

# Gehazi's Worthless Exchange

**Introduction.** So many stories in the Old Testament help us to understand very contemporary problems (Romans 15:4). The story we will consider today is no different. The story of Naaman is certainly a familiar one. This was a wonderful lesson. However, there was a sad sequel to the story in 2 Kings 5:20-27.

Gehazi was Elisha's servant, but Gehazi's character was the exact opposite of Elisha's. After Naaman was healed of his leprosy, he offered Elisha payment for making him clean again. Elisha refused his payment, knowing that God should receive the glory for this miracle. Naaman went on his way praising God. However, Gehazi could not understand how Elisha could refuse Naaman's generosity, and therefore decided that it would be foolish to allow this opportunity to slip by. Gehazi chose to use the situation to make a profit for himself. We are going to see that he truly made a worthless exchange.

## I. ***Gehazi Was Greatly Blessed***

- A. Consider some of the tremendous blessings which Gehazi possessed.
  - 1. Gehazi seemed to be in fine physical health.
  - 2. He had a good master and home.
  - 3. He had what seemed to be a secure and good occupation.
  - 4. He lived in a place where he would have gotten the best spiritual guidance.
    - a) He had the absolute best contact with moral and spiritual excellence.
    - b) Sadly, he chose to cast it all aside for a low standard of life, a low standard of conduct and a low standard of morality.
    - c) This reminds you of the children of Christian parents. If any children in this world have the best chance at spiritual success, it is the children of godly parents.
- B. His story is a sad one, but it is not an unusual one.

## II. ***Gehazi Was Not Spiritually-Minded***

- A. It is almost sacrilegious to see Gehazi, when he decided to go after Naaman, saying, "As the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him."
- B. He demonstrated that he had no clarity or care as to what true righteousness was by swearing or bringing the Lord into his lies and deception.
  - 1. Some want to bring the Lord's name into everything they do. A church will have a raffle for some cause and will call it a "raffle for Jesus." Some congregations want a campground for their members, so they call it a "getaway for Jesus." This is an obvious abuse of

passages like Colossians 3:16-17.

2. Gehazi seems to have justified what he did by saying, "As the Lord liveth," as if it were something the Lord would want. Jesus described the same kind of people in Matthew 7:21-23. We should always consider the Lord's will (James 4:13-15).

### III. ***Gehazi Was Covetous***

- A. When Naaman had left and begun to make his way back to Syria, Gehazi was thinking about his master's decision. It just did not seem fair that Elisha could let Naaman leave without paying any tribute to him.
  1. The prophets did take gifts for their work (1 Samuel 9:7-8; 1 Kings 14:3). In fact, Elisha had done the same (2 Kings 4:42).
  2. However, it was necessary here to show that Elisha did not work miracles by his own power, nor by his own will. He did not do it for reward (cf. Matthew 10:8).
- B. This generosity seemed absurd to Gehazi. It was a chance which might never come again. Perhaps he thought his "ship was coming in" and wanted to jump on the opportunity!
  1. Some people feel that being nice and having good scruples is very admirable until it gets in the way of making money.
  2. You can almost picture Gehazi thinking, "What does it matter whether we take goods from this foreigner anyway?" He did not see any spiritual significance beyond this physical event. He could not see anything higher than a simple transaction between man and man.
    - a) It did not seem to make any difference to Gehazi whether or not Naaman had been convinced by this miracle that Jehovah was the one and only God.
    - b) Gehazi did not think or care about the fact that it would make God and His prophet look like they were taking a "pay off."
  3. Naaman was now leaving and all Gehazi was thinking of was all the money and goods that were going with him.
- C. There are a lot of people out there who feel that someone who allows religious beliefs, convictions or even morality to stand in the way of money or advancement is a fool. However, the Lord condemned covetousness (Ecclesiastes 5:10-11; Mark 7:21-23; Colossians 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 5:3-5; Luke 12:15).

### IV. ***Gehazi Was A Liar***

- A. He lied first to Naaman. He ran after him and said that Elisha had some guests arriving and would need some money and clothing for his guests.
- B. As you might expect, Naaman was very willing to pay for what he had

received. He was so grateful that he gave him more than he requested.

- C. As with most lies, one leads to another and Gehazi found himself lying to Elisha. In fact, as always, Gehazi's lies only worsened the situation (Psalm 31:18; 120:3-4; Proverbs 6:16-19; 12:22; Colossians 3:9).
- D. The account came to a climax in vs. 26. Elisha wanted to show that the gift of God could not be purchased with money. Elisha asked, "Is it a time to receive money?" Gehazi could not hide from what he did.
- E. The worthless exchange became a deadly reality. Gehazi got the clothes and the money he had requested, but he also got more than he bargained for (Revelation 21:8)!

#### V. ***Will You Make A Worthless Exchange?***

- A. He exchanged his fine physical health for the deadly disease of leprosy.
  - 1. He would no longer be able to live with the Israelites (2 Chronicles 26:21).
  - 2. According to the law, he would be sent away to live among his own kind (Leviticus 13:46; Numbers 5:2).
- B. He exchanged a secure future working for the man of God for no future at all.
- C. Why do you think a story like this would have been included in the Bible for us to study? In nearly every passage like this, we can find an application.
  - 1. Some exchange a good family and wife for another woman, loyalty to a job or maybe just to live the "single life" again.
  - 2. Some exchange righteousness for a promising career.
  - 3. Some exchange their health for addictions to tobacco, drugs, alcohol, etc.
  - 4. Some may exchange the hope of eternal life for a few more minutes sleep on Sunday mornings or evenings.
  - 5. Some exchange the Sunday or Wednesday evening services for a television program or other kinds of entertainment.
  - 6. Some exchange true service to the Lord for half-hearted, lukewarm service.
  - 7. What will you add to your list (Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25)?

**Conclusion.** As long as we keep making those exchanges, Satan will keep offering them to us. Gehazi lived in an environment that was good and moral, but he was still found in sin. We can live in a good environment, but we can still fall short of the Lord's wishes. Gehazi got caught up in sin and he exchanged his soul for the pleasures of this life. His spiritual sensitivity had betrayed him in the time of testing, so rather than his character being re-

fined, his work was refused. The great irony in the story is that the Syrian had become an Israelite in heart and spirit, and was healed of his leprosy in Israel's waters. Gehazi had become a heathen in heart and spirit, and he was struck with the leprosy of the Syrian. What each had sown, that did they reap.

Please do not make an exchange that will cause you to lose your soul. With Gehazi, we see the end of greed (1 Timothy 6:10). There is nothing more peaceful and satisfying than striving to be a strong and true child of God. If you have not become a Christian, exchange your destiny for eternal life with God right now.