

## Term 3 Module 5 Resources Sheet 51 – Doing God’s Will

### 1. 2 Kings/ 4 Kingdoms 5

Now Naaman, commander of the army of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the Lord gave victory to Syria. The man was mighty in strength and valor, but a leper. † 2And the Syrians, lightly armed, had gone out on raids and brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. 3Then she said to her mistress, “If only my master were with the prophet of God in Samaria! For he would expel his leprosy from him.” 4And she went in and told her master, saying, “This is what the girl from the land of Israel said.” 5Then the king of Syria said to Naaman, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand gold shekels, and ten changes of clothing. 6Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, “Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I am sending Naaman my servant to you, so that you may heal him of his leprosy.” 7And it came to pass, when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, able to kill and make alive, to heal this man of his leprosy that this man sends to me? You perceive and see that this man is using this as a pretext for a quarrel with me.” 8When Elisha the man of God heard the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent notice to the king, saying, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let Naaman come to me, and he shall know there is a prophet in Israel.” 9Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot and stood at the door of Elisha's house. 10And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and bathe in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.” † 11But Naaman became furious and went away, saying, “Indeed, I told myself that Elisha would come out to greet me; that he would stand and call on the name of his God; and that he would put his hand upon the place and heal the leprosy. 12Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Can I not bathe in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage. 13Then his servants approached and said to him, “If the prophet were to tell you to do something great, would you not complete it? But here the prophet said to you, ‘Bathe and be clean.’ ” 14So Naaman went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to Elisha's instruction, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was cleansed. † 15Then he, with all his aides, returned to Elisha and came and stood before him; and he said, “Indeed, now I have come to know that in all the earth there is no God except the God of Israel. Now accept the gift of your servant.” † 16But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.” Again he urged him to take it, but he refused. 17So Naaman said, “If not, then, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of red earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord alone. 18And let the Lord be merciful with your servant: when my master goes there, to the house of Rimmon, to worship, he will rely on my hand, and I will worship in the house of Rimmon. In the worship in the house of Rimmon, may the Lord be merciful to your servant in this matter.” 19Then Elisha said to Naaman, “Go in peace.” He departed from him but a short distance. 20Then Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, said, “Behold, my master spared this Syrian Naaman, yet from his hand he received nothing of what he brought; but as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something of his.” 21So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he turned from the chariot to meet him. 22And Gehazi said, “Peace. My master sent me saying, ‘Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets came to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.’ ” 23Then Naaman said, “Take two talents of silver.” So Gehazi took two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants. They left and carried them on ahead of him. 24As they entered into the darkness, he took them from their hands and stored them in the house. He then dismissed the men. 25Now he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, “From where have you come, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant did not go anywhere.” 26Then Elisha said to him, “Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? And now you received the silver and the garments, and it shall happen that you shall receive from him gardens and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and men-servants and handmaidens. 27And the leprosy of Naaman shall also cling to you and your seed forever.” Thus he went out from his presence leprous, like snow. † †

The Orthodox Study Bible Online,

[http://www.worldhistory.biz/download567/The\\_Orthodox\\_Study\\_Bible\\_-\\_St.pdf](http://www.worldhistory.biz/download567/The_Orthodox_Study_Bible_-_St.pdf)

2. An Israelite girl goes into the victorious enemy's camp and explains that Naaman, one of the enemy's leaders, can be healed by the prophet of God. The fact that the king of the Syrians sends a letter to the king of Israel to cure Naaman indicates that Syrians believed that the divine power lies with him who also has the political power. This is not the Israelite understanding. The king of Israel (who has no name in this story) has no power to heal and fears retribution if he doesn't help Naaman. He replies: "Am I God, able to kill and make alive...?" Earthly power has thus no power over illness, life or death. Instead, the person who is close to God, through whom God speaks, prophet Elisha, can indicate how Naaman should be cured. His solution, though, does not seem logical. And Naaman rightfully asks himself: what's the good of going to bathe into the Jordan seven times? I could very well bathe into any other river. Which is a perfectly valid explanation, if only the cure hadn't come from God. The river Jordan has nothing special *in itself*, it is not the water that heals Naaman, but the fact that Naaman trusts the Lord of Israel and chooses to do a seemingly random thing just because God would like him to do it. Here the words of Prophet Isaiah can be inserted (Isaiah 55.8-12):

<sup>8</sup> "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,"  
declares the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> "As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup> As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

<sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

**Naaman is healed and thanks the God of Israel, wishing to reward his prophet Elisha. But the prophet does not accept the gifts. What has been done was part of God's plan, not Elisha's, and so Elisha cannot accept to be paid for something he hasn't done. He does have the authority to punish his servant with leprosy for asking Naaman for a payment and does so.**

**Therefore: God is directly related to Elisha, speaks through him. The king has the most limited power of all, he is not God's representative on earth. Elisha is one of God's vessels. Prophets have spiritual authority and sometimes the power to heal or to curse. God makes his will known through them.**