

# CHAPTER 5

Two more of Elisha's miracles are recorded in this chapter.

**I.** The cleansing of Naaman, a Syrian, a stranger, from his leprosy, and there,

1. The badness of his case (v. 1).
2. The providence that brought him to Elisha, the intelligence given him by a captive maid (v. 2-4). A letter from the king of Syria to the king of Israel, to introduce him (v. 5-7). And the invitation Elisha sent him (v. 8).
3. The method prescribed for his cure, his submission, with much ado, to that method, and his cure thereby (v. 9-14).
4. The grateful acknowledgments he made to Elisha hereupon (v. 15-19).

**II.** The smiting of Gehazi, his own servant, with that leprosy.

1. Gehazi's sins, which were belying his master to Naaman (v. 20-24), and lying to his master when he examined him (v. 25).
2. His punishment for these sins. Naaman's leprosy was entailed on his family (v. 26, 27). And, if Naaman's cure was typical of the calling of the Gentiles, as our Saviour seems to make it (~~LUKE~~ Luke 4:27), Gehazi's stroke may be looked upon as typical of the blinding and rejecting of the Jews, who envied God's grace to the Gentiles, as Gehazi envied Elisha's favour to Naaman.

## ~~II~~ 2 KINGS 5:1-8

### NAAMAN'S LEPROSY

Our saviour's miracles were intended for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet one, like a crumb, fell from the table to a woman of Canaan; so this one miracle Elisha wrought for Naaman, a Syrian; for God does good to all, and will have all men to be saved. Here is,

**I.** The great affliction Naaman was under, in the midst of all his honours, v. 1. He was a great man, in a great place; not only rich and raised, but particularly happy for two things: —

**1.** That he had been very serviceable to his country. God made him so: *By him the Lord had often given deliverance to Syria*, success in their wars even with Israel. The preservation and prosperity even of those that do not know God and serve him must be ascribed to him, for *he is the Saviour of all men, but especially of those that believe*. Let Israel know that when the Syrians prevailed it was from the Lord.

**2.** That he was very acceptable to his prince, was his favourite, and prime-minister of state; so great was he, so high, so honourable, and a mighty man of valour; but he was a leper, was under that loathsome disease, which made him a burden to himself. Note,

**(1.)** No man's greatness, or honour, or interest, or valour, or victory, can set him out of the reach of the sorest calamities of human life; there is many a sickly crazy body under rich and gay clothing.

**(2.)** Every man has some *but* or other in his character, something that blemishes and diminishes him, some allay to his grandeur, some damp to his joy; he may be very happy, very good, yet, in something or other, not so good as he should be nor so happy as he would be. Naaman was a great as the world could make him, and yet (as bishop Hall expresses it) the basest slave in Syria would not change skins with him.

**II.** The notice that was given him of Elisha's power, by a little maid that waited on his lady, v. 2, 3. This maid was, by birth, an Israelite, providentially carried captive into Syria, and there preferred into Naaman's family, where she published Elisha's fame to the honour of Israel and Israel's God. The unhappy dispersing of the people of God has sometimes proved the happy occasion of the diffusion of the knowledge of God, ~~400~~ Acts 8:4. This little maid,

**1.** As became a true-born Israelite, consulted the honour of her country, and could give an account, though but a girl, of the famous prophet they had among them. Children should betimes acquaint themselves with the wondrous works of God, that, wherever they go, they may have them to talk of. See ~~400~~ Psalm 8:2.

**2.** As became a good servant, she desired the health and welfare of her master, though she was a captive, a servant by force; much more should servants of choice seek their masters' good. The Jews in Babylon were to seek the peace of the land of their captivity. ~~400~~ Jeremiah 29:7. *Elisha* had

*not cleansed any leper in Israel* (~~1007~~ Luke 4:27), yet this little maid, from the other miracles he had wrought, inferred that he *could* cure her master, and from his common beneficence inferred that he *would* do it, though he was a Syrian. Servants may be blessings to the families where they are, by telling what they know of the glory of God and the honour of his prophets.

**III.** The application which the king of Syria hereupon made to the king of Israel on Naaman's behalf. Naaman took notice of the intelligence, though given by a simple maid, and did not despise it for the sake of her meanness, when it tended to his bodily health. he did not say, "The girl talks like a fool; how can any prophet of Israel do that for me which all the physicians of Syria have attempted in vain?" Though he neither loved nor honoured the Jewish nation, yet, if one of that nation can but cure him of his leprosy, he will thankfully acknowledge the obligation. O that those who are spiritually diseased would hearken thus readily to the tidings brought them of the great Physician! See what Naaman did upon this little hint.

- 1.** He would not send for the prophet to come to him, but such honour would he pay to one that had so much of a divine power with him as to be able to cure diseases that he would go to him himself, though he himself was sickly, unfit for society, the journey long, and the country an enemy's; princes, he thinks, must stoop to prophets when they need them.
- 2.** He would not go *incognito* — *in disguise*, though his errand proclaimed his loathsome disease, but went in state, and with a great retinue, to do the more honour to the prophet.
- 3.** He would not go empty-handed, but took with him gold, silver, and raiment, to present to his physician. Those that have wealth, and want health show which they reckon the more valuable blessing; what will they not give for ease, and strength, and soundness of body?
- 4.** He would not go without a letter to the king of Israel from the king his master, who did himself earnestly desire his recovery. He knows not where in Samaria to find this wonder-working prophet, but takes it for granted the king knows where to find him; and, to engage the prophet to do his utmost for Naaman, he will go to him supported with the interest of two kings. If the king of Syria must entreat his help, he hopes the king of Israel, being his liege-lord, may command it. The gifts of the subject must all be (he thinks) for the service and honour of the prince, and therefore he desires the king that he would *recover the leper* (v. 6), taking it for granted

that there was a greater intimacy between the king and the prophet than really there was.

**IV.** The alarm this gave to the king of Israel, v. 7. He apprehended there was in this letter,

**1.** A great affront upon God, and therefore he rent his clothes, according to the custom of the Jews when they heard or read that which they thought blasphemous; and what less could it be than to attribute to him a divine power? “*Am I a God, to kill whom I will, and make alive whom I will?* No, I pretend not to such an authority.” Nebuchadnezzar did, as we find, <sup>(2169)</sup> Daniel 5:19. “*Am I a God, to kill with a word, and make alive with a word?* No, I pretend not to such a power;” thus this great man, this bad man, is made to own that he is but a man. Why did he not, with this consideration, correct himself for his idolatry, and reason thus: — Shall I worship those as gods that can neither kill nor make alive, can *do neither good nor evil?*

**2.** A bad design upon himself. He appeals to those about him for this: “*See how he seeketh a quarrel against me;* he requires me to recover the leper, and if I do not, though I cannot, he will make that a pretence to wage war with me,” which he suspects the rather because Naaman is his general. had he rightly understood the meaning of the letter, that when the king wrote to him to recover the leper he meant that he would take care he might be recovered, he would not have been in this fright. Note, We often create a great deal of uneasiness to ourselves by misinterpreting the words and actions of others that are well intended: it is charity to ourselves to think no evil. If he had bethought himself of Elisha, and his power, he would easily have understood the letter, and have known what he had to do; but he is put into this confusion by making himself a stranger to the prophet: the captive maid had him more in her thoughts than the king had.

**V.** The proffer which Elisha made of his services. He was willing to do any thing to make his prince easy, though he was neglected and his former good services were forgotten by him. Hearing on which occasion the king had rent his clothes, he sent to him to let him know that if his patient would come to him he should not lose his labour (v. 8): *He shall know that there is a prophet in Israel* (and it were sad with Israel if there were not), that there is a prophet in Israel who can do that which the king of Israel dares not attempt, which the prophets of Syria cannot pretend to. It was not for

his own honour, but for the honour of God, that he coveted to make them all know *that there was a prophet in Israel*, though obscure and overlooked.

## 2 KINGS 5:9-14

### THE CURE OF NAAMAN'S LEPROSY

We have here the cure of Naaman's leprosy.

**I.** The short and plain direction which the prophet gave him, with assurance of success. Naaman designed to do honour to Elisha when he came in his chariot, and with all his retinue, to Elisha's door, v. 9. Those that showed little respect to prophets at other times were very complaisant to them when they needed them. He attended at Elisha's door as a beggar for an alms. Those that would be cleansed from the spiritual leprosy must wait at *Wisdom's gate, and watch at the posts of her doors*. Naaman expected to have his compliment returned, but Elisha gave him his answer without any formality, would not go to the door to him, lest he should seem too much pleased with the honour done him, but sent a messenger to him, saying, *Go wash in Jordan seven times*, and promising him that if he did so his disease should be cured. The promise was express: *Thou shalt be clean*. The method prescribed was plain: *Go wash in Jordan*. This was not intended as any means of the cure; for, though cold bathing is recommended by many as a very wholesome thing, yet some think that in the case of a leprosy it was rather hurtful. But it was intended as a sign of the cure, and a trial of his obedience. Those that will be helped of God must do as they are bidden. But why did Elisha send a messenger to him with these directions?

- 1.** Because he had retired, at this time, for devotion, was intent upon his prayers for the cure, and would not be diverted; or,
- 2.** Because he knew Naaman to be a proud man, and he would let him know that before the great God all men stand upon the same level.

**II.** Naaman's disgust at the method prescribed, because it was not what he expected. Two things disgusted him: —

**1.** That Elisha, as he thought, put a slight upon his person, in sending him orders by a servant, and not coming to him himself, v. 11. Being big with the expectation of a cure, he had been fancying how this cure would be wrought, and the scheme he had laid was this: “*He will surely come out to me, that is the least he can do to me, a peer of Syria, to me that have come to him in all this state, to me that have so often been victorious over Israel. He will stand, and call on the name of his God, and name me in his prayer, and then he will wave his hand over the place, and so effect the cure.*” And, because the thing was not done just thus, he fell into a passion, forgetting,

**(1.)** That he was a leper, and the law of Moses, which Elisha would religiously observe, shut lepers out from society — a leper, and therefore he ought not to insist upon the punctilios of honor. Note, Many have hearts unhumbled under humbling providences; see <sup><01214></sup>Numbers 12:14.

**(2.)** That he was a petitioner, suing for a favour which he could not demand; and beggars must not be choosers, patients must not prescribe to their physicians. See in Naaman the folly of pride. A cure will not content him unless he be cured with ceremony, with a great deal of pomp and parade; he scorns to be healed, unless he be humoured.

**2.** That Elisha, as he thought, put a slight upon his country. He took it hard that he must be sent to wash in Jordan, a river of Israel, when he thought *Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel.* How magnificently does he speak of these two rivers that watered Damascus, which soon after fell into one, called by geographers *Chrysoroas — the golden stream!* How scornfully does he speak of all the waters of Israel, though God had called the land of Israel *the glory of all lands*, and particularly for its *brooks of water!* <sup><01807></sup>Deuteronomy 8:7. So common it is for God and man to differ in their judgments. How slightly does he speak of the prophet's directions! *May I not wash in them and be clean?* He might wash in them and be clean from dirt, but not wash in them and be clean from leprosy. He was angry that the prophet bade him wash and be clean; he thought that the prophet must do all and was not pleased that he was bidden to do any thing, — or he thought this too cheap, too plain, too common a thing for so great a man to be cured by, — or he did not believe it would at all effect the cure, or, if it would, what medicinal virtue was there in Jordan more than in the rivers of Damascus? But he did not consider,

(1.) That Jordan belonged to Israel's God, from whom he was to expect the cure, and not from the gods of Damascus; it watered the Lord's land, the holy land, and, in a miraculous cure, relation to God was much more considerable than the depth of the channel or the beauty of the stream.

(2.) That Jordan had more than once before this obeyed the commands of omnipotence. It had of old yielded a passage to Israel, and of late to Elijah and Elisha, and therefore was fitter for such a purpose than those rivers which had only observed the common law of their creation, and had never been thus distinguished; but, above all,

(3.) Jordan was the river appointed, and, if he expected a cure from the divine power, he ought to acquiesce in the divine will, without asking why or wherefore. Note, It is common for those that are wise in their own conceit to look with contempt on the dictates and prescriptions of divine wisdom and to prefer their own fancies before them; those that are for *establishing their own righteousness* will not *submit to the righteousness of God*, <sup><510B></sup>Romans 10:3. Naaman talked himself into such a heat (as passionate men usually do) that he turned away from the prophet's door in a rage, ready to swear he would never have any thing more to say to Elisha; and who then would be the loser? Note, *Those that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies*. <sup><310B></sup>Jonah 2:8. Proud men are the worst enemies to themselves and forego their own redemption.

**III.** The modest advice which his servants gave him, to observe the prophet's prescriptions, with a tacit reproof of his resentments, v. 13. Though at other times they kept their distance, and now saw him in a passion, yet, knowing him to be a man that would hear reason at any time, and from any body (a good character of great men, and a very rare one), they drew near, and made bold to argue the matter a little with him. They had conceived a great opinion of the prophet (having, perhaps, heard more of him from the common people, whom they had conversed with, than Naaman had heard from the king and courtiers, whom he had conversed with), and therefore begged of him to consider: "*If the prophet had bidden thee to do some great thing, had ordered thee into a tedious course of physic, or to submit to some painful operation, blistering, or cupping, or salivating, Wouldst thou not have done it? No doubt thou wouldst. And wilt thou not submit to so easy a method as this, Wash and be clean?*" Observe,

**1.** His own servants gave him this reproof and counsel, which was no more disparagement to him than that he had intelligence of one that could cure him from his wife's maid, v. 3. Note, It is a great mercy to have those about us that will be free with us, and faithfully tell us of our faults and follies, though they be our inferiors. Masters must be willing to hear reason from their servants, <sup><8813></sup>Job 31:13, 14. As we should be deaf to the counsel of the ungodly, though given by the greatest and most venerable names, so we should have our ear open to good advice, though brought us by those who are much below us: no matter who speaks, if the thing be well said.

**2.** The reproof was very modest and respectful. They call him *Father*; for servants must honour and obey their masters with a kind of filial affection. In giving reproof or counsel we must make it appear that it comes from love and true honour, and that we intend, not reproach, but reformation.

**3.** It was very rational and considerate. If the rude and unthinking servants had stirred up their master's angry resentment, and offered to avenge his quarrel upon the prophet, who (he thought) affronted him, how mischievous would the consequences have been! Fire from heaven, probably, upon them all! But they, to our great surprise, took the prophet's part. Elisha, though it is likely he perceived that what he had said had put Naaman out of humour, did not care to pacify him: it was at his peril if he persisted in his wrath. But his servants were made use of by Providence to reduce him to temper. They reasoned with him,

**(1.)** From his earnest desire of a cure: *Wouldst thou not do any thing?* Note, When diseased sinners come to this, that they are content to do any thing, to submit to any thing, to part with any thing, for a cure, then, and not till then, there begin to be some hopes of them. Then they will take Christ on his own terms when they are made willing to have Christ upon any terms.

**(2.)** From the easiness of the method prescribed: "It is but, *Wash and be clean*. It is but trying; the experiment is cheap and easy, it can do no hurt, but may do good." Note, the methods prescribed for the healing of the leprosy of sin are so plain that we are utterly inexcusable if we do not observe them. It is but, "Believe, and be saved" — "Repent, and be pardoned" — "Wash, and be clean."

**IV.** The cure effected, in the use of the means prescribed, v. 14. Naaman, upon second thoughts, yielded to make the experiment, yet, it should seem,



with no great faith and resolution; for, whereas the prophet bade him wash in Jordan seven times, he did but dip himself so many times, as lightly as he could. However God was pleased so far to honour himself and his word as to make that effectual. *His flesh came again, like the flesh of a child.* to his great surprise and joy. This men get by yielding to the will of God, by attending to his institutions. His being cleansed by washing put an honour on the law for cleansing lepers. God will magnify his word above all his name.

## ~~1165~~ 2 KINGS 5:15-19

### THE CURE OF NAAMAN'S LEPROSY

Of the ten lepers that our Saviour cleansed, the only one that *returned to give thanks* was a *Samaritan*, ~~1716~~ Luke 17:16. This Syrian did so, and here expresses himself.

**I.** Convinced of the power of the God of Israel, not only that he is God, but that he is God alone, and that indeed *there is no God in all the earth but in Israel* (v. 15) — a noble confession, but such as intimates the misery of the Gentile world; for the nations that had many gods really had no God, but were without God in the world. He had formerly thought the gods of Syria gods indeed, but now experience had rectified his mistake, and he knew Israel's God was God alone, the sovereign Lord of all. Had he seen other lepers cleansed, perhaps the sight would not have convinced him, but the mercy of the cure affected him more than the miracle of it. Those are best able to speak of the power of divine grace who have themselves experienced it.

**II.** Grateful to Elisha the prophet: “Therefore, for his sake whose servant thou art, I have a present for thee, silver, and gold, and raiment, whatever thou wilt please to accept.” He valued the cure, not by the easiness of it to the prophet, but the acceptableness of it to himself, and would gladly pay for it accordingly. But Elisha generously refused the fee, though urged to accept it; and, to prevent further importunity, backed his refusal with an oath: *As the Lord liveth, I will receive none* (v. 16), not because he did not need it, for he was poor enough, and knew what to do with it, and how to bestow it among the sons of the prophets, nor because he thought it

unlawful, for he received presents from others; but he would not be beholden to this Syrian, nor should *he* say, *I have made Elisha rich*, <sup><01423></sup>Genesis 14:23. It would be much for the honour of God to show this new convert that the servants of the God of Israel were taught to look upon the wealth of this world with a holy contempt, which would confirm him in his belief that *there was no God but in Israel*. See <sup><01018></sup>1 Corinthians 9:18; <sup><01109></sup>2 Corinthians 11:9.

**III.** Proselyted to the worship of the God of Israel. He will not only offer a sacrifice to the Lord, in thanks for his present cure, but he resolves he will never offer sacrifice to any other gods, v. 17. It was a happy cure of his leprosy which cured him of his idolatry, a more dangerous disease. But here are two instances of his weakness and infirmity in his conversion: —

**1.** In one instance he over-did it, that he would not only worship the God of Israel, but he would have clods of earth out of the prophet's garden, or at least of the prophet's ordering, *to make an altar of*, v. 17. He that awhile ago had spoken very slightly of the waters of Israel (v. 12) now is in another extreme, and over-values the earth of Israel, supposing (since God has appointed *altars of earth*, <sup><01218></sup>Exodus 20:24) that an altar of that earth would be most acceptable to him, not considering that all *the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof*. Or perhaps the transport of his affection and veneration for the prophet, not only upon the account of his power, but of his virtue and generosity, made him, as we say, love the very ground he went upon and desire to have some of it home with him. The modern compliment equivalent to this would be, "Pray, sir, let me have your picture."

**2.** In another instance he under-did it, that he reserved to himself a liberty to bow in the house of Rimmon, in complaisance to the king his master, and according to the duty of his place at court (v. 18), *in this thing* he must be excused. He owns he ought not to do it, but that he cannot otherwise not do it, but that he cannot otherwise keep his place, — protests that his bowing is not, nor ever shall be, as it had been, in honour to the idol, but only in honour to the king, — and therefore he hopes God will forgive him. Perhaps, all things considered, this might admit of some apology, though it was not justifiable. But, as to us, I am sure,

**(1.)** If, in covenanting with God, we make a reservation for any known sin, which we will continue to indulge ourselves in, that reservation is a

defeasance of his covenant. We must cast away all our transgressions and not except any house of Rimmon.

(2.) Though we are encouraged to pray for the remission of the sins we have committed, yet, if we ask for a dispensation to go on in any sin for the future, we mock God, and deceive ourselves.

(3.) Those that know not how to quit a place at court when they cannot keep it without sinning against God, and wronging their consciences, do not rightly value the divine favour.

(4.) Those that truly hate evil will make conscience of abstaining from all appearances of evil. Though Naaman's dissembling his religion cannot be approved, yet because his promise to offer no sacrifice to any god but the God of Israel only was a great point gained with a Syrian, and because, by asking pardon in this matter, he showed such a degree of conviction and ingenuousness as gave hopes of improvement, the prophet took fair leave of him, and bade him *Go in peace*, v. 19. Young converts must be tenderly dealt with.

## 2 KINGS 5:20-27

### NAAMAN'S GRATITUDE

Naaman, a Syrian, a courtier, a soldier, had many servants, and we read how wise and good they were, v. 13. Elisha, a holy prophet, a man of God, has but one servant, and he proves a base, lying, naughty fellow. Those that heard of Elisha at a distance honoured him, and got good by what they heard; but he that stood continually before him, to hear his wisdom, had no good impressions made upon him either by his doctrine or miracles. One would have expected that Elisha's servant should be a saint (even Ahab's servant, Obadiah, was), but even Christ himself had a Judas among his followers. The means of grace cannot give grace. The best men, the best ministers have often had those about them that have been their grief and shame. The nearer the church the further from God. *Many come from the east and west to sit down with Abraham when the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.* Here is,

**I.** Gehazi's sin. It was a complicated sin.

- 1.** The love of money, that root of all evil, was at the bottom of it. His master contemned Naaman's treasures, but he coveted them, v. 20. His heart (says bishop Hall) was packed up in Naaman's chests, and he must run after him to fetch it. Multitudes, by coveting worldly wealth, have *erred from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.*
- 2.** He blamed his master for refusing Naaman's present, condemned him as foolish in not taking gold when he might have it, envied and grudged his kindness and generosity to this stranger, though it was for the good of his soul. In short, he thought himself wiser than his master.
- 3.** When Naaman, like a person of accomplished manners, alighted from his chariot to meet him (v. 21), he told him a deliberate lie, that his master sent him to him, and so he received that courtesy to himself that Naaman intended to his master.
- 4.** He abused his master, and basely misrepresented him to Naaman as one that had soon repented of his generosity, that was fickle, and did not know his own mind, that would say and unsay, swear and unswear, that would not do an honourable thing but he must presently undo it again. his story of the two sons of the prophets was as silly as it was false; if he would have begged a token for two young scholars, surely less than a talent of silver might serve them.
- 5.** There was danger of his alienating Naaman from that holy religion which he had espoused, and lessening his good opinion of it. he would be ready to say, as Paul's enemies suggested concerning him (<sup><47216></sup>2 Corinthians 12:16, 17), that, though Elisha himself did not burden him, yet being crafty he caught him with guile, sending those that made a gain of him. We hope that he understood afterwards that Elisha's hand was not in it, and that Gehazi was forced to restore what he had unjustly got, else it might have driven him to his idols again.
- 6.** His seeking to conceal what he had unjustly got added much to his sin.
  - (1.)** He hid it, as Achan did his gain, by sacrilege, in the tower, a secret place, a strong place, till he should have an opportunity of laying it out, v. 24. Now he thought himself sure of it, and applauded his own management of a fraud by which he had imposed, not only upon the prudence of Naaman, but upon Elisha's spirit of discerning, as Ananias and Sapphira upon the apostles.

(2.) He denied it: He *went in, and stood before his master*, ready to receive his orders. None looked more observant of his master, though really none more injurious to him; he thought, as Ephraim, *I have become rich, but they shall find no iniquity in me*, <sup><3178></sup>Hosea 12:8. His master asked him where he had been, “Nowhere, sir” (said he), “out of the house.” Note, One lie commonly begets another: the way of that sin is down-hill; therefore dare to be true.

**II.** The punishment of this sin. Elisha immediately called him to an account for it; and observe,

**1.** How he was convicted. he thought to impose upon the prophet, but was soon given to understand that the Spirit of prophecy could not be deceived, and that it was in vain to lie to the Holy Ghost. Elisha could tell him,

(1.) What he had done, though he had denied it. “Thou sayest thou wentest nowhere, but *went not my heart with thee?*” v. 26. Had Gehazi yet to learn that prophets had spiritual eyes? or could he think to hide any thing from a seer, from him with whom the secret of the Lord was? Note, It is folly to presume upon sin in hopes of secrecy. When thou goest aside into any by-path does not thy own conscience go with thee? Does not the eye of God go with thee? *He that covers his sin shall not prosper, particularly a lying tongue is but for a moment*, <sup><3129></sup>Proverbs 12:19. Truth will transpire, and often comes to light strangely, to the confusion of those that make lies their refuge.

(2.) What he designed, though he kept that in his own breast. He could tell him the very thoughts and intents of his heart, that he was projecting, now that he had got these two talents, to purchase ground and cattle, to leave Elisha's service, and to set up for himself. Note, All the foolish hopes and contrivances of carnal worldlings are open before God. And he tells him also the evil of it: “*Is it a time to receive money?* Is this an opportunity of enriching thyself? Couldst thou find no better way of getting money than by belying thy master and laying a stumbling-block before a young convert?” Note, Those that are for getting wealth at any time, and by any ways and means whatsoever, right or wrong, lay themselves open to a great deal of temptation. Those that will be rich (*per fas, per nefas; rem, rem, quocunque modo rem* — *by fair means, by foul means; careless of principle, intent only on money*) *drown themselves in destruction and perdition*, <sup><510></sup>1 Timothy 6:9. War, and fire, and plague, and shipwreck, are

not, as many make them, things to get money by. It is not a time to increase our wealth when we cannot do it but in such ways as are dishonourable to God and religion or injurious to our brethren or the public.

**2.** How he was punished for it: *The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to thee*, v. 27. If he will have his money, he shall take his disease with it, *Transit cum onere — It passes with this incumbrance*. He was contriving to entail lands upon his posterity; but, instead of them, he entails a loathsome disease on the heirs of his body, from generation to generation. The sentence was immediately executed on himself; no sooner said than done: *He went out from his presence a leper as white as snow*. Thus he is stigmatized and made infamous, and carries the mark of his shame wherever he goes: thus he loads himself and family with a curse, which shall not only for the present proclaim his villany, but for ever perpetuate the remembrance of it. Note, *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of those that seek death*, ~~1016~~ Proverbs 21:6. Those who get wealth by fraud and injustice cannot expect either the comfort or the continuance of it. What was Gehazi profited, though he gained his two talents, when thereby he lost his health, his honour, his peace, his service, and, if repentance prevented not, his soul for ever? See ~~1012~~ Job 20:12, etc.