

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Elisha

No 9

In Need of God's Mercies - Part 1 Naama'n Crisis

The LORD is good to all: and his mercies are over all his works. Psalm 145:9

Reading: Second Kings 5:1-15

The chapter records two more of Elisha's miracles, the healing of Naaman and the infliction of Gehazi with the complaint. Of necessity they are interrelated, but each has distinct things to teach us about the nature of God, and our daily walk in His way. We take then in this study, the Healing of Naaman. It serves to teach us that God's heart is for the world, all of mankind. He is good to all and His mercy is over all of His creation.

First, It serves to teach us that **God's heart is for the world**, His provision is for all of mankind. He is good to all and His mercy is over all His works. All may come to Him, but not all will come. Even in His own day, not all in Israel were healed, and a few were saved. It is so in every country and in every age. When Jesus was reproving the hardness of his own townfolk, He reminded them:

"And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian" Luke 4:27.

Naaman was highly respected for his competence as a soldier statesman in Syria on whom the king depended. Of him Josephus wrote, "And when they sought to kill Ahab alone, but could not find him, there was a young nobleman belonging to king Benhadad, whose name was Naaman; he drew his bow against the enemy, and wounded the king through his breastplate, in his lungs. Josephus" - Antiquities 8.15.5. Naaman's name means 'pleasantness' was a man who was spiritually attuned and open to reason. He compares in contrast to his lord, Benhadad, whose name is instructive 'ben'=son of, and 'hadad' the name of a god. It was then the habit of kings to consider themselves the offspring of their gods. Naaman understood that this in Benhadad was intransigent.

Benhadad thus dismissed the advice of appeal to Elisha and sent Naaman instead to Israel's king of.

Second, it teaches us that **all things work together for Good** to those who are called according to His purpose, even the evil things, the small things that happen. Consider the little Hebrew girl who was captured when one of Naaman's bands raided a village in Israel. Consider how she felt; but God had a purpose when Naaman made her a maid, as a slave, to his wife :2&3. See how Psalm 8:2 is wedged between vs1&3, and how mighty things often turn upon small things. All she did was to speak a word honouring a man of God, but on it hung a matter of great moment. Consider the depth of her insight. Elisha had not healed a leper in Israel (Luke 4:27) but from what she had seen and heard of Elisha she had no doubt that he was able.

Third, remember that, **nothing is impossible with God**.

We assume that 'the king of Israel' vv5-7 was Joram the younger son of Ahab, whom Naaman slew. He was coregent with his brother Ahazah who died in a fall 852BC, after which Joram became sole ruler in Israel. Probably this was

the reason for so lavish a gift: 10 Talents =300kg of silver, and 6000 Mina is 16.666kg of gold. But then it was an impossible demand. Joram's response was frustrating rage. "He's trying to trap me." The Hebrew word is interesting, "He is circling to crush me."

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?
Got specialises in things thought impossible:
He can do that which none other can do.

Elisha's response was typical. "Send him to me. He shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. It was a rebuke to Joram as well as a witness to Naaman.

Our Elisha is Jesus

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things and by whom He made the universe. Hebrews 1:1&2NIV

What the prophet was to Israel, Jesus is to us. 'With God, nothing is impossible.'

To 'know' v8; the word essentially means to know by reflective thinking based on experiencing the evidence as in Genesis 8:1, just as we know our God by the difference He makes in our lives.

Fourth, notice that **Elisha served this great man through his servant**.

There was nothing much to commend Gehazi. Nevertheless, although he was the messenger of Elisha Naaman felt snubbed and angry.

Today, prophet Jesus sends his servants to bring the good news of spiritual, psychological and physical healing through washing in His blood. They come in His authority and power. Jesus told His disciples:

All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ... Matthew 28:18-20

As His messengers we speak by His authority. People who dismiss the message because of the failings of the messenger make a grave mistake. However because of the severity of the message they bear, God's messengers need to take extra care that their presentation befits the dignity of their office, and life above reproach, for their hears sake, if nothing else.

More than that, washing in the Jordan, a second class river, was demeaning. The Abana, meaning stony, flows from the Anti-Lebanon mountains to end in a salty march, but the Barada was known by the Greeks as the golden river because it created an oasis garden of Damascus. God's terms of pardon likewise call men to abandon their own resources and wash themselves clean in the blood of His Son. Healing is abundant and free, but compliance to God's terms is necessary. There is no other way. Had Naaman not obeyed this instruction, he would have remained a leper. So with us.

To be Concluded in Study 11

Bible quotations in this study are from the NASB, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Welcome Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

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