

Church of God Sunday School

A LITTLE GIRL WHO KNEW ELISHA: NAAMAN OBEYS GOD

2 Kings 5

During the time that Elisha was God's prophet, Syria was the heathen country to the north of Israel. The Syrians often made raids on the Israelites' property, and some of the Israelites' children were taken to be slaves. On one of these raids the Syrians captured a little maid (we are not told her name). She was sold to Naaman, the captain of the host of the King of Syria. Naaman bought the little girl to be a servant to his wife.

The little maid missed her home and family greatly, but in time, as Naaman's wife was kind to her, the little maid came to love her mistress. The little maid was humble and obedient to her mistress, but the young girl did not forget the spiritual training she had received from her parents. She did not forget about God's man, the Prophet Elisha.

Now Naaman, her master, was a mighty man with much influence, and he was brave—but he had the terrible skin disease called leprosy!

Leprosy starts in the blood stream. The skin turns white, then it begins to decay, causing pain. This disease can become extremely painful, because in the worst type of leprosy, the body parts decay internally and externally. Parts of the body, such as the fingers and the toes, lose feeling and eventually decay so much that they fall off.

Basically, there are two types of leprosy. One is less severe, not lasting as long as the other, but both types are terrible to live with. In Bible days sometimes lepers were separated from their families to make sure the type of disease they had was not contagious (see Leviticus 13-14). Today people with leprosy are usually not separated from their families, because they can be treated with medicine.

When the little maid knew that her master had leprosy, she went to her mistress, telling her that the prophet in Samaria "would recover him of his leprosy." The little maid had heard of the miracles Elisha had done or she could not have given her mistress such a good report.

The little maid's mistress listened to her, because her life proved her belief in the true God. Naaman took heed to her words too, even though she was only a young girl.

When the King of Syria heard what the little girl had said about Naaman, he wrote a letter to the King of Israel. In the letter, he told the King of Israel that he was sending Naaman to him so that he could cure him. He thought, no doubt, that the king knew such an important man as Elisha.

So Naaman went to the King of Israel, taking the letter. 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 reward for his healing. When Naaman

gave the letter to the King of Israel, the king read the letter and 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? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." He thought the King of Syria was trying to start a fight with him and his country! The King of Israel should have thought of Elisha, God's man, at once, but he did not because he was a wicked king.

But 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 sent Naaman to Elisha's house, and when Naaman arrived, he stood outside Elisha's house, waiting.

Now, Naaman was a self-important man. He was a very proud man. He thought, Surely, Elisha will come right out in answer to my summons and pray to the Lord and pass his hand over the diseased place on my skin and I will be healed. But he got a surprise! Only Elisha's servant came to the door. He just said, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Elisha never even bothered to go meet Naaman!

Naaman should have been glad to obey those simple instructions, don't you think? Instead, he got angry! He turned to leave, saying, he thought Elisha himself should have come out to him and recovered him of the leprosy, and he asked, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?" Then Naaman left in a rage.

Naaman's servants stopped him before he got very far. 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, "How much rather than [or 'Why not'] . . . Wash, and be clean?" In other words: "Why not do this simple, easy thing: just obey what you are told?" Why not, because it injured Naaman's pride.

But when Naaman reasoned out what they had said, he knew they were right. So he went to the dirty, muddy Jordan River. He walked out into the muddy water and dipped himself 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 was so happy! He knew then that God was the true God. He determined not to worship false gods anymore. (In Syria the people worshiped the idol called Rimmon.)

Naaman went back to Elisha. He told him he knew the true God was in Israel. Naaman wanted to give Elisha the gifts he had brought, but Elisha refused to accept them. Elisha knew God had done the healing.

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.

Then Naaman left, but he was followed! Gehazi felt that he should have some of Naaman's gifts. Did he deserve anything? No, but his sinful heart was greedy and covetous, so he ran to catch Naaman.

Naaman saw Gehazi coming and asked if everything was all right. Boldly, Gehazi lied to him! He said

everything was well; 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 did not notice anything amiss; he was so thankful for his healing. He urged Gehazi to take two bags of silver instead of one. Gehazi acted humble: he acted as if he did not want to take more. But in the end, he accepted everything Naaman offered him. Naaman told two of his men to carry the silver and the clothing for Gehazi. Upon Gehazi's return to the house, he took all the things inside, and the men left.

Gehazi went to see Elisha, acting as if nothing unusual had happened. He thought 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 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 in gain from this world or to do the work of God?"

Elisha told Gehazi that, for his sinful, greedy ways, the leprosy of Naaman would be upon him and his family, not for awhile, but forever. Gehazi reaped the consequences for his sin right then: he went out from Elisha "a leper as white as snow."

But Naaman went back to his home, healed and happy. He told his wife all that happened. He thanked the little servant girl, who had told him about Elisha. I am sure that she was glad and happy too.

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 thing is, we need to be humble. Pride can get us all into trouble. If Naaman had listened to his pride instead of to his servants, would he have received his healing?

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 type for sin?

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**MEMORY VERSE :**

*"The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin."*  
 —1 John 1:7

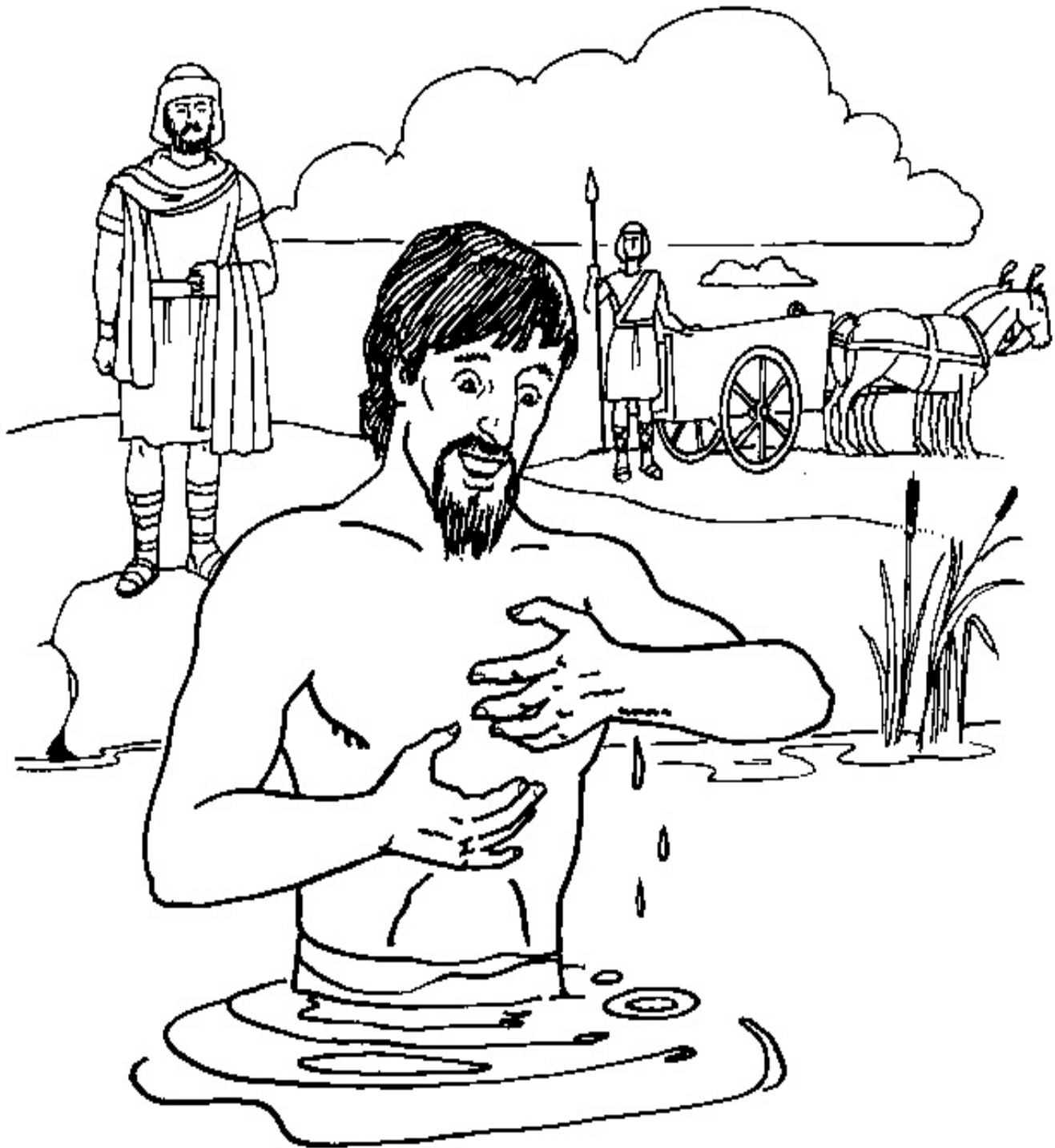
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Guide Naaman to the Jordan River

The maze contains the following elements:

- Gehazi**: A man in a long robe holding a staff, located in the top left.
- Captive Maid**: A woman kneeling in prayer, located in the top center.
- Elisha's House**: A simple rectangular building with a door, located in the top right.
- Naaman's Home**: A large, multi-story building with a central archway, located in the middle right.
- Naaman's Wife**: A woman in a long dress, located in the middle left.
- Jordan River**: A landscape with a winding river, located at the bottom.

The maze starts at a 'START' arrow pointing down and ends at an 'END' arrow pointing up.



Namaan Dips Seven Times and Is Healed