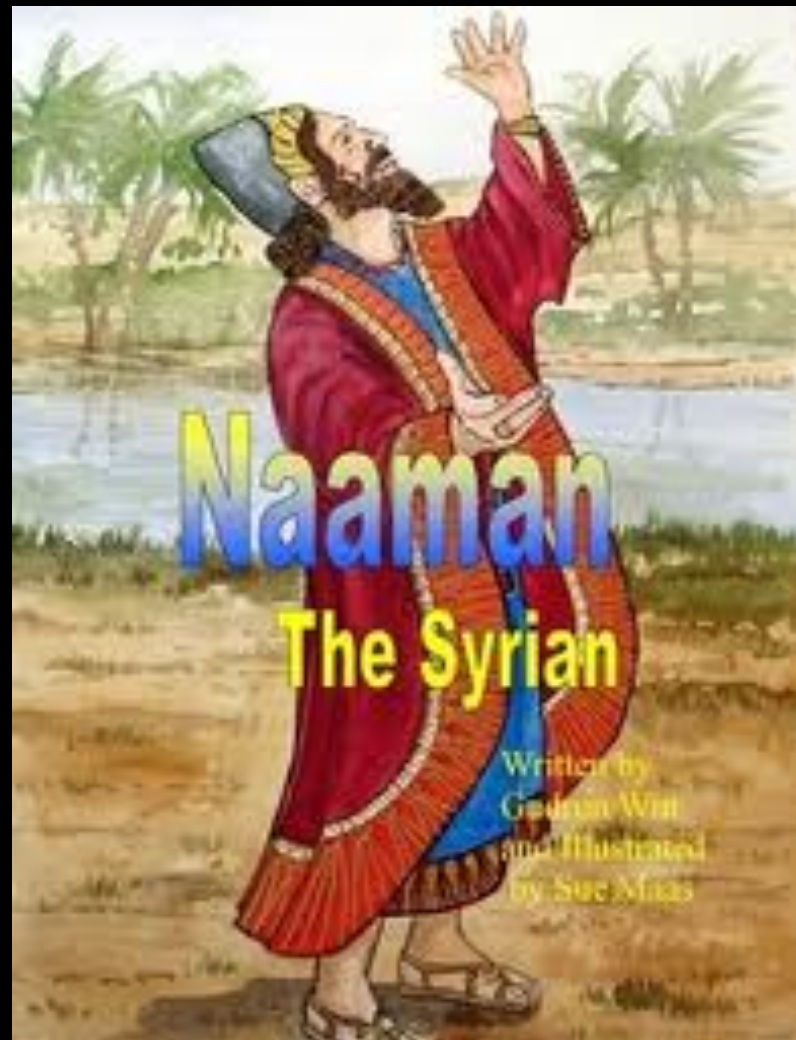


# NAMAAN: THE SYRIAN CAPTAIN

## 2 Kings 5; Luke 4:27



- One of the most fascinating events in the Old Testament is found in 2 Kings 5, and it involves a Syrian named Naaman. Naaman was a captain of the host of the King of Syria, who at that time was probably Ben-Hadad III.
- And Naaman, it would seem, had everything going his way. He was great man in the eyes of the King, he was honorable, he had been given military victory by God, and he was a mighty man of valor.  
The scripture says, “BUT HE WAS A LEPER!”

- word in Hebrew, but what a word it was – LEPROSY. It changed everything about Naaman. We know how lepers were treated and ostracized by the Jews, and the Syrians' treatment of Naaman would no doubt have been no better and probably much worse.
- Despite all his honors and successes, Naaman was unclean and diseased and soon to be outcast and forgotten. What could he do? For Naaman, the journey to salvation was through an unlikely source - a servant girl.



- This young servant girl out of the land of Israel who waited on Naaman's wife had been captured from Israel during a Syrian raid. Although at the time of these events, Israel and Syria seem to have been enjoying an uneasy truce, they had often been at war with each other. And as a result, this young girl was now serving Naaman's family as a captive.

- This story is filled with powerful and influential people, but the key to the entire saga of Naamaan and his healing is a lowly servant girl with one important thing....FAITH!
- What faith she had! She saw Naaman's problem and knew that God could cure him through the prophet Elisha. Can you imagine the courage it took for her to speak up and make such a promise?

- With great faith the servant girl speaks her heart to the master. Elijah the prophet of the one true God can heal. Captain Namaan should seek out the power of God through His man of God.  
Namaan asks permission from the King of Syria to go and find the prophet and seek his cure.
- Think about the life this servant must have led before her masters to warrant that kind of respect. They trusted her word and acted on it.

- Many Old Testament events include a touch of humor for the careful reader, and this event is no exception. Somewhere between the servant girl, Naaman's wife, Naaman, and Ben-Hadad, the message from the servant girl has been changed. Instead of asking Elisha to cure Naaman, the Syrian king's letter now asks the King of Israel to cure Naaman! And the king of Israel is in a panic!



- King Jehoram is in a great panic. He tears his clothes and cries out in fear, believing that the Syrian king is setting him up for a fight. It tells us much about Jehoram that – unlike the servant girl – he does not think to call Elisha. And although Jehoram mentions God during his rant, he does not turn to God for a solution to his problem.
- Enter Elijah. He hears about the distress of Israel's king and sends word to the ruler that he should send Naamaan to him.

- And in verse 9, Naaman and his entourage finally arrive at the door of the house of Elisha. The great and mighty Naaman has arrived. And what is Elisha's reaction? He stays inside and sends a servant out to tell Naaman what he must do.



- Let's pause again for a moment to consider how Naaman must have viewed that response. Even in a normal situation, it would have been viewed as a great insult for the master of the house not to personally greet such an honored traveler, but this was not a normal situation.
- Naaman had leprosy. He was very used to people not wanting to be near him. Naaman, no doubt, thought Elisha just didn't want to be in the presence of a leper, and that almost certainly had much to do with his angry reaction.

- The servant tells Naaman to go and wash in the Jordan river seven times, and then his flesh will be clean.
- And Naaman's reaction? He is filled with rage and fury, and he turns and goes away. This was not at all what he expected, he tells us. He wanted fireworks! He wanted a great show by the mighty prophet, and now he finds out he won't even get to meet the mighty prophet! And washing? He could have done that from home. In fact, the water is much cleaner back home. And so proud Naaman prepares to take his leave.

- And yet once again an unnamed servant plays a key role in his life. He suggests that Naaman would have gladly done some great thing had the prophet asked him, so why not do this small thing? Why not wash and be clean?
- So Naaman obeys the prophet – whom he had not yet even met – and is cleansed of his leprosy. Verse 14 tells us “his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.”

- And to go along with this dramatic change on Naaman's outside, we see a dramatic change on Naaman's inside.
- I have always wondered about Naaman's homecoming back in Syria, and thought of that young servant girl as she waited at the door watching with her eyes of faith for her master Naamaan to return clean and whole.

- I have always wondered about Naaman's homecoming back in Syria, and thought of that young servant girl as she waited at the door watching with her eyes of faith for her master Naaman to return clean and whole.
- What a time of praise and worship to God that must have been as the great captain of Syria returned home cleaned inside and outside.

- Naaman's cleansing came at a definite point in time. It happened at the moment he obeyed the command to wash and be clean. In like manner, our cleansing happens at a definite point in time – when we too obey the command to wash and be clean.

