

THE CAPTIVE GIRL WHO SAVED A MAN'S LIFE

BIBLE TEXT : II Kings 5:1-27.

LESSON 311 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 55:8).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Kings 5:1-27

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.

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.

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.

⁴ And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel.

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.

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.

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.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTE

A Captain

We have studied that the Children of Israel and the Syrians made war upon each other at different times. In one of the battles the Syrians captured and took home an Israelite girl. She was taken to the home of Naaman, where she became a servant and waited on Naaman's wife.

Naaman was an important man in the land of Syria. The king had made him captain over all the armies. Naaman was a courageous man and had done his work well. The people honoured him for the good that he had done for his country. He had much influence with the king because the Lord had helped Naaman to bring deliverance to the land of Syria.

One might think that Naaman and his family would be happy. But there was sorrow in Naaman's home. Even though all those good things could be said about Naaman there was one condition that brought sadness.

Leprosy

Naaman was mighty man in valour -- "but he was a leper." Leprosy was a terrible disease for which the physicians had no cure. To be a leper meant that he would be separated from his family and friends lest they would get the same dreaded disease; it meant that eventually he would be unable to act as captain of the hosts; it meant that all he had to look forward to was a long sickness and death.

Naaman was courageous, but courage could not heal him. Naaman was honourable, but honour could not heal him. He was prosperous, but prosperity could not heal him. He was influential, but influence could not heal him. The king, friends, money, position — none of these could heal Naaman. Was there no deliverance from this doom?

The Captive Maid

The little captive Israelite maid who waited on Naaman's wife knew about the Lord. No doubt, before she was captured she was taught about the God of the Children of Israel. When she was in a strange land she did not forget about the power of God. When she heard about Naaman's leprosy she told her mistress that the Lord's prophet could help him to recover from it.

We do not know even the name of this little maid. We do know that she lived a good life and that she spoke of the Lord when she had an opportunity. The people believed her. No one else had a cure for Naaman's leprosy, but they believed the little maid's report.

A Living Testimony

Many Christians live and work among unbelievers. They live for the Lord all the time, and others have confidence in them. When there is an opportunity they tell what God can do, and they witness of the things that He has done. To tell of the power in Jesus' Blood to save is to tell of the only cure against sin and death.

This lesson shows us that children can spread the Gospel and be helpful to others. Have you ever told anyone about Jesus and

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.

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

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.

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.

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.*

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?*

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.

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.*

¹⁶ But he said, *As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive*

His power to save from sin? Do you live at home and at school a life which makes others believe what you say?

The little maid in Naaman's home told the truth and everyone believed her. Even Ben-hadad, the king, believed the report. He told Naaman to make a visit to Samaria. He sent a letter with Naaman to Jehoram, the king of Israel. Naaman also took many gifts of silver, gold, and clothing.

A Letter

Naaman took the letter to the king. It asked him to recover Naaman of his leprosy. When Jehoram read it, he said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive?" The king must have known that only God could spare a man who had leprosy. It was an unreasonable demand to expect of the king. It was not in the power of the king of Israel to heal anybody from the dreadful leprosy or from any other disease. In times past, Ben-hadad had demanded good and valuable things from the Children of Israel that he might not make war with them (**1 Kings 20:1-6** ¹ **And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.** ² **And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad,** ³ **Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.** ⁴ **And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.** ⁵ **And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children;** ⁶ **Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away).** Jehoram thought that Ben-hadad was again trying to cause trouble by picking a quarrel with him.

The Wrong Person

Was there no help for Naaman? What had the little maid said? "The prophet that is in Samaria . . . would recover him of his leprosy." Naaman had gone to the wrong person. The prophet, not the king, had power with God. By going to the wrong person, Naaman still had his leprosy, and an ill feeling sprang up. It is important for people today to go to the right person for help. That One is Jesus. Only the Lord can save a person from his sins. Only the Lord can divinely heal a sick body. Ministers and other followers of the Lord can pray and can point a person to Jesus, but no man can save another from his sins. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Prophet

Elisha heard of the confusion caused by the letter. He sent this word to the king: "Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." Naaman came with his chariot and horses to Elisha's house and stopped at the door. A servant went out with a message from Elisha. He said, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

Instead of rejoicing at such a simple cure, Naaman was wroth. It was not the way he had expected. Was he not the captain of the Syrian host? And the prophet had not even come to greet him!

God's Way

God often works in ways that man does not expect. Man's ways are not God's ways. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the

none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused.

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.

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.

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

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.

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?

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.

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.

²⁴ And when he came to the tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and

heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8, 9). There is even a way that seems right to man but it ends in death (**Proverbs 16:25** ²⁵ **There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death**). Man must obey God in order to receive the blessings of the Lord.

Naaman thought about the rivers of his own land and those of Samaria. The people who have seen these rivers say that the rivers of Damascus are clear and sparkling while Jordan is muddy. Naaman would have been willing to wash in the rivers of his own land, but the word of the Lord by the mouth of the prophet had been "Jordan." Naaman went away in a rage because he would not humble himself to wash in the Jordan River.

Dipping in Jordan

Naaman's servants persuaded him to obey. They said that he would have done any great thing commanded by the prophet, then why not this small deed — "Wash, and be clean"? Naaman took the advice of his savants. Down he went into the Jordan River. He dipped himself seven times according to the word of the man of God. After each dip, Naaman could have doubtfully looked at his skin to see if there was any change. We do not read that the change came gradually. After Naaman had obeyed by dipping seven times, then "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

So it is when one seeks the Lord today. He must be obedient to the Word of the Lord. One might be willing to seek God in another place or at another time, but only by obeying God will he receive the blessing whether he prays seven times or once.

Naaman could have dipped just six times and then have gone away, without the healing, and saying that God would not heal him. Naaman proved God by obeying Him, and he was cleansed. Some people try to bargain with God. They try to receive His blessing by just partially obeying; but God demands complete obedience.

His Testimony

When Naaman was healed of his leprosy, he went back to the prophet. He testified, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." How grateful he was to be rid of the leprosy! Naaman said that from that time on he would not worship other gods. Naaman was going to worship the true and living God. He asked for "two mules' burden" of earth to take back with him. Perhaps he wanted to make an altar of earth where he could sacrifice burnt offerings unto the Lord (**Exodus 20:24** ²⁴ **An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.**). Naaman gave praise to God for his deliverance and left for his own country with the blessing of Elisha.

Covetous

Naaman was followed by Elisha's servant, Gehazi. Gehazi wanted the reward which Naamaan had offered to his master and which Elisha had refused. Gehazi told Naaman a lie and said that Elisha had sent him for the gifts to give to someone else. After Gehazi had received these things he hid them before he returned to his master. Elisha knew what Gehazi had coveted the reward, and questioned him about the garments and money. Gehazi did not tell Elisha the truth.

To lie is sin. Just one sin will spoil a good life. When a person yields to temptation and commits sin, often that one sin leads to another sin. Gehazi first coveted; then he told Naaman a lie; next he tried to conceal his sins; and he did not tell the truth when

he let the men go, and they departed.

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.*

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?*

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.*

Elisha asked him where he had been. In Gehazi's life, one sin brought on another sin. In punishment, the leprosy of Naaman was put upon Gehazi. Thus in this lesson we have learned how one man, Naaman, was recovered from his leprosy, and how another man, Gehazi, was smitten with the same disease.

Leprosy and Sin

Leprosy is sometimes spoken of as a type of sin. In the midst of Naaman's honour, there was leprosy. So it is in the lives of many people. In the midst of honour, wealth, friends, and position, there is sin. The people may have some good deeds to their credit, but there is sin. The Prophet Isaiah prayed for the people, saying, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). The Lord spoke these words through the Prophet Jeremiah: "For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD" (Jeremiah 2:22).

The only cure for Naaman's leprosy was in the Lord. It is the same with sin. The only cure for sin is in the Blood of Jesus. Sin causes a separation from God. It brings doom and death just as leprosy did. Naaman took gifts to the prophet. They are like the consecrations that people give to God when they pray and offer Him their lives. The gift of God cannot be purchased with money (**Acts 8:20** ²⁰ **But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.**). A person does feel like giving praise and consecrations to God in gratitude for His blessings. It was necessary for Naaman to obey completely the words sent by God. When people obey God today and do as he commands, their sins will be washed away and forgiven. Have your sins been washed away by the Blood of Jesus? Are you living for Him each day?

"What can wash away my sin?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus;

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

QUESTIONS

1. Who was captain of the Syrian hosts?
2. How did an Israelite maid happen to be in Naaman's home?
3. What was wrong with Naaman?
4. What did the little maid tell him to do?
5. What mistake did Naaman make?
6. Why did the king think that the Syrians were seeking a quarrel?
7. How did Naaman get rid of his leprosy?
8. What was the only cure for Naaman's leprosy?
9. Tell how leprosy and sin are similar.
10. How can a person be rid of his sins?