad in the best of us,
That it behooves the most of us,
not to talk about the rest of us.

We are all sinner saved by God's wonderful grace. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" — Isa 64:6. So, amid all the good we can say about Naaman, we must add – BUT HE WAS A LEPER.

4. Read 2 Kings 5:2, 4 and discuss the role of Naaman's wife's servant and how her example is helpful to us.

This is a story about a young lady who was taken into slavery due to Israel's disobedience, but remained a faithful witness for God. The Syrians took her from her family – Her people – her nation. She was made to serve in a foreign land, but the one thing they could not take from her was her God. She was a true believer. Even in physical captivity she never forgot her God. She faithfully witnessed of His power to save.

We are not even told her name but make no mistake – She is the real heroine of this entire story. She would seem to be an insignificant part of this story but without her faithful witness – this story would not have taken place.

Naaman's conduct was greatly influenced by his wife and her young servant. She was a Jewish woman taken captive during a Syrian raid (2 Kings 5:2a) and became God's faithful witness in a foreign land. She could have been disillusioned with God: blamed Him for her captivity; blamed God for all the bad things that ever happened to her, but she didn't. She understood God's sovereignty and the hope that lay ahead.

She was a missionary in bondage. She was the only preacher that Naaman would ever hear. Her master was under the death penalty and without her brave testimony he would perish. Yes, he was Israel's enemy, but he was a creature made in the image of God. He, like most people in this world was lost in a world of paganism and superstition.

All she did was tell Naaman's wife about Elisha, the prophet of God. I am sure she told her about all she knew about the prophets, Elijah and Elisha. This was her generation. The amazing stories happened in her lifetime. Elijah and the fire of God from heaven. How God used both Elijah and Elisha to part the Jordan River. Then, maybe she told Naaman's wife about Elisha being used by God to raise a child from the dead and much more. "If only my Lord were with the Prophet who is in Israel" – 2 Kings 5:2b.

Naaman's wife told her husband. Maybe she even requested that the girl repeat the stories to Naaman. Then Naaman went to the King. – 2 Kings 5:4. Had Naaman not been sick, I doubt he would have given the stories a second thought, but God uses the circumstances of life to bring people to the end of their strength.

5. Read 2 Kings 5:5-6 and discuss how Naaman planned on using the supplies he gathered. Besides silver and gold, what other items did Naaman bring with him?

Calculate the monetary value of Naaman's silver and gold at today's market value. Silver today sells at \$18 an ounce. Gold sells today at \$1200 an ounce. Naaman brought ten talents of silver, which weighs approximately 750 lbs and 6,000 pieces of gold weighing approximately 150 lbs. How much money did he bring with him?

ANSWER:

The four items Naaman brought to Elisha: a note from the king of Syria; 10 talents of silver; 6000 pieces of gold and 10 changes of clothing – 2 Kings 5:5-6.

10 talents of silver weighs approximately 750 lbs. or 12,000 ounces. That is equivalent to \$216,000 on today's market – 2 Kings 5:5. (That is one talent = 75 lbs. Silver today is valued at approximately \$18/oz. $750\text{lbs} = 12,000\text{ oz} \times \$18 = \$216,000$. In 2 Kings 5:23, Gehazi, Elisha's servant sell out for 2 talents of silver which = 150 lbs. That is 2400 oz. $2400\text{ oz} \times 18 = \$43,200$ and 2 changes of garments.)

6,000 pieces of gold weight approximately 150 lbs. Today gold sells at \$1200 per ounce, valued today around \$1,440,000. Each piece of Naaman's gold weighed 2 oz.

He was all out to purchase his healing.

6. Read 2 Kings 5:8-11 and discuss Naaman's reasoning, "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." How does this point to the fact that salvation is not of works?"

ANSWER:

Naaman finally arrives at Elisha's house in 2 Kings 5:8-11 and exclaims, "SURELY I THOUGHT." Is not this the reason many end up in hell? They imagine they can get to God through many means.

7. Read 2 Kings 5:19-27. How does Gehazi's actions mar God's portrait of salvation?"

