



Syria was a heathen country to the north of the land of Israel. The Syrians often made raids on Israel, taking Israelites from their homes to be slaves in Syria. On one of these raids a little girl (we are not told her name) was captured. She became a servant to the wife of Naaman (*NAY-uh-muhn*).

Naaman was a "mighty man in valour," the captain of the Syrian army. He was brave and rich—but he had a terrible skin disease called leprosy!

Leprosy, in the Bible, was used to describe many different skin conditions. Spots on clothing and on the walls of houses (Leviticus 13:47; 14:55)—thought to be mildew—were also called leprosy. Some types of leprosy caused people to be separated from their families until it was determined that they were not contagious (Leviticus 13—14). Today's leprosy is called Hansen's disease. It is unknown if this is the same disease as Old Testament leprosy, as most of the symptoms are different.

When the little girl knew that Naaman had leprosy, she went to her mistress (Naaman's wife) and said, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." No doubt, the little girl knew of the miracles Elisha had done, or she could not have given her mistress such a good report.

When word of what the little girl had said was told to the king of Syria, he wrote a letter to the king of Israel (Jehoram; *juh-HOR-uhm*). The letter said, "I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy." Naaman took the letter to the king of Israel. He also took ten talents of silver (750 pounds of silver), six thousand pieces of gold (150 pounds of gold), and ten changes of clothes as a gift.

When the king of Israel read the letter, he became so angry that he tore his clothes. He said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" He thought the king of Syria was trying to start a fight with him and his country!

Church of God Sunday School

NAAMAN IS HEALED OF LEPROSY

2 Kings 5:1-27

The news of Naaman's coming soon reached Elisha. 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." The king of Israel should have already thought of Elisha, God's man, but he did not because he was a wicked king.

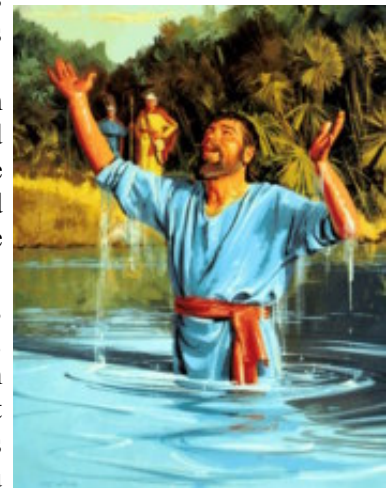
"Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha." Naaman was a very important man in his country. No doubt, he expected to be met by the Prophet Elisha. But he got a surprise! Elisha's servant, Gehazi (*ghee-HAY-zi*), came to the door instead.

Gehazi told Naaman, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Naaman was a very proud man. As he left Elisha's house, he was angry. He had thought Elisha would come out and call on the name of the Lord. He believed Elisha would pass his hand over the diseased skin, and he would be healed!

Then Naaman thought about the instructions to wash in the Jordan, a river in Israel. He said, "Are not Abana [*uh-BAY-nuh*] and Pharpar [*FAHR-pahr*], rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?"

Naaman's pride was injured. He said, "Behold, I thought . . ." But God's ways are not our ways. God's healing of Naaman's leprosy would only come through complete obedience to the words of Elisha.

As Naaman was leaving in a rage, his servants stopped him. They reasoned with him that if he had been told to do some great thing, he would have done it, and he agreed that he would. Then they asked him, "[Why not] . . . Wash, and be clean?" In other words, "Why not just obey and do this simple, easy thing you



Naaman Is Healed of Leprosy

have been told?"

Naaman listened to his servants. He went to the dirty, muddy Jordan River. There he dipped himself in the river seven times. When he came up after the seventh time, he might have been dirty from the muddy water, but his skin was healed of the dreaded leprosy! Naaman knew then that the God of Israel was the true God.

Naaman went back to Elisha. He told him, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." Naaman wanted to give Elisha the gifts he had brought, but Elisha refused to accept them. God alone had healed Naaman, and God alone should receive the glory.

Naaman told Elisha he would worship idols no more, but he wanted God to pardon him if he had to help his master into the temple of Rimmon to worship. Elisha said, "Go in peace." God is the judge.

After Naaman had left, Gehazi decided that he should have some of the gifts that Elisha had refused. So he ran to catch Naaman. When Naaman saw Gehazi coming, he asked if everything was all right. Gehazi said everything was well. He said that his master had sent him because two young men, "sons of the prophets," had arrived. Elisha wanted to give them "a talent of silver, and two changes of garments." That was an outright lie!

Naaman urged Gehazi to take *two* talents of silver instead of *one*. Naaman told two of his men to carry the silver and the clothing for Gehazi. When they came to the "tower" (a well-known hill), Gehazi took the talents and clothing from the servants.

After hiding the gifts, Gehazi went to see Elisha, as if nothing unusual had happened. He might have thought that he had been very clever, but Elisha was very discerning. He asked Gehazi where he had gone. Gehazi lied again and said he had gone nowhere. Elisha knew Gehazi had gone to meet Naaman. He said, "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?"

Elisha then asked Gehazi, "Is it a time to receive money . . . garments . . . oliveyards . . . vineyards . . . sheep . . . oxen . . . menservants, and maidservants?" In other words, "Is it a time to take gifts for doing the work of God?"

Elisha told Gehazi what his punishment would be: "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed [children] for ever." Gehazi reaped the consequences immediately. He went out from Elisha's presence "a leper as white as snow."

This lesson teaches us several things. One thing is, children can be workers in the Kingdom of God as well

as adults. They can be God's witnesses and missionaries to others if they know Jesus.

Another lesson is, we need to be humble. Pride can get us all into trouble. If Naaman had listened to his pride instead of listening to his servants, would he have been healed?

Also, the disease of leprosy in the Old Testament is used to represent sin and its horrible effects upon a person's life. Can you think of reasons why leprosy is a good example for sin?

MEMORY VERSE:

"And many lepers were in Israel in the time of [Elisha] . . . and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."
—Luke 4:27

Fill in the Missing Letters



G _ _ HAZI



NAA _ _ AN



**KING OF
IS _ _ AEL**



**KING OF
SYR _ _ A**