

# Luke 4:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

## Analysis

**And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.** Jesus cites a second example from Elisha's ministry (2 Kings 5). The emphatic *oudeis autōn ekatharisthē, ei mē* (οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἐκαθαρίσθη, εἰ μή, not one of them was cleansed, except) underscores God's sovereign choice. Many Israelite lepers remained unhealed while God cleansed Naaman, commander of the Syrian army—Israel's enemy.

Leprosy represented both physical disease and ceremonial uncleanness, often understood as divine judgment. The verb *katharizō* (καθαρίζω, to cleanse) carries both physical and ceremonial meaning—Naaman was healed and made ritually clean. That God chose to cleanse a Gentile military leader who didn't worship YHWH while Israelite lepers suffered demonstrated that God's grace isn't constrained by ethnicity, merit, or covenant status. This pointed directly to Jesus' mission to seek and save the lost, including Gentiles.

## Historical Context

Elisha ministered in the Northern Kingdom during the 9th century BC, succeeding Elijah. Second Kings 5 records Naaman's healing—he was commander of Syria's (Aram's) army, which had defeated Israel in battle. Syria was Israel's bitter enemy. That God sent a captive Israelite girl to witness to Naaman, then cleansed him

through the prophet's word, while Israelite lepers remained unhealed, was deeply offensive to Jewish pride. Naaman initially resisted Elisha's simple command to wash seven times in the Jordan, expecting elaborate ritual. His healing came through humble obedience, not merit.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. What does God's cleansing of Israel's enemy while Israelite lepers suffered reveal about grace transcending human categories?
2. How does Naaman's healing through simple obedience (despite initial resistance) illustrate salvation by faith, not works?
3. Why would Jesus' citation of God blessing Gentiles while bypassing Israel particularly enrage His Nazareth audience?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ πολλοὶ λεπροὶ ἦσαν ἐπὶ ἐλισσαίου τοῦ  
And many lepers were in the time of Eliseus G3588  
G2532 G4183 G3015 G2258 G1909 G1666

προφήτου ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἐκαθαρίσθη  
the prophet in Israel And none of them was cleansed G2511  
G4396 G1722 G3588 G2474 G2532 G3762 G846

εἰ μὴ Νεεμὰν ὁ Σύρος  
G1487 G3361 Naaman G3588 the Syrian G4948

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 17:12** (Parallel theme): While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

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