

Naaman the Leper



1 In the days of the prophet Elisha, the commander of the army of Syria—one of the countries next to Israel—was a man whose name was Naaman.



2 Naaman was very famous in Syria. He was a great soldier; he and his army had won many victories. But there was something wrong with Naaman. He had a terrible skin disease called leprosy.



3 Now, a little Israelite girl who had been captured by the Syrians lived in Naaman's house. She said to Naaman's wife, "I wish my master could go to Israel. There's a prophet there who could cure him."



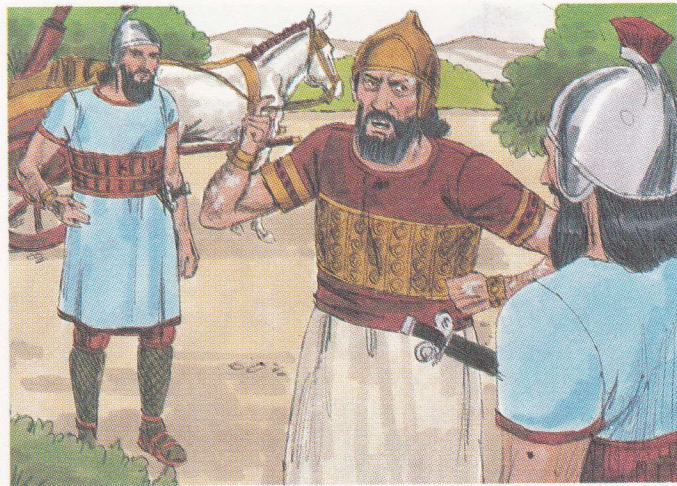
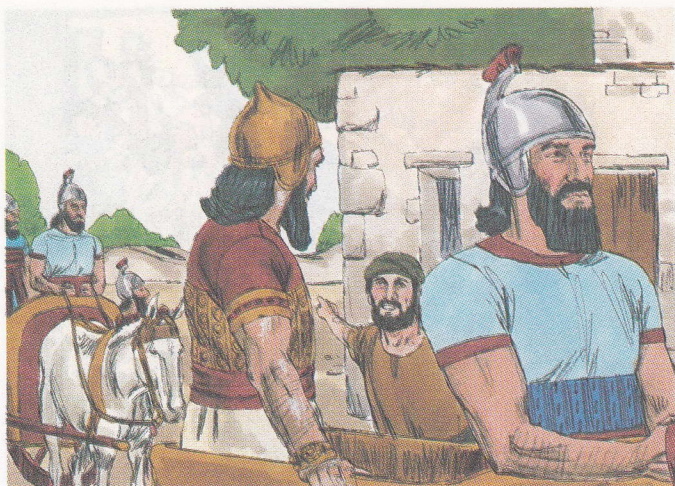
4 So Naaman got permission from the king of Syria to go to Israel. He took a gift of silver and gold and fine clothing. The king also gave him a letter which ordered the king of Israel to heal Naaman.



5 The king of Israel was very upset when he read this letter. "How can he expect me to cure this man?" he said. "Who does he think I am— God? He must be trying to start a fight."



6 Elisha the prophet found out about Naaman and the letter. He said to the king of Israel: "Send the man to me. I will show him that there is a prophet in Israel."



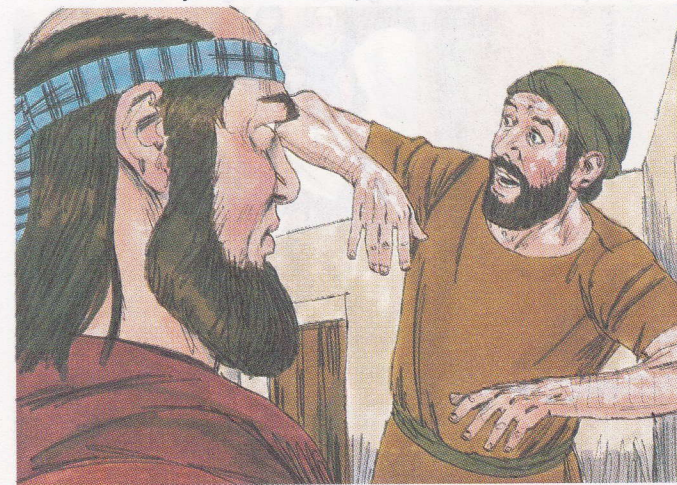
7 So Naaman went to Elisha's house. Elisha's servant came out and said to Naaman, "My master says you are to wash yourself in the Jordan river seven times. Then you will be cured of your disease."

8 When Naaman heard this, he became very angry. "We have better rivers back in Syria! I thought the prophet would do something special, like praying for me or waving his hand over my leprosy!"



9 But his servants said to him, "Sir, if this prophet had told you to do something difficult, you would have done it, wouldn't you? So why don't you just wash yourself as he said?"

10 Then Naaman went to the Jordan and dipped himself in it seven times, as Elisha had instructed. When he finished, his disease was healed! His skin was just as healthy as a child's!



11 He went back to Elisha and said, "Now I know that there is no god but the God of Israel." He tried to get Elisha to accept a gift, but no matter how hard he persuaded, Elisha would not take it.

12 After Naaman left, Elisha's servant followed him and asked for a gift. Later Elisha scolded the servant and said, "You will get Naaman's disease." And the servant's skin became white with leprosy.