

## 2 Kings Chapter 05 Commentary

**2Ki 5:1 ¶ "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."**

In this chapter we shall see the hand of God working through Elisha, the prophet of God. Naaman has leprosy, and is a great man in Syria, captain of the host, which would make him to be very close to the King of Syria. Notice, Naaman was made great, by the hand of God giving him victory over their enemies, not through his own strength. The loss of Israel to Syria was a judicial judgment of God against them for their idolatry. The name Naaman means *pleasantness, to be agreeable, to be delightful, sweet, and beautiful*, which brings us to the knowledge that Naaman was found in God's favor, which we shall see manifested later in this chapter.

We must remember that if we yield our lives to our inherit sin nature, God will give us over to it, and God will bring judicial judgments against us. Why? This is a direct affront to God against the very first commandment.

The Syrians had brought a maid from Israel, and she was maid to Naaman's wife. She told Naaman's wife that if they were in Israel, the prophet of God would recover Naaman of his leprosy. We can ascertain, by the speech of this Israelite maiden, that she was a child brought up under the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She was providentially placed, by God, in a position to offer up information, which would bring glory and honor to God. She also knew that God had a prophet in Israel, even though Israel did not have a godly king. Obviously, she had conducted herself in a manner that her words were regarded in high esteem. Thus, they were conveyed to the king of Syria. A reminder to us of our responsibility as parents to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and live our lives in a way that what we say carries great weight with those around us.

A reminder that as a part of the New Testament Church. There is a New Testament scripture that reminds us of the same things happening here seen in ***Jude 1:18-21; 18 "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."*** We are to keep ourselves, and one another, from idolatry.

I would point out that God gave Israel many specific laws about leprosy. One of which was when leprosy was detected the person was isolated and then checked periodically to see if it was contagious. The particular law under consideration in this case, because both Naaman and eventually Gehazi, Elisha's servant, have leprosy all over, is seen in ***Le 13:12-13; 12 "And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; 13 Then the priest shall consider: and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean."*** This is why these men could be around other people. Such a one was still a leper but was not considered to be contagious.

**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."**

Someone tells the king of Assyria what the Israelite maid has said. The king of Syria then writes a letter to the king of Israel, asking him to cure Naaman's leprosy. We remember, from our chart of kings, that there is not a good king in Israel after the division of Israel into two nations. We see that it is true of this king from his reaction to the letter from the king of Syria. The king of Israel does not have a relationship with God, or this

message would not have disturbed him so greatly, for we see he accuses the king of Syria of seeking to quarrel with Israel. Obviously, the king of Israel has knowledge of Elisha, but there is no relationship with him either.

This is a reminder to all of God's people that we are to keep up fellowship with God, with God's people, and God's ministers. Also, we should have a ready knowledge of the bible, so we are always ready to give an answer from the truth of God, to all that ask of us a reason for our hope in Christ.

**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."**

Elisha hears of the king's distress and sends him a message. He tells the king of Israel to send Naaman to him, and they would all learn, that there is a prophet of God in Israel. Naaman is sent to Elisha, and he comes with all his pomp and show to Elisha's house. Elisha doesn't go out to meet him. He sends a messenger to Naaman and tells him to go wash in Jordan river seven times, and he will be cleansed of his leprosy.

A reminder to us, when we come to God with all our works, and so called righteousnesses, God will not come out to meet us. He will send us a message that is meant to humble our hearts and bend our desires to God's will. God always has a message in his word of truth, which will humble our hearts and cause us to see the sinfulness of our sins.

**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."**

Naaman is so mad at the action of Elisha, and the message of what to do, that he turns away in a rage. Notice, Naaman has not yet figured out that God is in the land of Israel and not in the land of Syria. He desires to go wash in the rivers of Syria, which by nature were of cleaner water than the river Jordan, which was often muddy. Notice, also, Naaman has a head knowledge of "*the name of the LORD his God*" that is the God of Elisha, for Naaman actually says that very thing.

Now, let's apply this principle to our own lives as a child of God. When we are so full of ourselves that we cannot see God, we do like Naaman and desire to do things in our homeland, the flesh's sin nature, and not in accordance with the word of God. At times like this, if we have a heart knowledge of God, we are displaying that we have put God in a closet and shut his name out of our lives, and we are exercising in head knowledge only.

**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."**

Naaman's servants (plural) speak to Naaman and remind him that if the prophet had bid him to do some great thing (great as in the eyes of the world) would you not do it? Why not do as the prophet says and wash and be clean? Wherefore, Naaman humbles himself, goes, and washes seven times in Jordan, and his leprosy is cleansed and his flesh is like that of a little child. This reminds us of the scripture in **1Co 1:27-29; 27 "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence."** We see an example of God at work in confounding the high and mighty, and bringing them to a state of lowliness and humility. We see the picture of a child of God being born again. How? The leprous flesh, a picture of the sin nature of the flesh, is washed away and now the skin is like the skin of a little child, demonstrating the change from nature to grace in Naaman's heart and body. Now, Naaman has a heart knowledge of God, for we shall see his life is changed by the healing of God applied to his body.

Praise the Lord, for brothers and sisters in Christ, who are willing to speak to us in love, and rebuke us for rejecting the word of God. The rebuke being done in a loving manner so that our hearts are humbled, and we are willing to do things once again according to **"thus saith the Lord"** and not what is right in our own eyes. This is why Jesus taught us about loving one another as yourself, and in **1Ti 5:1 ¶ "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;"** Just as Naaman's servants in their rebuke called Naaman **"My father."** They approached Naaman in humility. They do not approach him; demanding that he do what Elisha told him. We see that Naaman received the loving and gentle rebuke. So, it should be with God's people.

**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 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."**

Naaman, having been humbled and changed by the power of God, now has a heart knowledge of the LORD God, comes back to Elisha's house, and Elisha comes out to meet him this time. Naaman makes a public profession of his faith in God. Now we see how the definition of his name is brought to the knowledge that this is a man who has found favor in God's sight. We believe his is a child of God.

Naaman, who is used to the custom of giving to the idolatrous prophets in his own land, (which is also the common practice in Israel) offers to give to Elisha a blessing. Elijah tells Naaman that God will not let him receive a blessing from Naaman, for something that God did, not Elisha. Naaman then offers to give Elisha's servant a gift, which Elisha also refuses. Had Elisha let Gehazi be given a gift, it would still have taken from the glory of God. Naaman declares that he will not offer sacrifices to any other god than the LORD.

Naaman, recognizing the change, the new birth, in his life, now ask of Elisha for permission to continue in his duty to the king of Syria. He asks that when I accompany my master, the king of Syria, into the house of Rimmon as is my duty, and bow myself in the house of Rimmon, know that I am not bowing to the god Rimmon, but unto the LORD, and may God forgive his servant Naaman, for his civil obedience to his master, the king of Syria. Naaman must bow because the king leaned upon him when Naaman was bowed down. Naaman was a propping place for the king, even as we use a footstool. Elisha tells Naaman to go in peace.

Naaman has already declared that he will worship no other gods, or idols, but will worship and sacrifice to the LORD only. We would hope that Naaman, not only went back and told his king everything that had happened, and of his conversion, and conviction, to worship the LORD only, but that he would openly profess and fulfill his promise to worship God, only, in the presence of all. We would hope that his king would not require him to enter the idolatrous house of Rimmon, but Naaman is asking Elisha, and God, for an exception to do his civil duty if his king continues to require him to go into the house of Rimmon with him.

There are great lessons to be learned from these verses. God's people, whether in the new birth, or in being corrected and returning to the LORD, should devote their lives totally to the LORD. We should always be willing to confess our faith and belief in the LORD, and Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Those, who help others to do as the word of God says, and they are thereby humbled and turn to God, should never take any of God's glory for the changed life to themselves. We do not do the eternal saving of the soul. That is solely the work of God. Just as healing Naaman of his leprosy, and of his rebirth, which the healing of leprosy is simply a picture of the sins of a child of God being forgiven, through the finished work of Jesus Christ, being washed in the waters of regeneration, manifested in the new birth.

Another thought is Naaman's situation, which he is going to be in, under his natural master. He is required by his master, the king of Syria, to accompany him to the house of idolatry. But even if he does as his master requires, in his heart, Naaman is not bowing to the idol Rimmon, but is bowing to the LORD. But wouldn't Naaman be committing idolatry by even going into the house of Rimmon? Not if his heart is truly devoted to worshipping God. However, the bible tells us to refrain from the very appearance of evil. Yes, it does, but don't

you believe that Naaman gave a full report of all that happened to him, even his change to the grace of God, and his devotion to the LORD only? Surely, he did. Wherefore, the king of Syria knew, when he required his servant Naaman, to enter the house of Rimmon, as his bodyguard, Naaman was not going to bow to Rimmon, but unto God.

Maybe, if the king of Syria continued to require Naaman to escort him into the house of Rimmon, maybe Naaman, while bowed with his natural king, may be doing as we are taught in **1Ti 2:2; 1 ¶ "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."** If Naaman escorts his king in the house of Rimmon and bows with him, we would expect that he will be praying, hopefully aloud, to God for his king, and thereby be used as an instrument to bring his king to turn to God.

When I went to work for county government, my boss, the county manager, and I had a long conversation along these lines, my being aware of the way of politics. I told him that I would not be a part of anything that was ungodly, and that I would not lie for him or anyone else. There was a time when he wanted me to tell a man, who was asking the county to do something they did not want to do, he asked me to tell a lie to the man. I told him I could not do that. He then told me that I could tell the man, the message was from the county manager and not from me, which I did in such a way that the man understood that I was not telling him a lie, that I was not the source of the message, but only the messenger, conveying the message that was given to me. He thanked me for my honesty and went his way.

We are not to be of this world, but we must live in this world. However, we must live in this world without denying, that we are servants of the most high God, nor yielding to principles of ungodliness. When we are caught in situations that would be compromising to our faith, we are to clearly declare that we will not do anything to compromise our belief in Jesus Christ, nor that which would be slanderous to the name of the LORD.

Alternatively, Naaman could step down from his office, so that he is not put in a compromising position of escorting the king into the house of Rimmon. But to what effect? He is still going to be living in an idolatrous nation, surrounded by idolatrous people. Some will say, well he could move to Israel. Again, I ask: to what effect? Israel, at this time, is almost completely living in idolatry. Not only Israel but most of Judah. There are only the few of the priesthood, who are living at Jerusalem, which are following the law commandments and worshipping God. The only place he could have safely gone to was to be with Elisha, or the priests at Jerusalem, where he could not be accepted because he was a stranger.

Many people in our own nation, the United States of American, and all other nations of the world, are in similar situations. They may be reborn children of God, but there is no place of true worship which they can attend, and they just have to get by the best they can. We are told in **1Co 10:13; 13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."** The definition for flee is **to run away or to shun**. This is where I see Naaman in his life situation. He does not really have a place to run away from idolatry, but God is able to give him the strength to **shun** idolatry. We see that Elisha understood Naaman's life position, for he told him to **"go in peace."** Elisha is simply telling him, be faithful to God and God will providentially provide a way for you.

Consider one other thing. Jesus himself went into the synagogues of his day, to teach the truth, which had become houses of idolatry, for the priesthood had so misinterpreted the intent of the law commandments, that they were not worshipping God, but rather appeasing their own self-righteousness, believing they were making themselves to be right with God. Actually, they were only going through a ritual without meaning to them, which made their worship idolatrous.

Consider, when Jesus came to this earth in a prepared body of flesh, what kind of world did Jesus come into? A world of idolatry, not only the idolatry of the Gentiles, but also into the idolatry of the Israelites. Is Naaman's situation any different than that of Jesus? I don't see any difference, just as it is with every child of God. We are all born into a world of idolatry. Just as Elisha demonstrated that there was a prophet of God in Israel, Jesus demonstrated that there was a prophet of God in Israel. Just as Elisha ministered to the Gentile

Naaman, So Jesus ministers to the Gentile people. Remember the Samaritan woman at the well. God ministers to the Gentiles even today.

Israel, which represents the nation of people who are to be known as God's people, had mostly turned from worshipping God to idolatry. The New Testament Church, in the world today seen by the world as the religion of those who profess to be Christians, has also been infiltrated by the idolatry of the world, and is setting no better example of a people bearing the name of God, than Israel was at this time. Oh God! Please help us to be faithful and true servants unto you as Elisha and as Jesus was faithful to you. We ask in the name of Jesus, Amen!

**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 he let the men go, and they departed."**

Now, in Israel, it was the custom that any who sought council of the prophet of God, was to bring to the prophet of God a gift. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, knew of this custom. Gehazi thought it was not right for Elisha to not take the gift from Naaman. However, Gehazi forgets that those who gave gifts to the prophets of God were Israelites, not Syrians or people of other nations. Gehazi also forgets that this whole healing of leprosy is to bring glory to the name of God, and to God himself.

Gehazi's inherited covetous nature gets the best of him and Gehazi runs after Naaman, and when he catches up with him, he tells Naaman a lie to procure some of the treasure for himself. Naaman readily gives more than was requested by Gehazi and sends two of his servants to bear the gift for Gehazi. Gehazi hides the gift in the house and sends the men away. The bible speaks, of Gehazi's actions, to us in volumes when we are told **1Ti 6:10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."** Surely, we see the covetousness of Gehazi at work, and just like the devil, Gehazi does his dirty work in secret, he thinks. Gehazi has forgotten that God knows all things, even the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Gehazi, in his covetousness, dishonors Elisha's name by his covetousness, deception, and pride of life, thinking what he can do with these monetary gains. He is stealing in the name of Elisha for his own gain. Thus, he not only degraded the name of Elisha but also dishonored the name of God.

Adam Clarke's commentary gives us this information: "*The Chaldee, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic understand the word Ipe ophel, which we translate tower, as signifying a secret, dark, or hiding place. He was doing a deed of darkness, and he sought darkness to conceal it.*" We shall see proof of this in these next verses when the Holy Spirit reveals to Elisha what Gehazi has done.

**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 forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."**

Gehazi goes in to stand before Elisha. Elisha asks Gehazi where he has been. Gehazi tells another lie, which does not deceive Elisha, the prophet of God. Elisha tells Gehazi: My heart went with you, and I know that you received a gift from Naaman. Elisha asks Gehazi: is it a time to receive money, and a list of other things, which were what Gehazi determined to do with the gifts he received, for something that we did not do? Elisha tells Gehazi: because you have done this covetous evil, under the cover of a lying spirit, the leprosy that was upon Naaman will be upon you and your seed forever. Gehazi departed from Elisha's presence a leper as white as

snow. Notice that Gehazi's sin did not only affect him; but it was also laid upon his family forever. Does this mean that there are still descendants of Gehazi who are lepers today? No, It means that leprosy was upon all his descendants until his line was extinguished. This is a great warning to us today: when we sin, it affects many more than just our own self and may be the death of our own family lineage.

One lesson here is: we should not let the love of money cause us to be misguided in our actions. Just as we do not take credit for the eternal salvation of a soul, so we do not do things under the cover of a lie to get gain, or some claim to fame for ourselves. Gehazi's actions equate to those who claim to have eternally saved a person, (which we hear often toady in the realm of religion) when the truth is that only God can save a person eternally. By making such claims, we are defaming the name of God and Christ, just as Gehazi defamed the name of Elisha and God. Nor should we lie about our misconduct when we are called out for our inappropriate actions. We must always remember, in every decision we make for whatever actions we take, nothing is hidden from God.

There is also a picture of the New Testament church in this scene. We see a Gentile, coming to the man of God, a prophet, for healing. Thus, we see when the Jews rejected Christ, and later rejected his apostles, the apostles were sent forth to the Gentile nations of the world. Just as Naaman was healed of his leprosy, every born-again child of God is healed of his sin sickness, eternally, through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

We also see a picture of the Age of Salvation by the Grace of God, in that, eternal salvation cannot be bought, because it is the gift of God, to as many as God the Father gave to God the Son to save. We also see that no person can give eternal salvation to another person, because it is the gift of God to his own chosen people.

Just as Gehazi, under the pretense of a lie, exercised to take a gift that was not his, and paid the price for his sin, we remember in the New Testament, two scriptures that demonstrate this, seen in **Ac 8:18-23; 18 "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 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. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."**

And in **Ac 19:13-17; 13 ¶ "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."** Both texts teach us that we are not to exercise in gifts not given to us by God.

We give thanks and praise to our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, for the gift of eternal life, and the great hope of the resurrection of our bodies, to be like his resurrected body in eternity. Thank you, LORD, for the revelations of this chapter to us. May your Holy Spirit take these revelations and make them effectual in the hearts and lives of many, to bring glory and honor to your holy name, Amen!