

NAAMAN THE SYRIAN

BIBLE TEXT : II Kings 5:1-27.

LESSON 311 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

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:

I Testimony for God

1. Naaman the Syrian, a great and honourable man, was afflicted with leprosy, II Kings 5:1.
2. A captive maid of Israel testified of the power of God to heal such a disease, II Kings 5:2-4;

Numbers 12:13-15

¹³ And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in *again*.

¹⁵ And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in *again*.

Matthew 8:3

³ And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Matthew 8:16

¹⁶ When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

II Prophet of God

1. Naaman was sent to the king of Israel with a letter requesting healing for Naaman, II Kings 5:5-7;

Genesis 30:1-2

¹ And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

² And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, *Am* I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

Genesis 50:19

¹⁹ And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God?

Exodus 4:16

¹⁶ And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

2. Elisha requested that Naaman be sent to him, II Kings 5:8;

Matthew 11:28

²⁸ Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

John 5:40

⁴⁰ And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Psalms 21:4

⁴ He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, *even* length of days for ever and ever.

3. Naaman was told to dip seven times in Jordan, and he would be healed, but he refused to do it, I Kings 5:9-13;

1 Kings 7:2

² He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof *was* an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.

Isaiah 53:1

¹ Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Psalms 78:19-20

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*

¹⁹ *Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*

²⁰ *Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?*

Matthew 13:58

⁵⁸ *And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

4. Naaman's servants persuaded Naaman to reconsider his refusal to obey Elisha, II Kings 5:13;

Exodus 18:19

¹⁹ *Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:*

1 Kings 12:6-8

⁶ *And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?*

⁷ *And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.*

⁸ *But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:*

Daniel 4:27

²⁷ *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.*

Proverbs 11:14

¹⁴ *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

III Power of God

1. Naaman was healed when he obeyed the command of the prophet, II Kings 5:14, 15;

Proverbs 4:20-22

²⁰ *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.*

²¹ *Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.*

²² *For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*

Deuteronomy 7:15

¹⁵ *And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all *them* that hate thee.*

Jeremiah 30:17

¹⁷ *For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.*

2. Elisha refused any reward for the healing Naaman had received from God, II Kings 5:15-19, 26;

Isaiah 1:23

²³ *Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.*

Daniel 5:17

¹⁷ *Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.*

Micah 3:11

¹¹ *The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD*

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

among us? none evil can come upon us.

Hosea 9:1

¹ Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as *other* people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.

Matthew 10:8

⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

3. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, received gifts from Naaman, but Naaman's leprosy came upon Gehazi for his covetousness, II Kings 5:20-27;

Joshua 7:11

¹¹ Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff.

Joshua 7:25-26

²⁵ And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

²⁶ And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

Acts 5:3

³ But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

NOTE

Faithful Witness

Should anyone doubt the value of personal testimonies, the reading of the account of Naaman the leper should dispel such doubts. A little maid, captive of a people other than her own, dared to speak of the power and might of the Lord; and because she did, a marvellous miracle was wrought and great attention was focused upon the name of God. God was glorified in a great manner, a soul was converted to the true worship of God, and the testimony of Naaman's healing has rung out victoriously ever since.

Naaman, who was a great and honourable man in his own country, had become afflicted with leprosy. Contracting such a disease meant that Naaman would be ostracized from society, and from his home and family. There was no cure for leprosy, and doubtless Naaman felt that his case was hopeless, and that his life's work would be prematurely ended.

The old saying, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," was certainly true in Naaman's situation. His serving maid, the little captive from Israel, told her mistress about the prophet of God in her native land who could heal Naaman of his leprosy. In the course of events, knowledge of what the little maid had said came to the ears of Naaman and his king, and hope sprang anew in Naaman's heart.

One would naturally think that men who are facing certain death, or who are in the most serious kind of emergencies, would instinctively call upon God. Men often do, but at the same time there are some who do not. Naaman was one of those great men who, in his distress and need, did turn wholeheartedly to the true and living God. We learn from our lesson that he was an exception and not the rule in his day.

Word of God

The Lord has said: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing

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.*

whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). The word of God came by way of personal testimony to the household and person of Naaman, when he was in dire need of healing or his body and in urgent need for the salvation of his soul.

Although Naaman was a Syrian, and had been an idol worshiper and, at best, knew very little of the worship of the true God, he received the word of the Lord when it did come in to him. Naaman proved himself to be one of those precious souls of whom Jesus spoke in the parable of the sower and the seed. (Matthew 13:1-8 ¹ **The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.** ² **And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.** ³ **And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;** ⁴ **And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:** ⁵ **Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:** ⁶ **And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.** ⁷ **And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:** ⁸ **But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.** Matthew 13:18-23 ¹⁸ **Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.** ¹⁹ **When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.** ²⁰ **But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;** ²¹ **Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.** ²² **He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.** ²³ **But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.**) The seed had been sown in variety of places: some seed had fallen upon stony places, some had fallen in thorny places, but some had fallen upon good ground. That which was good brought forth fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold, or a hundredfold. Through the instrumentality of the serving maid's testimony and the wise counsel of Naaman's servants, Naaman's soul became good ground ready to receive the word of God. His heart became fertile, and the seed sown brought forth fruit unto God.

Naaman travelled to another country, heard the prophet's command, and finally humbled himself to obey it. He was healed of leprosy, and was converted to the true worship of God. He became an outstanding testimony of God's mercy and saving grace, not only in his own lifetime but also through the years, wherever the Word of God has been preached. When it came time for Naaman to return to his own land his testimony was, "Thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD".

Names Written in the Book of Life

Ezekiel prophesied in his time against the false prophets who prophesied lies. "They shall not be in the assembly of my people, **neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel**" (Ezekiel 13:9). Now the meaning of such a statement was far-reaching, and the promise of serious consequences. Jesus told His disciples: "Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather **rejoice, because your names are written in heaven**" (Luke 10:20). Jesus emphasized the importance, over everything else, of having their names written in Heaven. Paul, in writing to the Hebrews said: "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and

unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the **general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven**" (Hebrews 12:22, 23). Finally we read of the Great White Throne Judgment, when death and hell shall deliver up their dead, when the dead, both small and great, shall stand before God and the books are opened, and the Book of Life is opened, and the dead are judged out of those things which are written in the books. "And whosoever was **not found written in the book of life** was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11-15).

The remarkable fact in connection with Naaman's healing and conversion was that he bestirred himself to seek the prophet of God even though it meant a great effort for himself and for others. It must not have been easy to cast aside his old beliefs and ideas of heathenism and idol worship. Had not his servants wisely remonstrated with him, he would not have humbled himself to obey the prophet's command to dip seven times in the river Jordan. Because he did yield to such wise counsel, which was actually the word of the Lord, he received healing and salvation. His name was written in the Book of Life, and he was numbered with Israel. His faith and obedience was of such outstanding quality that Jesus used his example as a rebuke to the unbelief of the Israelites. Jesus told them, "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:27).

The plain implication of Jesus' statement was that Naaman alone had availed himself of God's grace and mercy to obtain healing and salvation, though he was a foreigner and a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel and to the household of God. Because he did believe, his name has been recorded in the Book of Life and neither time nor eternity will efface that name. Doubtless there were many lepers in Elisha's time, even as Jesus said, who knew of Elisha the Prophet of God, and of the true worship of God; but as they did nothing to seek God for their need, they received nothing. They failed to have their names written in the Book of Life and on the record with those who were true Israelites. (**Ephesians 2:11-13** ¹¹ **Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;** ¹² **That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:** ¹³ **But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Romans 9:4-8** ⁴ **Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;** ⁵ **Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.** ⁶ **Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:** ⁷ **Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.** ⁸ **That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Romans 2:28-29** ²⁸ **For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:** ²⁹ **But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God)**

Covetousness

In bold contrast with the faith and sincerity of Naaman, we have the lies and insincerity of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha. Is there not a solemn warning to those who live in close proximity to the Gospel, to guard their hearts and souls with all diligence lest they be overcome with temptation, and the great truths of God

become commonplace with them?

Gehazi was possibly intended to be the successor of Elisha in the Prophet's office, even as Elisha had faithfully ministered to Elijah and had been chosen to succeed him. Unfortunately, Gehazi proved untrue to the high calling in God, and covetousness proved to be his downfall. Seeing an opportunity in the person and generosity of Naaman, he led to him and acquired gifts from him. Gehazi's sin did not stay hidden from Elisha, and the leprosy of Naaman came upon Gehazi for his transgression.

Naaman sought out God, and went to his home renewed in body, transformed in soul; while Gehazi, who was associated with the truth of God every day, failed of the grace of God, sinned, and became a leper. The great lesson for all to learn is that though one may be without knowledge of the covenants and promises of God, yet God is always faithful to him and will bring him into contact with His truth in one way or another. If one will take heed he will have his name written in the Book of Life. Though he may have access to the truth of the word of God, yet if he fails to obey its precepts and walk in the light of its truth, he will, as Gehazi, suffer accordingly for his transgressions.

QUESTIONS

1. How did Naaman hear about the power of the Lord to heal him?
2. Why did the King of Israel become angry when asked to heal Naaman?
3. Why did Naaman refuse to dip in Jordan seven times?
4. Why did Naaman change his mind about dipping in the Jordan River?
5. Why did Jesus commend Naaman?
6. Why were no other lepers healed in Israel?
7. Was Naaman truly converted to the worship of God? How do we know?
8. How did Naaman get his name in the book of Life?
9. What was Gehazi's sin?
10. What happened to Gehazi because of his sin?