

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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THE SAD STORY OF AN INDIVIDUAL NAMED GEHAZI

Gehazi was a fellow who lived during the reigns of king Jerhom (Israel) and king Jehoshaphat (Judah) – **2 Kg. 3:1**. Gehazi, as Elisha’s servant, was in a privileged position to learn a thing or two from the prophet of God (**2 Kg. 4:12**). But in the end, Gehazi blew it. Here’s what happened. A man named Naaman traveled to Israel in hopes of being cured of his leprosy (**2 Kg. 5:1-7**). Eventually, he submitted to the remedy Elisha prescribed (**2 Kg. 5:8-14**). Naaman offered Elisha a material reward after being healed (**2 Kg. 5:15**). The prophet declined the offer (**2 Kg. 5:16**). Soon after, Naaman began his journey back to Syria (**2 Kg. 5:19; cf. 5:1**). We can rightly infer from the text that Gehazi was privy to the circumstances surrounding Naaman’s offer. He saw an opportunity to unjustly profit from Naaman and went about to work his sinful plan. The text reads this way:

“But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed” (**2 Kg. 5:20-24**).

It’s easy to imagine that Gehazi thought he had been really shrewd. What he had been was disobedient! He would quickly learn that God frowns upon those who deal in darkness. Let’s see how the account turns out. The text reads: *“But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow”* (**2 Kg. 5:25-27**).

What a knucklehead Gehazi turned out to be in the end! What lessons can we glean from this sad account? There are several.

LIKE GEHAZI, PEOPLE STILL TODAY OFTEN LET GREED GET THE BETTER OF THEM

Elisha’s generosity (**2 Kg. 5:15-16**) seemed absurd to Gehazi. He decided payment was in order – and if Elisha did not want to jump at the chance to “get rich” and march down “easy street” via Naaman, he would seek payment by and for himself. He devised a plan and went to tax Naaman (**2 Kg. 5:20-21**). Gehazi gave way to greed. He was eager for base gain. Sadly, he suffered for it (**Prv. 28:20**). There are many like Gehazi still in the world today – greedy pigs who lust for material increase and do whatever it takes to “get the goods.” Folks, greed and Christianity are mutually exclusive (**Eph. 4:17-20**).

LIKE GEHAZI, PEOPLE STILL TODAY OFTEN THROW AWAY TRUE RICHES FOR EARTHLY TREASURES

Gehazi conned Naaman out of two talents of silver and two changes of clothes (**2 Kg. 5:23-24**). These items were a sad exchange for his soul (**Mt. 16:26**). In addition to being separated from God (**Isa. 59:1-2**), Gehazi also lost other precious items. He lost his physical health in becoming a leper (**2 Kg. 5:27**). He also lost the blessing of working for Elisha (**ibid**). How sad. There are still so many today – calling themselves members of the Lord’s church – who sell out for a couple of bucks. Sadder still.

LIKE GEHAZI, PEOPLE STILL TODAY OFTEN ENGAGE IN DECEPTION

Gehazi lied to both Naaman and Elisha (**2 Kg. 5:22, 25**). Lying is nearly ubiquitous in our society. Unfortunately, some members of the church tell lies – fitting right in with the world – and so disregard God’s will (**Col. 3:9**). Liars land in hell (**Rev. 21:8**).

LIKE GEHAZI, PEOPLE STILL TODAY OFTEN BRING GOD INTO THEIR ERROR

Thousands of years ago Gehazi said, *“As the LORD liveth, I will...”* (**2 Kg. 5:20**). Here we are in 2010 and local churches still bring the Lord’s name into so many unauthorized things they do. Yes, congregations claim to be doing the work of the Lord by hosting Christmas parties, Easter egg hunts, clothing drives, scrapbooking parties, pot-luck dinners, or opening up coffee shops, etc. History sure teaches that few people ever learn. So few truly respect Bible authority (**1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17; Rev. 22:18-19**).

LIKE GEHAZI, PEOPLE STILL TODAY DO NOT PONDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ACTIONS

Gehazi was so short sighted and, as noted, he paid the price for such (**Prv. 15:27**). So many “Christians” are just like him.