

General Church Education



Naaman's Leprosy

2 Kings 5

Lesson 19

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is the Prophet and
Preserver

For ages 11-12 years

Naaman’s Leprosy

2 Kings 5

Teacher Background

Naaman was an army captain and great hero in Syria. When he contracted leprosy a young girl from Israel recommended he go to Elisha to seek a cure. With the king’s approval, he went to the king of Israel. The king did not know Elisha’s whereabouts, but Elisha knew he had arrived and sent for him. Elisha told Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River. Despite being distressed, Naaman did this and his leprosy was healed. He was so grateful that he offered Elisha a gift, which Elisha refused. Naaman then asked for some soil to worship the Lord in Syria. Elisha’s servant Gehazi heard Elisha refuse the enormous gift and greedily ran after Naaman to get it. In return, he became leprosy.

Leprosy, a disfiguring disease, represents falsities. Although Naaman was a powerful commander, he stands for people who falsify a knowledge of truth and good from the Word. He therefore needed to wash in the “Holy Land”—the source of the Lord’s truths and goodness. This washing represented baptism—or initiation into the truths of the Lord’s Word. Afterwards, Naaman declared his belief that the God of Israel was “the only God in all the earth”.

Focus Points

- Naaman, the powerful commander of the Syrian army, went to Samaria to see Elisha.
- Naaman washed in the Jordan River as Elisha commanded and was cured of his leprosy.
- Elisha’s servant Gehazi greedily asked for a reward and was struck with leprosy.

Readings from the Writings

“[Naaman, a leper of Syria], ... represented and signified those who falsify the knowledges of truth and good from the Word, for ‘leprosy’ signifies falsifications, and ‘Syria’ the knowledges of truth and good. ‘The waters of Jordan’ signified the truths that introduce into the church, which are the knowledges of truth and good from the Word, for the river Jordan was the first boundary across which the land of Canaan was entered, and ‘the land of Canaan’ signified the church; this is why ‘the waters of Jordan’ signified introductory truths, which are the first knowledges of truth and good from the Word. Because of this signification of ‘the waters of Jordan,’ Naaman was commanded to wash himself in them seven times, which signified purification from falsified truths; ‘seven times’ signifies fully, and is predicated of things holy, such as truths Divine are. Because ‘seven times’ has this signification, it is said that ‘his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little lad,’ the flesh coming again signifying spiritual life, such as those have who are regenerated through Divine truths.” *Apocalypse Explained* 475.18

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.” (2 Kings 5:10)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

True or False?

Read each statement. Decide whether the statement is true or false and circle T for true or F for false. If you think a statement is false, write the statement to make it true.

Water Quotation Bookmarks

Create seven decorative bookmarks to represent the seven times Naaman washed in the Jordan River. Choose a quotation about water or washing from the list provided to write on each bookmark.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Seeking Rewards

Elisha refused to accept the reward Naaman offered. Today, people sometimes volunteer to do things or are paid for what they do. Students will consider things for which they have been paid, and which they may do without getting a reward. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-seeking-rewards-2-kings-5-heaven-and-hell-152.pdf>

Talents of Silver

The talents of silver Naaman offered to Elisha as a reward were extremely large and valuable. How easy would it have been for Gehazi to carry them and hide them?

Could you have resisted accepting this gift? Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-talents-of-silver-2-kings-5.pdf>

A Chart of the Kings of Israel and Judah

As you learn about the kings of Israel and Judah, complete a chart. As you fill in the spaces, think about whether the king is good or evil. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-chart-of-the-kings-of-israel-and-judah-1-kings-2-kings.pdf>

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Vocabulary

valor—great courage in the face of danger

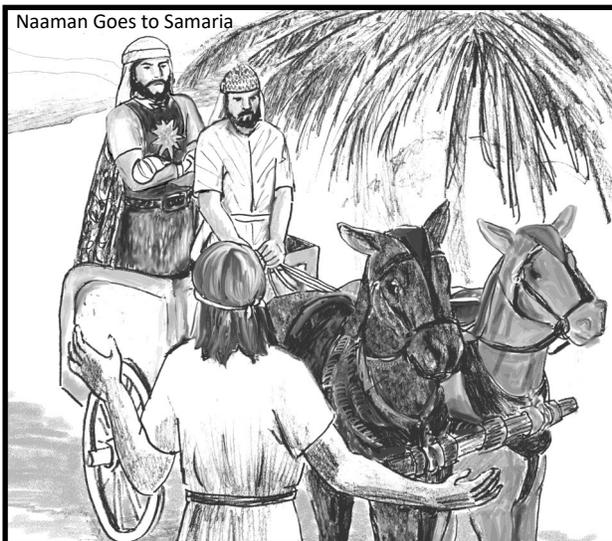
rebuke—express sharp disapproval of someone for what they have done

Naaman, Commander of the Syrian Army

Syria was a powerful country to the northeast of Israel. Its capital, Damascus, was one of the oldest cities in the world. David conquered Syria, and for more than forty years Judah, Israel and Syria were united in the great kingdom of Israel. Under Solomon's successor, Rehoboam, that large and powerful kingdom was broken up into the three separate kingdoms: Judah, Israel (Samaria), and Syria. Sometimes these kingdoms were enemies; at other times they were allies.

Naaman was a great hero in Syria because he had defeated the Assyrians, but he had leprosy, a contagious and incurable disease. In extreme cases a person would be covered with sores and would lose the sensation of touch. All lepers except those that were rich and powerful were forced to live apart in caves and wastelands. They often lived in groups and took care of each other. Since Naaman commanded the king's army he lived at home with his wife and servants.

When Israel fought Syria, Syria had captured a young girl from Israel. She was a maid to Naaman's wife. The girl told her mistress that the prophet Elisha might be able to cure Naaman's leprosy. Naaman believed this might be possible, even though he probably did not know much about the God of Israel. He went to his king and repeated what the girl had said. The king told him to go and find the prophet.



Naaman Goes to Samaria

The king of Syria wanted his capable army commander to be healed because Syria's military strength depended on Naaman's valor and skill. So he sent Naaman to the king of Israel with a letter. The Syrian king did not know who the prophet was, or where he lived, but he thought the king of Israel would know about so great a prophet. But the king of Israel only appeared to care about himself and his safety. When he received the letter he was afraid and tore his clothes. He thought it was a trick to start a war between Israel and Syria.

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Elisha heard that Naaman's request distressed the king of Israel. So he sent to the king to tell him to send Naaman and he went to Elisha. But when a messenger met him and told him to wash seven times in the river Jordan Naaman was outraged. As commander of a great army, Naaman did not expect this. He believed he could have been cured if he had stayed in Syria and washed in the larger more important rivers there.

Naaman Does as Elisha Commanded

Naaman's servants helped him see that he should have acted differently. They said,

“My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash and be clean'?” (2 Kings 5:13)

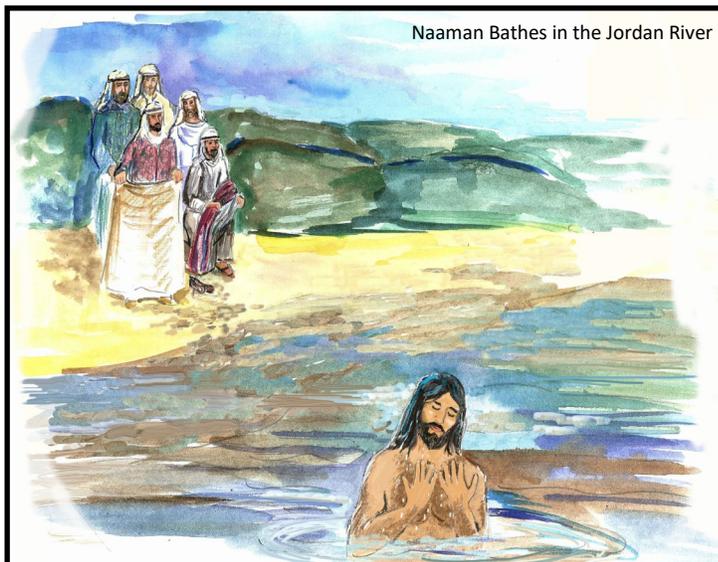
So the Naaman went to the river Jordan, dipped himself seven times, and the leprosy vanished.

Naaman knew little about the Lord, but he must have been ready to follow the Him. He served his king justly with courage and honor. A miracle could not affect people who did not believe in the power of the Lord to help them. Naaman had faith that Elisha served a powerful God.

Naaman Shows His Gratitude

After he was cleansed, Naaman declared that the God of Israel was the only God. He was so grateful that he offered Elisha a gift in thanks. But Elisha would not accept the gift. He had done the Lord's work and did not expect a reward. However, Naaman promised to worship the God of Israel. He asked to take soil back from Israel, perhaps to have a reminder of his pledge, maybe to set up a place where he could secretly worship the Lord in Israel.

Then Naaman asked Elisha to pardon him. He knew that when he returned to Syria he would have to sacrifice in the temple of Rimmon, a false god of Syria. He was aware that this might look like he was not really committed to the Lord. He wanted Elisha to know that he had to be with his king in the temple if he was to serve Syria.



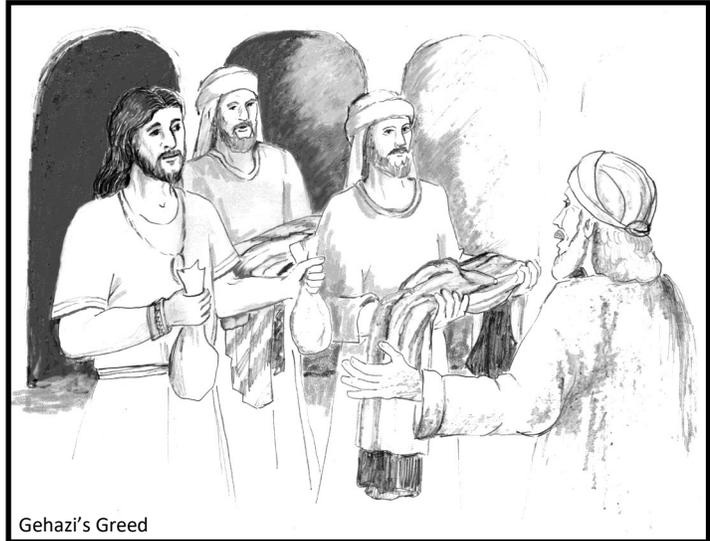
The Lord wants every nation to have good leaders who follow Him and try to live a good life. Perhaps it was better for a nation like Syria to have an honorable leader than for Naaman to remain in Israel. If Naaman could worship the Lord in his heart while he went through the external rites of worship to Rimmon, he could still serve the Lord.

Gehazi's Greed

Gehazi heard Naaman offering his master great wealth. He must have been frustrated, because if Elisha had

accepted it he would have benefited too. Unlike Elisha, Gehazi wanted worldly comforts and decided to get them through deceit.

Gehazi went after Naaman and pretended his master had changed his mind. He claimed that two young prophets needed a talent of silver and clothing. Such a request seemed reasonable, so Naaman granted it, and even included an extra talent of silver. Gehazi put them in his house and went to Elisha.



Gehazi must have forgotten that Elisha knew things before anyone told him. When Elisha saw him, he asked where he had been. When Gehazi tried to deceive him, Elisha replied,

“Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from the chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?” (2 Kings 5:26)

Elisha was telling Gehazi that he cared for him, but that they did not need possessions and that he should not have lied. Then Elisha declared that Gehazi and his descendants would have leprosy forever. Gehazi immediately became leprous. You might think Elisha would not keep Gehazi as his servant. However, later we learn that Gehazi remained his faithful servant.

Washing in the Jordan

Showy acts of commitment to the Lord are not really important. Yet doing what the Lord asks of us, however unimportant it may seem, is very important. Life is largely made up of doing little things again and again without wanting rewards. Naaman quickly learned this, for it was the means of healing him of leprosy.

Truth is necessary for spiritual life just as water is necessary for life on earth. The waters of the Jordan stand for special truths that introduce people to a spiritual life. Naaman knew little, if anything, about worshiping the Lord. Washing in the Jordan introduced him to the religion of Israel. It also pictures introducing a person to worshiping the Lord through the Word.

When you were young you may have been taught truths from the Word simply, so you could understand them. As you learn more, you can understand more complicated ideas. Naaman knew little and so needed simple truths. Washing caused him to change his faith, but he would need to live that faith and learn more about it for it to keep affecting him in meaningful ways. This is true for all of us—we need to read the Word and apply each truth we learn to genuinely worship the Lord in our hearts and minds.

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.” (2 Kings 5:10)

Projects and Activities (answers at back of lesson)

Choose one or two.

True or False?

Read each statement. Decide whether the statement is true or false and circle T for true or F for false. If you think a statement is false, write the statement to make it true.

Water Quotation Bookmarks

Create seven decorative bookmarks to represent the seven times Naaman washed in the Jordan River. Choose a quotation about water or washing from the list provided to write on each bookmark.

True or False?

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Circle the T or the F in front of each statement. If you think a statement is false, change the words to make it true.

1. T or F Naaman was a poor beggar with leprosy.
2. T or F A servant of Naaman's wife knew of a prophet who could help Naaman.
3. T or F The prophet's name was Elijah.
4. T or F The king of Syria was very angry that Naaman wanted to ask for help from a prophet of Jehovah.
5. T or F The prophet sent for Naaman to cure him of his leprosy.
6. T or F The prophet sent a messenger to tell Naaman to wash in the rivers of Damascus seven times.
7. T or F Naaman expected the prophet to wave his hands and heal him.
8. T or F Naaman agreed to wash in the river and was healed.
9. T or F The prophet demanded a reward for healing Naaman.
10. T or F The prophet's servant secretly got the reward intended for Elisha.

Water Quotation Bookmarks

Create seven decorative bookmarks with quotations about water or washing to represent the seven times Naaman washed in the Jordan River. Choose your quotations from the list below or find your own in the Word. You might give these as gifts to friends, parents, grandparents, etc.

Supplies Needed

one piece of heavy paper, approximately 9in x 12in (23cm x 30cm)
watercolor paint
medium to large paintbrush/water
ruler
black or dark marker
scissors



Directions

1. With the ruler, divide the paper into seven equal sections about 1.5in (3.5cm) wide.
2. Paint each section with long strokes of blue and green to look like water.
3. Choose seven different quotations to write in each section. Write them out on scrap pieces of paper to make sure they will fit on the strip.
4. When the painted strips are dry, write the quotation over the paint with a marker.
5. Carefully cut each bookmark out along the lines.

Water Quotations

Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean. (2 Kings 5:10)

He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. (Psalm 23:2-3)

I will wash my hands in innocence; so I will go about Your altar, O Lord. (Psalm 26:6)

There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God. (Psalm 46:4)

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:7)

Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. (Mark 1:9)

The Lamb will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. (Revelation 7:17)

He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal. (Revelation 22:1)

“Water” in the spiritual sense is the truth of faith from the Word. (*The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 204)

Truths purify a person’s soul from uncleanness as waters do his body. (*Coronis* 34)

Answers

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True or False?

1. F, 2. T, 3. F, 4. F, 5. F, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T, 9. F, 10. T.