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Frequently Asked Questions

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>	IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)</i>
AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>	Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow)
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)	JBK: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Koren</i> (2000)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
Ara: Aramaic	KJV: King James Version
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)	Lattimore: <i>The New Testament</i> by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	LES: <i>Lexham English Septuagint</i> (2019)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.	LS: <i>An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell-Scott)
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	LSJM: <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.	LXX: Septuagint
CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)	m. Mishnah
CGL: <i>Cambridge Greek Lexicon</i> (2021)	MT: Masoretic Text
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Holladay)	NASB: <i>New American Standard Bible</i> (1977)
CJB: <i>Complete Jewish Bible</i> (1998)	NASU: <i>New American Standard Update</i> (1995)
CJSB: <i>Complete Jewish Study Bible</i> (2016)	NBCR: <i>New Bible Commentary: Revised</i>
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition	NEB: <i>New English Bible</i> (1970)
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls	Nelson: <i>Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words</i>
EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>	NETS: <i>New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> (2007)
EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>	NIB: <i>New Interpreter's Bible</i>
ESV: <i>English Standard Version</i> (2001)	NIDB: <i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>
Ger: German	NIV: <i>New International Version</i> (1984)
GNT: <i>Greek New Testament</i>	NJB: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic</i> (1985)
Grk: Greek	NJPS: <i>Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures</i> (1999)
HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)	NKJV: <i>New King James Version</i> (1982)
HCSB: <i>Holman Christian Standard Bible</i> (2004)	NRSV: <i>New Revised Standard Version</i> (1989)
Heb: Hebrew	NLT: <i>New Living Translation</i> (1996)
HNV: <i>Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible</i>	NT: <i>New Testament</i>
IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>	
IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>	
ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>	

OT: Old Testament
REB: Revised English Bible (1989)
RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition
v(s). verse(s)
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: Latin Vulgate
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)
WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

Naaman the Aramean (2 Kings 5)

When Naaman the Aramean was healed of his leprosy and acknowledged the One God of Israel, there was nothing stated about him having to keep various matters of Torah.

“Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria; he was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. The Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of Eretz-Israel a little girl, and she waited on Naaman’s wife. She said to her mistress, ‘I wish that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would heal him of his leprosy.’ Someone went in and told his lord, saying, ‘The girl who is from Eretz-Israel said this.’ The king of Syria said, ‘Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.’ He departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of clothing. He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, ‘Now when this letter has come to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy.’ When the king of Israel had read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, ‘Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends to me to heal a man of his leprosy? But please consider and see how he seeks a quarrel against me.’ It was so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, ‘Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.’ So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, ‘Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall come again to you, and you shall be clean.’ But Naaman was angry, and went away and said, ‘Behold, I thought, “He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leper.” Aren’t Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be clean?’ So he turned and went away in a rage. His servants came near and spoke to him, and said, ‘My father, if the prophet had asked you do some great thing, wouldn’t you have done it? How much rather then, when he says to you, “Wash, and be clean”?’ Then went he down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. He returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him; and he said, ‘See now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel. Now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.’ But he said, ‘As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will

receive none.' He urged him to take it; but he refused. Naaman said, 'If not, then, please let two mules' load of earth be given to your servant; for your servant will from now on offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. In this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon. When I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant in this thing.' He said to him, 'Go in peace.' So he departed from him a little way. But Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, 'Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him, and take something from him.' So Gehazi followed after Naaman. When Naaman saw one running after him, he came down from the chariot to meet him, and said, 'Is all well?' He said, 'All is well. My master has sent me, saying, "Behold, even now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing."' Naaman said, 'Be pleased to take two talents.' He urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and laid them on two of his servants; and they carried them before him. When he came to the hill, he took them from their hand, and stored them in the house. Then he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, 'Where did you come from, Gehazi?' He said, 'Your servant went nowhere.' He said to him, 'Didn't my heart go with you when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive groves and vineyards, and sheep and cattle, and male servants and female servants? Therefore the leprosy of Naaman will cling to you and to your offspring forever.' He went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow" (2 Kings 5, WMB).

The scene of the healing of Naaman the Aramean (Syrian), has been employed by a number of people, who are negatively disposed to the post-resurrection era validity of the Torah. After being healed of his leprosy, and acknowledging the One God of Israel, the Prophet Elisha was seemingly silent regarding any other matters of Torah to be followed by Naaman. Many who encounter the example of Naaman the Aramean, whether they be negative or positive to various matters of Torah to be followed by Messiah followers today, have probably not done a sufficient job in reviewing the scene of 2 Kings 5, some of its original context and setting, and evaluating what this scene communicates within the Deuteronomic Histories (Joshua-2 Kings).

The healing of Naaman the Aramean, took place during the Divided Kingdom period, with the Prophet Elisha, here, operating within the sphere of influence of the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim. Intelligent Bible readers need to remember how during the Divided Kingdom period, the Israelites of both the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim and Southern Kingdom of Judah, were often seem to be lax, at best, in their keeping of God's Torah. More frequently, the two populations were engaged in various forms of idolatry and dismissal of God's commandments, and/or forms of syncretism, with the One God of Israel

Naaman the Aramean (2 Kings 5)

served alongside of other gods and goddesses. The major purpose of the Deuteronomic Histories, was to take the warnings declared by Moses in Deuteronomy—and compose a theological account of Israel in the Promised Land, where Deuteronomy’s warnings were largely not heeded, and Israel was widely punished by God. What did the healing of Naaman the Aramean (Syrian) of leprosy in 2 Kings 5, possibly indicate in view of others, from Israel, who sought healing (2 Kings 1)?

Naaman, army commander of the king of Aram (Syria), was a respected figure, as the Lord had given him victory (2 Kings 5:1). But he is also noted to have been a leper (“he had *tza’arat*,” TLV). Naaman’s wife was waited on by an Israelite girl who had been captured, who informed her of how there was a prophet in Samaria who could cure him (2 Kings 5:2-3). Naaman informed the king of Aram of this, who said how he would write a letter to the king of Israel (2 Kings 5:4-5a). Naaman departed, with a sufficient sum of silver, gold, and changes of clothing (2 Kings 5:5b). Naaman went before the king of Israel, with the letter stating, “With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy” (2 Kings 5:6, 2011 NIV). The king of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1ff), actually rent his clothes over this request, thinking that he was being called upon as monarch to cure Naaman, exclaiming, “Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy?” (2 Kings 5:7a, 2011 NIV). He wondered if the tenuous peace with Aram was about to become a quarrel (2 Kings 5:7b).

News of the king’s response to Naaman’s request, reached the Prophet Elisha, who informed him to send him on to him, so that he would know of the prophet in Israel (2 Kings 5:8). Naaman proceeded to Elisha’s house (2 Kings 5:9), who then told him to wash in the Jordan River seven times, to be cleansed (2 Kings 5:10). Naaman was incensed at Elisha’s direction, saying, “I thought...he would surely come out to me, and would stand and invoke the LORD his God by name, and would wave his hand toward the spot, and cure the affected part” (2 Kings 5:11, NJPS). He then questioned the logic of Elisha, invoking the Abanah (Amanah) and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, as being superior to the waters of Israel (2 Kings 5:12). His servants, seeing Naaman’s reaction, told him, “if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed’” (2 Kings 5:13, 2011 NIV). So Naaman proceeded to wash himself in the Jordan River seven times, and was cleansed (2 Kings 5:14).

Naaman returned to the Prophet Elisha, recognizing, “Well, I’ve learned that there is no God in all the earth except in Isra’el; therefore, please accept a present from your servant” (2 Kings 5:15, CJSB). Elisha declined Naaman’s insistence that he be given something (2 Kings 5:16). So instead, Naaman made a unique request: “please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the LORD” (2 Kings 5:17, ESV). Naaman wanted to carry away dirt from the Land of Israel, with the purpose of using it in the future, whenever he was in a situation where the gods of his king, such as Rimmon, were being worshipped (2 Kings 5:18). Due to the parochial nature of much Ancient Near Eastern religion, of various deities being localized to particular

areas, Naaman could be apparently seen to be in the Land of Israel, worshipping the Lord instead of Aramean or Syrian deities, because of having dirt from Israel. Elisha wished him well, and that he go in peace (2 Kings 5:19).

The scene continues, as Elisha's servant Gehazi thought there was a problem with Elisha not having received any gift or monies from Naaman (2 Kings 5:20). Gehazi pursued Naaman's party returning home (2 Kings 5:21), and he requested a talent of silver and two changes of clothes, for two disciples of the company of the prophets (2 Kings 5:22). Naaman was pleased to grant the request (2 Kings 5:23), and returned (2 Kings 5:24). The Prophet Elisha confronted him, recognizing what he had done (2 Kings 5:25-26). Because of Gehazi's greed, Elisha decreed how "the tza'arat of Naaman will cling to you and to your offspring forever" (2 Kings 5:27, TLV).

What are Bible readers to deduce from the scene of Naaman the Aramean (Syrian)? Within the Tanach (OT), this is one of the earliest encounters of a non-Israelite who recognized the One God of Israel, with some obvious limitations.

In some present debates over Torah validity and continuance for non-Jewish disciples of Israel's Messiah, some have claimed that other than recognizing the Lord (YHWH) as God, Naaman was not required by the Prophet Elisha to observe any other Torah instructions. In the record of the Tanach, though, nothing more is stated regarding Naaman. Yeshua the Messiah made the observation, though, "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, NASU). The most which is seen, regarding the furtherance of Naaman's belief in the One God of Israel, is witnessed by Elisha's word, "Go in peace" (2 Kings 5:19), meaning "Elisha bade him farewell" (NEB). Nothing more is specifically stated, in the Biblical record, regarding Naaman's continuance in his recognition of the One God of Israel, whether he continued to solely believe in Him, or whether he reverted to polytheism.

What surely cannot be skipped over, from the scene of 2 Kings 5, is how Naaman's recognition of the One God of Israel, was affected by syncretism. Questions also abound regarding the relationship of Elisha, functioning as a prophet, in mainly the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, itself beset with syncretism. Within the Northern Kingdom, worship of the One God of Israel was present, but it was frequently observed alongside of various pagan practices and superstitions. While Elisha was doubtlessly a monotheist, King Jehoram, who he corresponded with (2 Kings 5:8), most certainly was not (2 Kings 3:2-3ff). *So in an Israelite environment of syncretism and polytheism, what priorities would a prophet actually have had? **How much could a prophet actually do?***

The main reaction of Naaman, to his being cleansed of leprosy, was in requesting that two mules laden with earth, or dirt, from the Land of Israel, be allowed to be taken by him (2 Kings 5:17). His stated reason for this was, "In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter" (2 Kings 5:18, NASU). The dirt from Israel would be

Naaman the Aramean (2 Kings 5)

employed in instances when, as army commander for the king of Aram, Naaman would be found participating in pagan worship. By walking on dirt from Israel, Naaman would presumably be walking in Israel, and be seen worshipping the Lord (YHWH), instead of deities like Rimmon. Would Naaman's presumed monotheism have continued, once returning home?

It is likely that there will be some significant, unanswered questions, regarding the healing of Naaman the Aramean (Syrian). Yet, what might the scene of 2 Kings 5 indicate, in terms of the place of 2 Kings within the Deuteronomistic Histories (Joshua-2 Kings)? The Deuteronomistic Histories were composed to carry forward the message of Deuteronomy, particularly in how its warnings against idolatry, sexual immorality, and syncretism, were largely not heeded by Israel once in the Promised Land. Yet, this is precisely what would be witnessed, time and time again, often leading Israel to the brink of disaster. Within the Jewish theological tradition, Joshua-2 Kings are included within the Former Prophets, precisely because of the prophetic theme they are to carry, in calling people to repentance from sin—especially when they encounter Ancient Israel, in the Promised Land, having consistently failed in following God's Instruction.

With some of this in mind, the scene of Naaman the Aramean in 2 Kings 5, plays an important role, within the larger scope of the record of the Deuteronomistic Histories. Previously, Bible readers have witnessed how King Ahaziah became ill, and sought out Baal-zebub of Ekron. This led to a conflict with Elisha's predecessor, Elijah (2 Kings 3:1-16). That one is reading a theologized history, for the purpose of stirring its readers to repentance before God, is witnessed in how (non-extant) records of further Israelite history are noted (2 Kings 3:18). That there was an intended contrast, between King Ahaziah, a monarch of the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim (2 Kings 1), and Naaman, army commander of the king of Aram (2 Kings 5), has been noted by examiners. T.R. Hobbs describes,

“In the present collection of Elisha stories, 2 Kings 5 provides a perfect counterpart to 2 Kings 1, and a near parallel to 2 Kings 8. In contrast to the Israelite king, Ahaziah, who sought healing from a foreign god, Baal-zebub of Ekron, a foreign dignitary and a foreign king seek help in their sickness from the God of Israel and his prophet. This contrast between the behavior of Israel and the behavior of foreign nations becomes a common theme in the prophetic tradition (Jer 2:10-11)” (ABD).¹

Indeed, the main point of encountering Naaman the Aramean in 2 Kings 5, within the larger scope and themes of the Deuteronomistic Histories, is how Israel proper was frequently seen to be engulfed in idolatry. Naaman, a pagan, who sought the One God of Israel for healing from leprosy, was an example intended to shame those of Israel proper—who may have sought out pagan gods and goddesses, when they needed healing.

¹ T.R. Hobbs, “Naaman,” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:968.