

2 Kings 05 - Annals of Israel: Naaman the Syrian Healed of Leprosy; Gehazi's Greed

II. The divided kingdom from the North-South division until the Assyrian invasion (1 Kings 12:1—2 Kings 17:41)

(13) Israel during Elisha's Ministry (2 Kings 2:1—8:15)

(D) Elisha's miracles reveal Yahweh as both provider and life giver (2 Kings 4:1—6:7)

(f) Elisha takes away and gives leprosy (5:1-27)

(i) Leprosy taken from Naaman of Aram (5:1-14)

(ii) Leprosy given to Gehazi (5:15-27)

2 Kings 5

(f) Elisha takes away and gives leprosy (5:1-27)

(i) Leprosy taken from Naaman of Aram (5:1-14)

1 Now **Naaman**, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man in the view of his master, and eminent, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, *but* afflicted with leprosy.

1 Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, *but he was* a leper.

1 Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man in the opinion of his master. He was highly favored, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. Though he was a mighty and valiant man, he was suffering from leprosy.

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.

- "...Naaman" - "gracious"; he was commander of the army of the king of Aram, Ben-Hadad II (860-841 BC) (Cf. 1 Kings 15:18,20)

— He was a successful and courageous warrior, highly regarded because of the victories God had given the Arameans under his leadership

— However, he had leprosy, a dreaded disease that degenerated its victims and eventually proved fatal. No cure for it was known.

— In Israel, lepers were normally isolated from non-lepers, but this was not always the custom in other nations, including Aram

— Naaman was able to carry on his duties as long as the disease permitted him to do so

2 Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

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2 On one of their raids to the territory of Israel, Aram had taken captive a young girl when she was an infant, who had eventually become an attendant to Naaman's wife.

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.

- In the course of their occasional battles with Israel, Naaman's forces had captured some Israelites whom they made slaves

— One of these was a young girl whom Naaman had given to his wife as a servant

— Evidently Naaman and his wife were kind to this girl because she sought Naaman's welfare

3 And she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy."

3 She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy."

3 She mentioned to her mistress, "If only my master were to visit the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

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.

- She told her mistress, who told her husband, that a prophet living in Samaria could cure leprosy. This was Elisha, who lived in a house in the capital city (6:24,32).

— Probably the girl had heard of Elisha before she was carried off as a slave. Apparently she assumed he could cleanse leprosy in view of his supernatural power.

— Her faith contrasts with the general unbelief that prevailed in Israel at this time

— No leper in Israel, though, was healed in Elisha's day (Luke 4:27). Later the slave girl's faith in the Lord may have been an indirect rebuke to Israel's King Jehoram who had no faith in God.

4 And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "The girl who is from the land of Israel spoke such and such."

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

4 Later, Naaman went to inform his master and told him something like this: "Thus and so spoke the young woman from the territory of Israel."

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

- Naaman and the "girl" are contrasted: he was an Aramean, a "great man" (*'is gadol*, v1); a commander. She is an Israelite, a "little maiden" (*na'ara qetanna*, v2); a captive servant

5 Then the king of Aram 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 clothes.

5 Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand *shekels* of gold and ten changes of clothes.

5 The king of Aram replied, "Go now, and I'll send a letter to the king of Israel." So he left and took with him ten talents of silver and 6,000 units of gold, along with ten sets of clothing.

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.

- The Aramean king was anxious for his valuable commander to be cleansed, not only because he was a trusted friend, but because the dreaded disease would eventually rob the king of his top military commander.

— Naaman set out to visit King Jehoram (of Israel) who he assumed would order the prophet to cure him

— With him the commander took gifts of 10 talents (ca. 750 pounds) of silver, 600 shekels (ca. 150 pounds) of gold, and 10 sets of clothing, all prized gifts

— Ancient peoples considered clothing much more valuable than most modern people normally do

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

6 He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy."

6 He also brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read as follows: "...and now as this letter finds its way to you, look! I've sent my servant Naaman to you so you may heal him of his leprosy."

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.

- Ben Hadad probably first approached Jehoram rather than Elisha because he figured that any prophet with such power would have the personal protection of the king

7 But when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to keep alive, that this man is sending *word* to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me."

7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending *word* to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me."

7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he ripped his clothes and cried out, "Am I God? Can I kill and give life? Is this man sending me a request to heal a man's leprosy? Let's think about this—he's looking for a reason to start a fight with me!"

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.

- Jehoram was dismayed when he read the letter from Ben-Hadad II

— Tearing one's robes indicated great anxiety and distress (Cf. 2:12; 6:30; 11:14)

— Israel and Aram had been at peace, but it appeared to Jehoram that Ben Hadad was trying to pick a fight again as he had done with Jehoram's father Ahab (Cf. 1 Kings 20:1-3)

— Jehoram did not realize that Naaman did not expect him to cure the leprosy. Elisha did not even enter Jehoram's mind. The Israelite king had no use for a prophet who constantly opposed him. Jehoram wanted as little contact with Elisha as possible.

8 Now it happened, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent *word* to the king, saying, "Why did you tear your clothes? Just have him come to me, and he shall learn that there is a prophet in Israel."

8 It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent *word* to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

8 When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king and asked, "Why did you tear your clothes? Please, let the man come visit me and he will learn that there is a prophet in Israel!"

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.

- When Elisha learned of Jehoram's anxiety over Ben Hadad's letter, he sent the king a message not to worry

— If Jehoram would send Naaman to him, the prophet would cure him. Naaman would learn, even if Jehoram had not, that there was a true prophet in Israel.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots, and stood at the doorway of Elisha's house.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha.

9 So Naaman arrived with his horses and chariots and stood in front of the door to Elisha's house.

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 to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and *you will* be clean."

10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and *you will* be clean."

10 Elisha sent a messenger out to him, who told him, "Go bathe in the Jordan River seven times. Your flesh will be restored for you. Now stay clean!"

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.

- Elisha treated Naaman like a superior would treat an inferior. Socially, Naaman was superior to Elisha, but Elisha, as God's prophet, was superior to the vice-regent of Ben Hadad.

— Not at all awed by the great general, Elisha did not even go out to meet him! Instead he sent a messenger to convey his simple "prescription:" Naaman was told to dip 7x in the Jordan River and he would be free of his disease

— The cure lay not in the water of the Jordan but in obedient faith in God's promise through His prophet

11 But Naaman was furious and went away, and he said, "Behold, I thought, 'He will certainly come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the site and cure the leprosy!'

11 But Naaman was furious 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 wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.'

11 But Naaman flew into a rage and left, telling himself, "Look! I thought 'He's surely going to come out to me, stand still, call out in the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the infection, and cure the leprosy!'

11 But Naaman was wrath, 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.

- Naaman expected some type of healing ceremony; Elisha's coolness to Naaman showed him that he was not a wonder-worker who expected payment or praise, and wanted no political involvement with Aramea.

12 Are Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, not 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.

12 Are not Abanah and 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.

12 Aren't the Abana and Pharpar rivers in Damascus better than all of the water in Israel? Couldn't I just bathe in them and become clean?" So he turned away and left, filled with anger.

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.

- Naaman turned from Elisha's house angry for two reasons:

(1) His pride had been offended by Elisha's off-handed treatment of him; he had expected a cleansing ceremony in keeping with his own dignity.

(2) He resented having been told to wash in a muddy river that he considered inferior to the Abana and Pharpar rivers in his hometown; the water of the Jordan, he thought, could not possibly do him any good.

13 Then his servants approached and spoke to him, saying, "My father, had the prophet told you *to do some* great thing, would you not have done *it*? How much more *then*, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?"

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

13 But then his servants approached him and spoke with him. They said, "My father, had the prophet only asked of you something great, you would have done it, wouldn't you? Yet he told you, 'Bathe, and be clean...!'"

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?

- The commander's servants had not been personally put down as their master had, and could view the situation more objectively

— Approaching him tenderly, they appealed to him to be reasonable

— They pointed out that it was not as though Elisha had requested something difficult (some great thing). What harm would there be in giving his prescribed remedy a try?

14 So he went down and dipped *himself* in the Jordan seven times, in accordance with the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

14 So he went down and dipped *himself* seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.

14 So he went down and plunged himself into the Jordan River¹⁴ seven times, just as the man of God had said, and his flesh rejuvenated like the flesh of a newborn child. And he was 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.

- Naaman humbled himself and obeyed the word of the Lord. As he obeyed in faith, he was cleansed.

— God did even more for him and restored his flesh to its soft boyhood texture. The fact that in Elisha's day an Aramean leper was healed, whereas no Israelite leper was (Luke 4:27), points to Israel's apostasy.

(ii) Leprosy given to Gehazi (5:15-27)

15 Then he returned to the man of God with 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, except in Israel; so please accept a gift from your servant now."

15 When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now."

15 Naaman went back to the man of God, along with his entire entourage, and stood before him. "Please look!" he said. "I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel! So please, take a present from your servant."

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.

- Naaman returned from the Jordan to Elisha's house in Samaria (about 25 miles) with a heart full of gratitude and hands full of gifts

— Rather than expecting Elisha to come to him, he willingly stood before the prophet and testified to his belief that Israel's God is the only true God. Unfortunately many in Israel, including her king, had not come to the same realization.

— This was the highest purpose of Naaman's healing from God's point of view

Jesus later made the case that Naaman's faith condemned most Israelites of His day, since they had rejected the true God and embraced gods that could not heal (Luke 4:25-30).

16 But he said, "As *surely* as the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will accept nothing." And he urged him to accept *it*, but he refused.

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

16 But Elisha replied, "As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will not receive anything from you." Though Naaman urged him to take it, Elisha declined.

16 But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

- Elisha agreed that the LORD whom he served lives, but the prophet refused to accept any reward for his ministry

— This was probably because to accept a gift would have implied that Elisha personally had been responsible for the miracle

— Naaman's urging did not budge Elisha. He had not performed this miracle for reward, but at the word of the Lord, and he did not want anyone to think otherwise. The false prophets could easily be bought, but not Elisha (Cf. 1 Thess 5:22).

17 Then Naaman said, "If not, please let your servant be given two mules' load of earth; for your servant will no longer offer a burnt offering nor a sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD.

17 Naaman said, "If not, please let your servant at least be given two mules' load of earth; for your servant will no longer offer burnt offering nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD.

17 So Naaman asked, "No? Then please let your servant load two mules with dirt from Israel, because your servant will no longer offer any burnt offering or sacrifice to any other god but the LORD.

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.

- Since Elisha would not take anything, Naaman asked him to give as much earth as he could carry back to Damascus on two mules

— He intended to use this in making an altar to the Lord

— Many polytheists believed that no god could be worshiped except in its own land or on an altar built with the dirt of that land

18 Regarding this matter may the LORD forgive your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow down in the house of Rimmon, when I bow down in the house of Rimmon, may the LORD please forgive your servant in this matter."

18 In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter."

18 In this one area may the LORD pardon your servant: Whenever my master enters the temple of Rimmon to worship there, he will lean on my hand while I bow down in the temple of Rimmon. So may the LORD pardon your servant in this one area."

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.

- Naaman proposed to worship only *Yahweh* Himself (the LORD), but superstition shaped his thinking

— In the course of his official duties, however, he would have to give token respect to the god of his master the king

— The god of Damascus was Hadad-Rimmon, a god of rain and thunder, here shortened to Rimmon. It was Naaman's duty to participate in this official worship with the king and probably other officials of state.

— The commander was not prepared to risk his life, as Daniel's three friends would (Dan 3:12), by refusing to bow before an idol, but one must remember that Naaman was not an Israelite with the advantage of knowledge of the revealed Word of God. Perhaps his responsibility therefore was not as great as an Israelite's would have been.

19 He said to him, "Go in peace." So he went some distance from him.

19 He said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him some distance.

19 "Go in peace," he said. So Naaman left.

After Naaman had gone only a short distance,

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

- Elisha's departing benediction ("Go in peace") probably was a blessing on the journey ahead of Naaman rather than on the compromising behavior the general had outlined (v17-18)

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, thought, "Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Aramean, by not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him."

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, thought, "Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Aramean, by not receiving from his hands what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him."

20 Gehazi, the attendant to Elisha, the man of God, told himself, "Look how my master has spared this Aramean, Naaman! He declined to take from him what he brought. As the LORD lives, I'm going to run after him and get something from him."

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.

- Gehazi became greedy of what Naaman had offered to give Elisha

— He justified his greed by reasoning that since Naaman was an Aramean, a natural enemy of Israel, he should at least be taken advantage of

21 So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw *someone* running after him, he came down from the chariot to meet him and said, "*Is everything well?*"

21 So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw one running after him, he came down from the chariot to meet him and said, "Is all well?"

21 So Gehazi ran after Naaman.

When Naaman noticed someone running after him, he came down from his chariot, greeted him and asked, "Is everything all right?"

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?

- Gehazi pursued Naaman to get something from him; he was able to overtake the large slow-moving caravan on foot

22 And he said, "*Everything is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Behold, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a **talent** of silver and two changes of clothes.'*"

22 He said, "All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Behold, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes.'"

22 Gehazi said, "Everything's all right. My master sent me to tell you, 'Just now two men from the Guild of Prophets have arrived from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them each a talent of silver bullion and two sets of clothes.'"

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.

- Gehazi said everything was all right, then lied to the commander: he said his master had received unexpected guests (two prophets), and wanted to give them silver and a change of clothing each

— Gehazi put this lie in Elisha's mouth and made the request sound very unselfish

- "...talent" - 75 lbs

23 Naaman said, "Be sure to take two talents." And he urged him, and tied up two talents of silver in two bags with two changes of clothes, and gave *them* to two of his servants; and they carried *them* before him.

23 Naaman said, "Be pleased to take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags with two changes of clothes and gave them to two of his servants; and they carried *them* before him.

23 But Naaman said, "Please accept my invitation to take two talents of silver." He urged him, binding two talents of silver in two bags, along with two sets of clothes. He placed them in the care of two of his young men, and they went on ahead of Gehazi.

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.

- Naaman was happy to oblige, and urged Gehazi to accept twice as much silver as well as the clothing

— He even provided two servants to carry these gifts back to Elisha

24 When he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and deposited them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed.

24 When he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and deposited them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed.

24 When he arrived at the stronghold, Gehazi took the bags from their custody and hid them away in the house. Then he sent the men away and they left.

24 And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

- Gehazi followed the servants and when they arrived at the hill (on which Samaria was built) he took the gifts from them and put them in his house

25 But he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere."

25 But he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere."

25 Later he went to address his master. Elisha asked him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" "Your servant went nowhere in particular," he said.

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.

- Gehazi tried to cover one lie with another...

26 Then he said to him, "Did my heart not go *with you*, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to accept money and to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, sheep, oxen, and male and female slaves?

26 Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go *with you*, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants?

26 But Elisha responded, "Didn't my heart break as the man was turning from his chariot to greet you? Is now the time to receive money? To receive clothes? And olive groves, vineyards, sheep, oxen, servants, or female attendants?

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?

- Elisha explained that he was aware of everything Gehazi had done

— He added that true servants of the Lord should not take personal rewards from people, especially influential non-Israelites, in return for blessings that God, not His servant, had given them

— False prophets were selfishly lining their own pockets and bringing contempt on the prophetic office; true prophets should avoid conduct that might be misunderstood as self-seeking

27 Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence afflicted with leprosy, *as white as snow*.

27 Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper *as white as snow*.

27 Naaman's leprosy will plague you and your descendants forever!" As he left Elisha's presence, he was infected with leprosy that looked like white snow.

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.

- Naaman's leprosy had been removed from him for his trust in and obedience to God.

Now, ironically, leprosy would cling to Gehazi for his lack of trust in and obedience to God.

— The servant had brought dishonor to Yahweh's name. "If you buy these, you also buy Naaman's leprosy." Naaman had become an Israelite, but Gehazi became a pagan through sin (Cf. Matt 6:31-34).

- Naaman's conversion was to show the Israelites how easily the Lord could turn the hearts of their adversaries to Jehovah, and become fellow believers with the Jews themselves.

- A bad case of leprosy turned one's skin and hair white as snow

- Gehazi's judgment was serious because his sin had far-reaching consequences; this story was probably told all over Aram and Israel.

— As a servant of God Gehazi had more privilege than most people and therefore more responsibility than most people

This story contains many lessons:

- Naaman's healing was another great proof of the Lord's power to restore health, a power which only Baal supposedly possessed.
- This incident also helped spread the fame of *Yahweh* to another part of the ancient world.
- The contrasting behaviors of Elisha and Gehazi also model positive and negative attitudes and actions for God's servants of all ages.
- This was one of the several examples that Jesus Himself referred to in His sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:25-30), for which they tried to throw Him off a cliff.
- Gehazi decided to join the ranks of Eli, Saul, and the kings who disregarded *Yahweh*, and so forfeited what he could have inherited, namely, the privilege of serving God as Elisha's successor. Elisha had valued that privilege and had consequently succeeded Elijah (2 Kings 2).

One man goes away healed because of his obedience, while the other man, indeed the one who should have known what matters most, walks away with leprosy. Yet another Israelite has made the tragic mistake of choosing a substitute for the Lord, while a Gentile convert has discovered that what his servant girl said about the Lord's prophet is true.

This text contains one of the great Gentile conversion accounts in the OT. Like Rahab (Joshua 2:9-13), Ruth (Ruth 1:16-18), and the sailors and Ninevites in Jonah (Jonah 1:16; 3:6-10), Naaman believed in the Lord. From Gen 12:2-3 onward in the OT, God desires to bless all nations through Israel. This ideal becomes a reality here due to the witness of the Israelite servant girl and the work of the Israelite prophet.