

Elisha ~ Part 14

In my last post, we continued to explore the ministry of **Elisha** by looking at **2 Kings 5:11-15**, where we learned about **Na'aman** as he first **Resists and Then Trusts the Lord**. In this post, we continue with **Na'aman** as he **Serves the Lord** in **2 Kings 5:15-19a**.

¹⁵ Then, with his [Na'aman] whole retinue, he returned to the man of God, went and stood before him, and said, '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.'¹⁶ But Elisha answered, 'As Adonai lives, before whom I stand, I will not accept it.' And despite his urging him to take it, he refused. ¹⁷ So Na'aman said, 'If you won't take it, then please let your servant be given as much earth as two mules can carry; because from now on, your servant will offer neither burnt offerings nor sacrifices to other gods, but only to Adonai. ¹⁸ Except this, and may Adonai forgive your servant for it: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon — when I bow down, may Adonai forgive your servant for this.' ¹⁹ Elisha said to him, 'Go in peace.'" ~ 2 Kings 5:15-19a (CJB)

Na'aman Serves the Lord

Like every new Believer, **Na'aman** still had a lot to learn. He had been saved and healed by trusting in God's grace, and now he had to grow in grace and faith and learn how to live to please the God who healed him. Instead of hurrying home to share the good news, **Na'aman** returned to the house of **Elisha** to thank the Lord and His servant. That meant traveling another thirty miles back from the **Yarden River**, but he must have rejoiced during the entire trip. It was natural for him to want to reward **Elisha**, but had the prophet accepted the gift; he would have taken the credit to himself and robbed God of His glory. He also would have given **Na'aman**, a new convert, the impression that his gifts had something to do with his salvation ~ NOT!

Na'aman was starting to grow in his understanding of the Lord, but he still had a long way to go. **Elisha** refused his gifts, but **Na'aman** asked if he could take some native soil with him to **Syria** to use in his worship of **Adonai**. In those days, people had the idea that the gods of a nation resided in that land, and if you left the land, you left the god behind. However, **Na'aman** had just testified that **Adonai** was God in all the earth! However, taking that soil was a courageous act, because his master and his friends would surely ask **Na'aman** what it meant, and he would have to tell them of his faith in the God of Israel.

In his second request, **Na'aman** showed unusual insight, for he realized that the king would expect him to continue his official acts as the commander of the army. This included accompanying the king into the temple of **Rimmon**, the **Syrian** equivalent of **Ba'al**. **Na'aman** was willing to perform this ritual outwardly, but he wanted **Elisha** to know that his heart would not be in it. **Na'aman** anticipated that his healing and his changed life would have an impact on the royal court and eventually lead to the king's conversion. I know from personal experience that instead of criticizing Believers who serve in public offices, we need to pray for them because they face tough decisions.

It is interesting that **Elisha** did not lecture him or admonish him but just said, **Go in peace**. This was the usual covenant blessing the Jews invoked when people were starting on a journey. The prophet would pray for him and trust God to use him in his new ministry in **Syria**. **Na'aman's tzara'at** was gone, he still had the treasures, he carried soil from Israel, and he knew the true and living God.

In my next post, we continue to explore the life of **Elisha**. In this post, we continue to examine **2 Kings 5:19b-27** where we learn that **Geichazi Lies to Himslef, Na'aman, and Elisha**.