

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Third Quarter 2015: *Missionaries*

### Lesson 3 “The Unlikely Missionary”

#### Read for this week’s study

2 Kings 5; Mark 1:40–45; 2 Kings 2:1–15; John 15:5; Romans 6:4–11; Romans 6:1.

#### Memory Text

“And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:27, NIV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. He Had It All . . . But
- III. An Unlikely Witness
- IV. Elisha, the Prophet
- V. The Healing of Naaman
- VI. A New Believer
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Moderator: Jon Paulien

1. Read 2 Kings 5:1-19. The story finds Naaman the Syrian in a foreign land and among strange people. What is it about travel that opens the mind and heart to new ideas and new spiritual experiences? What other stories in the Bible concern people encountering God a long way from home? What can we learn from the Naaman story about cross-cultural witnessing in the context of international tension and rivalry? (Introduction to whole Quarter)
2. At the end of this story did Naaman become a monotheist (believer in only one God)? What does the Naaman story tell us about God? Why do so many people in today’s world believe that monotheism is the cause of much of the world’s problems? What does that imply for our picture of God? (Introduction to whole Quarter)
3. Read 2 Kings, chapters 2 through 9 and also 13 to get the larger picture of the Elisha story. What parallels can you see between the life of Elisha and the earthly ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of John? (Sabbath Afternoon’s lesson)
4. Read 2 Kings 5:1. What impact would Naaman’s social situation have on his openness to new ideas about God? What are the implications of this story for reaching the wealthy, the famous and the powerful/influential? What is the role of

suffering and illness in spiritual growth? How do we see suffering acting in the following stories about Jesus? Mark 1:40-45; Luke 8:41-56; Mark 2:1-12. (Sunday's lesson)

5. Read 2 Kings 5:1-7. Why would the Syrians even have listened to what a captive slave girl had to say? What does the role of this slave girl tell us about how our lives and actions can impact how others view God and the truths that God has entrusted to us? What other things did God do in the Elisha story to teach the Syrians what God is like? (Monday's lesson)
6. Read 2 Kings 5:1-15. What does this passage tell us about the calling and ministry of Elisha? Why didn't Elisha come out to greet Naaman? (Tuesday's lesson)
7. Read 2 Kings 5:11-14. What does this account teach us about Naaman and some of the lessons he had to learn? How does this story reveal God exposing Naaman's pride in multiple ways? How does pride sabotage the friendship God longs to have with each of us? (Wednesday's lesson)
8. Read 2 Kings 5:15. How did the actions of a slave girl, Elisha and Naaman's servants all work together to change his picture of God? How remarkable was his new picture of God at that point in human history? How does the Naaman story illustrate the interaction between God's grace and human obedience? (Thursday's lesson)
9. Read Luke 4:22-27 and the statement in Friday's lesson from *Prophets and Kings*, pages 252-253 (see below). There is the implication in that statement that Naaman was somehow more worthy than many of the lepers in Jesus' day. If that is true, can we still say that Naaman's healing was an act of God's grace? (Friday's lesson)
10. Read 2 Kings 5:17-19. What are the implications of Elisha's reply to Naaman? To what degree is the Holy Spirit already at work in non-Christian religions? What impact does awareness of that have on the way we relate to adherents of non-Christian faiths?

### Passages Related to Question 9

#### Luke 4:23-27, ESV

And he said to them,

“Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb,

‘Physician, heal yourself.’

What we have heard you did at Capernaum,

do here in your hometown as well.”

<sup>24</sup> And he said,

“Truly, I say to you,

no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

<sup>25</sup> But in truth, I tell you,

there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah,

when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land,  
<sup>26</sup> and Elijah was sent to none of them  
but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon,  
to a woman who was a widow.  
<sup>27</sup> And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha,  
and none of them was cleansed,  
but only Naaman the Syrian.”

**Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 252-253**

“Centuries after Naaman returned to his Syrian home, healed in body and converted in spirit, his wonderful faith was referred to and commended by the Saviour as an object lesson for all who claim to serve God. “Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet,” the Saviour declared; “and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” Luke 4:27. God passed over the many lepers in Israel because their unbelief closed the door of good to them. A heathen nobleman who had been true to his convictions of right, and who felt his need of help, was in the sight of God more worthy of His blessing than were the afflicted in Israel, who had slighted and despised their God-given privileges. God works for those who appreciate His favors and respond to the light given them from heaven.”

**Thoughts from Graham Maxwell**

Now some don't like that, they want to go in and just be forgiven. God says, “Forgiveness won't heal the damage done. If you want to be well you'll have to change your lifestyle.” You say, “I don't want to do that! I want to be healed by faith. I want to be like Naaman, strike your hand on the place.” And God says, “No, give that man something to do.” That was only a symbol there. God says, “If you want to be saved, are you willing to cooperate? Are you willing to accept painful surgery if necessary?” If we trust Him we'll accept that.

“Are you willing to change your whole life?”

“Yes, I'm willing because I trust you.”

So the person, the patient being saved by faith may be very busy following all the prescriptions of the divine physician. And that's not legalism. Legalism is doing it to please your doctor. That's what legalism is all about. The essence of legalism is preoccupation with your legal standing, whether you offer God the blood of bulls and goats, or the blood of His Son. If you're preoccupied with your legal standing you're a legalist. If you're preoccupied with the truth about God that is the basis for trust and a willingness to listen, your life may be full of acts of cooperation and obedience and trying to follow the doctor's prescriptions in every detail. That

doesn't make you a legalist. You'd be a fool if you didn't do those things. It makes sense to do those things. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Healing, Salvation, and Trust #2, recorded January, 1988, Foothills Camp, Alberta, Canada} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMHSALVTRUST>*

But neither claims nor superior show of power can establish integrity or trustworthiness. Jesus warned against believing mere claims, even when apparently supported by supernatural signs. He spoke of religious leaders that would arise, making all kinds of false claims—even claiming to be Christ! And they would perform great miracles and wonders to prove the truthfulness of their claims. “But don't believe them,” Jesus said (see Matthew 24:11, 23–26).

“Watch out,” he warned, “and do not let anyone fool you. Many men, claiming to speak for me, will come and say, ‘I am the Messiah!’ and they will fool many people” (Matthew 24:5, GNT).

“My dear friends,” John later advised, “do not believe all who claim to have the Spirit, but test them to find out if the spirit they have comes from God. For many false prophets have gone out everywhere” (1 John 4:1, GNT).

In his description of Satan's effort to sweep the whole world into his camp just before Christ's return, John speaks of the use of authority and force accompanied by the performance of great miracles, even making “fire come down out of heaven to earth in the sight of everyone.” As a result, “all the people living on earth” are deceived “by means of the miracles”—except God's true people (see Revelation 13:8, 12–14, GNT).

Long ago Moses had warned the children of Israel not to be misled by the working of miracles. “A prophet or an interpreter of dreams may promise a miracle or a wonder, in order to lead you to worship and serve gods that you have not worshiped before. Even if what he promises comes true, do not pay any attention to him” (Deuteronomy 13:1–3, GNT).

The great controversy is not over who can perform the greatest miracles but over who is telling the truth. As the former Lucifer, Satan has seen the awesome power and majesty of God. And whenever he thinks of the One who hung the whole vast universe in space, he trembles with fear (James 2:19) and “knows that his time is short” (Revelation 12:12).

God has not been charged with lack of power but with its abuse. The controversy is over the character of God. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 38-39. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-05>

Lou: ... Tied in a bit with that, this question has come up regarding Deuteronomy 13 on the Bible Reference Sheet. It warns against signs and wonders. And yet when we look in the gospels and the story of Jesus, aren't these miracles that He performed; aren't they a basis for belief?

Graham: At Cana it says “these beginning of signs that He did.” And they did say something, to be sure. His mother already trusted Him. She said, “Do whatever He says.” I think the miracles do get people started sometimes. But it’s not the best evidence; miracles can be counterfeited. Look at the first three plagues in Egypt. A miracle is the poorest type of evidence. But if we’re susceptible to it, our God will run the risk, sometimes, of using them. Like Gideon’s wet fleece, and then the dry one—that doesn’t speak well of Gideon. It speaks very well of God, who generously gave him those signs. God would rather that we would weigh the evidence. So I wouldn’t want to say that He didn’t use miracles at all, but they are an elementary first step in developing faith, and a hazardous one.

Lou: And the Deuteronomy 13 passage is pointing out the hazard there.

Graham: Yes. Because at the same time they are performing miracles, they are not telling the truth. I’m afraid that when I’m watching some programs on the air—where there is so much miracle-and-faith-healing—I then listen to hear what they are saying about God. And if they are not telling the truth about God, then never mind those miracles. But I notice that the audience is being so swayed by the miracles, and so excited, they are not prepared to open their Bibles and do some hard study of the truth. That’s the danger of miracle; it is so dramatic. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4 with Lou Venden, “God’s Way Of Restoring Trust” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

Take some of the other things such as the feeding of the five thousand or the feeding of the four thousand a little bit later. And that’s recorded in all the Gospels, I believe. Certainly it made an impact on the writers of the Gospels and on the people. They were ready, if I remember it correctly—with the feeding of the five thousand—weren’t they ready to crown Him King right at that time?

Graham: That’s right. Now this illustrates the point superbly. Because He realized that huge crowds were following Him for the miracles, and that’s all. And so you remember, He told them something very serious, meaning, “Unless you really accept me and my teachings you will not be saved.” And they all left Him.

Lou: That’s true.

Graham: Yes, all they wanted was free food and free healing. And so then He turned to the twelve and said, (some translations say) “Do you also wish to go?” The Greek is extraordinary. There is a way of asking a question that gives the question yes or no. It would be wonderful to use for exams here in the University; every question has the answer on the front. But the way it’s worded in the Greek, Jesus said, “You don’t want to go too, do you?”

And they said, “No; to whom else should we go? You have the words of eternal life.” They weren’t entirely convinced; there was so much they didn’t understand. But at least they chose to stay. He must have wondered then whether it was worth coming. How much of a following had He won? Only when He performed miracles did He get a crowd, and He did not wish to get a crowd from the performance of miracles. Doesn’t it say something though, that when He won a following by miracle, He turned them away. That is the wrong reason for power.

Lou: The raising of Lazarus. Dead for four days! Isn’t that outstanding evidence of authority? Wouldn’t you believe just on the basis of that performance?

Graham: We call that His crowning miracle, don’t we? And yet it’s significant that Elijah had resurrected the dead before. It was not that unusual. Well, it wasn’t unique anyway. I think it’s the total situation within which He did this thing. For example, He had just been crying awhile before. He wept. And they said, “Behold, how He loves him.”

The gentleness of Jesus is what was disappointing so many of His followers. But then He demonstrated that He can resurrect the dead. And the theologians knew what this implied. And that’s why it says “From then on, they plotted to murder Him.” Because they realized that step by step He was demonstrating beyond question that He was the infinitely powerful but equally gracious One who fitted the Old Testament description.

More than that, He had the wisdom to wait until the fourth day and they must have realized it. And the wisdom with which He did things. He didn’t display His erudition to be sure, but He knew that they had questioned His resurrection of Jairus’ daughter before. And so this time He waited until the fourth day, because some of them believed that the spirit hovered nearby for three days in case of resuscitation. So He waited until the fourth day until the most skeptical person in His audience would admit that this time Lazarus was really dead. And then, when He said, “Roll away the stone,” He wanted to hear them say, “Don’t roll it away,” an important key text, “he stinks.” Because they would all admit that he really was dead. “Now,” He said, “come forth.”

They had no answer for that. And when you’ve run out of evidence, then you turn to violence. And they tried to kill Him.

Lou: So that did not serve to convince them.

Graham: No, it actually turned them against Him all the more.

Lou: It sealed His death, His doom. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7 with Lou Venden, “The Question Of Authority” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>*

## Further Study with Ellen White

Christ tears away the wall of partition, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle which their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He teaches us to look upon every needy soul as our brother, and the world as our field. {DA 823.1}

Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the Restorer. {MM 11.2}

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. {TMK 38.4}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God. {DA 173.1}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}