

## Virtual Vestry - [2 Kings 5](#)

### Elisha heals Naaman

Naaman was a commander in the Syrian army. He was described as a great man and a mighty warrior. Apparently, the Lord had given Syria/Aram victory through Naaman's military efforts and he was much admired by the King of Syria/Aram. In spite of all this, Naaman had leprosy. In biblical times, leprosy was a wide term covering many skin conditions, including eczema psoriasis as well as what we think of as leprosy. In one of his successful campaigns against Israel, Naaman acquires an Israelite girl who becomes a servant to his wife. She is not given a name but she convinces Naaman to seek the prophet in Israel for healing

**Vs 1:** The beginning of the chapter seems to imply that God gave Syria victory over Israel and yet Naaman goes to find healing in Israel.

- Discuss

**Vs 5-8:** The King of Syria (Aram) wants to help Naaman and writes a letter to the King of Israel requesting healing and puts together a gift. The King of Israel freaks out, expecting some kind of trick. Elisha (probably rolls his eyes and) asks 'what's the issue, send him to me.'

- Have you ever had a request that you didn't know what to do with?
- Elisha states that Naaman will learn there is a true prophet here in Israel.  
Discuss.

**Vs 9-13:** Elisha gives Naaman the simple instruction to wash seven times in the Jordan. Naaman was offended that Elisha didn't do what he expected. Naaman wanted some kind of performative validation that he was here to be healed by the prophet. It was not until the servant pointed out to him he would have done anything difficult Elisha said so why not this simple thing? In addition, the Jordan river would have been quite muddy compared to, for example, the mountain springs of Damascus.

- Why do you think Elisha didn't meet Naaman's expectations. In fact, he makes Naaman do all the work by sending him off to wash.
- Is there any significance in the seven times or any other aspect of the healing process.

**Vs 14-16:** Naaman is healed as Elisha said he would be. Naaman wants to repay Elisha but Elisha refuses Naaman's gift so instead Naaman asks to take earth from Israel with him and only ever worship the Lord.

- Why would Elisha refuse Naaman's gift (see vs 26).

**Vs 17:** When Naaman asks for some earth from Israel, he is showing his devotion to the God of Israel by taking the earth with him. In the ancient world, people saw the earth as a location for a turf war between the Gods.

- When Naaman takes the earth with him, what does that say about his spiritual development.
- What did Naaman learn about the God of Israel (see verse 8).

**Vs 18-19:** Naaman asks to be forgiven for helping his master, the king, as he worships in the temple of Baal-Rimon. Elisha simply says “go in peace”.

- Given how seriously God seems to take idolatry, why do you think Elisha gives Naaman a pass on this?

**Vs 20-24:** Elisha’s servant Gehazi chases after Naaman and lies to him to get something from Naaman.

- Compare Gehazi’s subterfuge and Naaman’s generosity.
- Why do you think Gehazi wanted to get something from Naaman.

**Vs 25-27:** Elisha was not impressed with Gehazi’s subterfuge or his lie and curses Gehazi and his descendants to have leprosy.

- Was this a harsh punishment or befitting the crime.
- How is it that Elisha seems to know everything that happens?

**In [Luke 4: 27](#),** Jesus speaks about Naaman, stating there were many lepers in Israel at the time but only Naaman, the Syrian, was healed. Jesus seems to be pointing out the faithfulness of the Gentiles compared to the Israelites.

- Discuss

If you have any other comments or there was something we missed please discuss.