

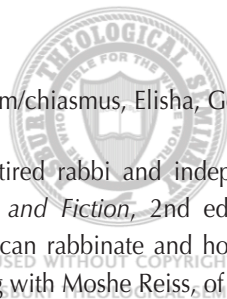
David J. Zucker  
*2 Kings 5: A Chiastic Quintet*

**Abstract:**

2 Kings 5 recounts the healing of the Aramean general Naaman through his encounter with Elisha the prophet of YHWH, and what then ensues with Elisha's attendant Gehazi. As structured the chapter reflects five sets of chiasms. This article breaks down those chiasms as it seeks to examine the story's focus in scripture.

**Keywords:** Chiastic/chiasm/chiasmus, Elisha, Gehazi, Naaman

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Chiasm in a literary setting, broadly defined “is the use of a balance of words, phrases, or themes around a pivotal center idea, provided that the order of these words, phrases, or themes is inverted in the second half over against the ordering of the first half.” The word itself is “a symbolic representation of the flow of word or theme order in such a passage diagrammed visually by plotting the parallel sections at the extremes” of the “Greek letter ‘chi’ (X) rotating around the pivotal center crossing. Chiasm, ... [is] an expression of balanced ideas.”<sup>1</sup> Put slightly differently, Chiasm [or chiasmus] “is a rhetorical device that focuses the reader’s attention on the center of the unit, where the central idea or turning point is situated.”<sup>2</sup> Chiasmus is often diagrammed as A, B, C, D, E, [X] E’, D’, C’, B’, A’. Chiasms may be a mnemonic device, or simply the author’s chosen literary structure. A study of 2 Kings 5 reflects numerous chiasms in this biblical chapter.

Set in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century BCE in the northern kingdom of Israel, 2 Kings 5 presents the narrative about the *tzaraat*-affected<sup>3</sup> Aramean general Naaman and Elisha the prophet of YHWH, as well as details about Elisha’s attendant Gehazi. Following some general comments about chapter five, this article addresses how the structure of the received (redacted) version of this chapter reflects five sets of chiasms. There is no way to know with a certainty if these chiasms stem from the authorial intent of the writer of 2 Kings 5, from the Deuteronomic Historian, or from that of the redactor of the text of the book of Kings. Indeed, the arguments for chiasms in a narrative, by their very nature can be subjective. No doubt someone else may propose a different set of chiasms. Still, the chapter allows for this quintet of chiastic readings.

The chapter demonstrates “Elisha’s, or more properly YHWH’s, power to heal Naaman and Naaman’s recognition of that power, it also points to the prophet’s and YHWH’s capacity to punish a moral wrong.”<sup>4</sup> In this chapter there are “no less than *ten* characters, or groups of characters ... Naaman, his wife, her maid, the king of Syria, the king of Israel, Elisha, Gehazi, Naaman’s servants, Elisha’s unnamed messenger, and the additional unidentified servants who carry Gehazi’s loot for him. With the marked increase in characters comes an increase in the number of subplots and ‘scene changes’ which enhance the main incident of the encounter between Naaman and Elisha.”<sup>5</sup> Undoubtedly Naaman, Elisha, and Gehazi are the main characters in this chapter. Yet as Gina Hens-Piazza points

out while the young girl from Israel, and Naaman's servants are "bit-part characters ... the supporting cast ... [they] are quite significant. Despite their abbreviated appearance in the story, they often play a pivotal role ... their direct speech ... alter[s] the course of the story."<sup>6</sup>

In terms of an overview of this chapter, Robert L. Cohn points out that "though at first glance 2 Kings 5 appears to be a single, continuous story focusing on Naaman, closer study reveals that it is comprised of three distinct units, each centering on a different character."<sup>7</sup> Cohn highlights vv. 1—14 (Elisha), 15—19 (Naaman), and 20—27 (Gehazi). Cohn correctly points out that,

Elisha is the named subject whose instruction leads to Naaman's health. Elisha, therefore, is the center of gravity in the unit. The basic story is a very simple one, which the author, conceivably, could have compressed into a few verses, like many of the other Elisha stories. It might, for instance, have run as follows:

Naaman, the commander-in-chief of the Syrian army, was valorous but leprous. When he heard of the power of Elisha, he went to Samaria to be cured. Elisha said to him, "If you would be clean, wash seven times in the Jordan." And Naaman did as the prophet said, and, behold, he was clean.

"This condensed version would seem to include the important elements, and it moves us from *problem to solution* [*my emphasis*], yet it is not equivalent to the biblical story. By weaving plot, characters, and speech around these bare bones, the biblical author has created a different story, an artful narrative. When we ask at every step *how* it is different, we begin to understand the way it functions as literature."<sup>8</sup>

Cohn's compressed version quoted above covers half of chapter five, vv. 1—14. Briefly stated, the second half of the narrative, vv. 15—27 looks like this:

Having been cured, Naaman goes to Elisha to thank him. He offers the prophet gifts which Elisha rebuffs. Naaman pledges loyalty to YHWH. He starts to return to Aram. Gehazi, Elisha's aide follows after Naaman and falsely suggests that Elisha actually wants a payment. Gehazi then takes the gifts and hides them.<sup>9</sup> Elisha confronts Gehazi about his deceptive behavior; he then curses Gehazi with *tzaraat*.

As shall be demonstrated below, to paraphrase Cohn, in the proposed chiasmus/chiastic analysis of the whole chapter, the plot moves from problem to solution to problem: from *tzaraat* to solution to *tzaraat*.

Cohn analyzes the chapter pointing out various literary matters.<sup>10</sup> For example, he notes that when introduced in the first verse, Naaman is praised as a commander of the army of the king of Aram. Naaman is a great man, someone held in high favor by his master; he is victorious and a “valorous hero/*gibbor hayil*.” Then, unexpectedly, “the author shocks the reader with the irony of Naaman’s predicament. [Naaman suffers from *tzaraat*.] The careful description of Naaman has a further purpose in the narrative. In it are planted a number of key words and ideas which will occur later in the narrative, like seeds which germinate and sprout. The first verse thus acts as a kind of *précis* in code, not deciphered until the story is complete.”<sup>11</sup>

### **The first example of the chiastic quintet**

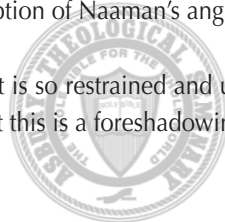
The *first* example of the chiastic quintet is quite subtle. It centers on Naaman’s actions after he has come to Elisha’s house. The prophet chooses to refrain from meeting Naaman in person. Instead, he sends a mere messenger with what appears to be a dismissive suggestion: go and immerse yourself in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman is incensed and leaves in high dudgeon. Burke O. Long characterizes the chiasm this way:

- a. A description of Naaman’s angry departure (11a)
- b. Naaman’s speech / thought (11b, 12a)
- a’. A further description of Naaman’s angry departure. (12b)<sup>12</sup>

This example is limited. It is so restrained and understated, that the reader might easily overlook that this is a foreshadowing of further chiasms in this chapter.

### **The second example of the chiastic quintet**

Like a well-written mystery story, in the *second* example of the chiastic quintet a major clue hides in plain sight. Exactly two thirds of the way through the chapter, verse 18 is itself consciously written as a chiasm,



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and a much more definitive and complex one.<sup>13</sup> In this case a-b-c-d is followed by d'-c'-b'-a'.

But may *YHWH pardon your servant on one count*: when my master goes into the *house of Rimmon* to worship there leaning on my arm, and I *bow down* in the *house of Rimmon*, when I do *bow down* in the *house of Rimmon*, may *YHWH pardon your servant on this one count* (NRSV slightly adapted).<sup>14</sup>

- a. On one count
  - b. may YHWH pardon your servant
    - c. Going to the House of Rimmon
      - d. Bowing there
        - d'. Bowing there
      - c'. In the House of Rimmon
    - b'. may YHWH pardon your servant
  - a'. on this one count.

Appearing to give obeisance to the Aramean god is what is of greatest concern to Naaman, now a believer in the worldwide power of YHWH.<sup>15</sup> Naaman forms his request of YHWH as a chiasm. In that chiastic sense v. 18 serves as the key to the structure of the whole chapter. *It is the most obvious theological message of this narrative.*

### The third example of the chiastic quintet

In fact, the totality of chapter 5 is framed in a chiastic manner. That is the *third* example of the chiastic quintet. When read as a chiasm, where the first verse is linked to the final verse, the second verse is linked to the penultimate verse, and so on until one comes to the middle verses, the proposed chiastic structure becomes clear.

The narrative begins with a description of Naaman in Aram, heroic but plagued with *tzaraat*. This is quickly followed in verse 2 which offers a direct link to the land of Israel through the presence of an Israelite *servant girl*. In verse 3, this servant speaks to Naaman's wife, and soon Naaman is on his way to Israel. The closing verses of the chapter read in *reverse order* depict Gehazi with *tzaraat* (27), mention of female and male servants (although the text uses the descriptions of *'avadim* and *shifahot*, 26), and then Elisha and Gehazi speaking together (25).

- A. Naaman *tzaraat* (1)
  - B. Female servant/attendant to Naaman's wife (2)
  - C. Two people speak: Female servant speaks to Naaman's wife; (3)
  - D. Young girl mentioned; Request to king of Israel / Naaman takes silver, gold, clothes (4, 5)
  - E. Naaman travels to Israel (6)
  - F. Consternation of king of Israel; consternation of Elisha (7, 8)
  - G. Naaman goes to Elisha (9)
  - H. Elisha sends directions to Naaman (10)
    - I. Naaman angry, discounts power of YHWH; servants (11, 12, 13)
    - J. Naaman cured, now acknowledges power of YHWH (14, 15a)
    - K. Naaman offers gift to Elisha (15b)
    - K'. Elisha refuses gift (16)
  - J'. Naaman requests earth to take with him (17)
  - I'. Naaman seeks YHWH's absolution for his future role in Aram/worship of Rimmon; Naaman
    - self-describes as servant (18)
  - H'. Elisha sends Naaman on his way (19a)
  - G'. Naaman leaves Elisha (19b)
  - F'. Consternation of Gehazi (20)
  - E'. Naaman travels from Israel (21)
  - D'. Gehazi requests / Gehazi takes Naaman's silver, clothes; young men mentioned (22, 23)
  - C'. Two people speak: Elisha and Gehazi (25, 26)
  - B'. Mention of male and female servants (26)
  - A'. Gehazi *tzaraat* (27)

As mentioned earlier, Chiasmus “is a rhetorical device that focuses the reader’s attention on the center of the unit, where the central idea or turning point is situated.” Near the heart of this narrative is the lesson that, as Naaman proclaims, “**Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel**” (15a). Yet there is an additional lesson. In the second part of the verse at the center-point of the narrative, Naaman offers a gift to Elisha the man of God (15b). Pointedly Elisha refuses the gift, stating that he only serves the living YHWH (16). Refusing this proffered gift is central to the wider narrative. It is the set-up for the second half of the chapter. To use Cohn’s phrase, it is “a kind of *précis* in code, not deciphered until the story is complete.” It is only towards the end of the chapter that one learns about Gehazi’s avarice in seeking a gift which leads to his being cursed, ironically with *tzaraat*, that same affliction which brought Naaman to Israel.

#### *Additional details*

The chiastic connections in this *third* example are also found in a more detailed way. In v. 1 Naaman is described as in “high favor *with* his master” (NRSV); “was important *to his* lord” (NJPS). In the more literal word-for-word translation, it reads “a man prominent *before* his lord” (*The Early Prophets*, Fox translation).<sup>16</sup> The actual Hebrew text reads *lifney adonav*. In the corresponding chiastic verse (v. 27), Gehazi is described with a variant form of the same word, as leaving the *presence* of his master (*milifanav*). In addition, the “narrator’s final clipped remark (v. 27b) takes us back to Naaman’s early affliction and makes this tale of reversals and contrasts into a wave doubling back on itself.”<sup>17</sup>

In v. 3 the little servant girl says to her mistress, if only Naaman “were with the prophet [in Samaria] ... he would cure him” of his *tzaraat*. The Hebrew text reads, *lifney ha-navi*, standing *before the prophet*. In the corresponding chiastic verse (v. 25), Gehazi stands *before* Elisha although a different expression is used. Nonetheless, the servant girl suggests physical movement, as does Elisha; contrastingly, Gehazi denies physical movement.

In v. 4 the girl (*naarah*) from Israel is mentioned. In the corresponding chiastic verse (v. 23), “his servants” are mentioned (*naarav*).

In v. 5 Naaman takes with him gifts, ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. In the corresponding chiastic verses (vv. 22, 23) there is mention of Gehazi asking Naaman for specific gifts and then Naaman actually giving him talents of silver and sets of garments. Gehazi will then secret those items away in v. 24a.<sup>18</sup>

In v. 7 the unnamed king of Israel,<sup>19</sup> in his consternation says, “am I God (*Elohim*) to give life or death?” In the corresponding chiastic verse (v. 20) Elisha is referred to as “the man of God” (*ish haElohim*).

In v. 8 the text speaks of “Elisha the man of God,” and one finds Elisha’s exclamation that Naaman should know that “there is a prophet in Israel.” Elisha is not drawing attention to himself by this statement, rather he is highlighting that as the prophet he represents YHWH. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 20, Gehazi is identified as the servant of “Elisha the man of God” and Gehazi refers to YHWH. There is a further, albeit more subtle connection between these verses. In v. 8 Elisha wants it understood that he is a prophet of God. Then, as shall be shown later, when offered compensation for his advice, Elisha *refuses any payment* from Naaman. By contrast, Gehazi in v. 20 runs after Naaman, specifically “to get something out of him.”

In v. 9 Naaman goes to Elisha. In the corresponding chiastic verse (19b) he takes his leave from Elisha.

In v. 11 Naaman is furious, he expected Elisha to perform some elaborate ritual. Naaman thought that the prophet would “call on the name of YHWH.” In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 18 Naaman seeks “YHWH’s pardon” when Naaman will accompany his master in future religious ceremonies when they are in the house of Rimmon (Rimmon is a play on words for the major Aramean god, Ramman).

In v. 12 Naaman makes specific reference to two rivers which are situated in *Aram*. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 18 Naaman refers to what he will need to do when he returns to *Aram*, namely accompany his master in the house of Rimmon.

Two verses, v. 13 and v. 17, are each two steps away from the center-point. In v. 13 Naaman’s servants appear to be quite grounded and practical, for they urge him to take Elisha’s suggestion at face value and that he should immerse himself in the Jordan. In v. 17 Naaman asks Elisha’s consent that the Aramean takes some earth from the Shomron back with him back to *Aram*, presumably to make an altar. Naaman’s request is both psychologically and literally grounded.

In v. 13 the servants (*avadav*) give Naaman advice; in v. 18 Naaman twice self-describes as a servant (*ʾavadekha*). “Like his servants, who minister to him, Naaman now calls himself a servant before the prophet and before” YHWH.<sup>20</sup>



In v. 14 Naaman is cured, and in v. 15a he proclaims God's power in the world. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 17, as noted he requests that he be allowed to take a quantity of earth with him back to Aram, because he will in the future only worship YHWH. This earth taken from Israel will serve as a connection for him. In v. 15a Naaman uses the phrase *ki im* (except), and the same phrase, *ki im*, appears in v. 17

In v. 15b Naaman urges Elisha to take a gift for his services *qah-na* (please *take*) and in the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 16, Elisha refuses to do so (*im-eqah* (if I will *take*)). Coincidentally Elisha echoes a trope found in Genesis 14 when Melchizedek praises Abraham (then still Abram) and wishes to reward him. Abram resolutely refuses to “take a thread or a sandal throng or anything” (Gen 14:23).

#### The fourth example of the chiastic quintet

The *fourth* example of the chiastic quintet addresses verses 1—14, the first half of the chapter. Before analysing those connections, one might note that Cohn draws attention to the fact that in v. 14, after having immersed himself seven times in the Jordan River, Naaman is cured of his *tzaraat*. When he is returned to health, “his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy” (*naar qaton*). This forms an *inclusio* with the parallel words in v. 2 describing the young Israelite girl (*naarah q'tanah*).<sup>21</sup> This opening chiasm centers on Elisha, the man of God. Truly “there is a prophet in Israel.”

When considering just the first half of this chapter by itself (vv. 1—14) one can see that there are additional chiastic patterns.

- L. Naaman has *tzaraat* (1)
- M. (servant) gives advice (2, 3)
  - N. King of *Aram* mentioned (5)
  - O. brings letter, mentions Naaman who is on his way to Israel (6)
    - P. cure for *tzaraat* sought (7)
    - Q. Elisha mentioned (8)
      - Q. Elisha mentioned (9)
  - P'. directions for *tzaraat* cure explained (10)
  - O'. Naaman angry and goes away in a fury (11)

N'. Rivers located near Damascus (capital of *Aram*) (12)

M'. servants give advice (13)

L'. Naaman cured of *tzaraat* (14)

Verse 1 ends with the statement that Naaman is plagued with *tzaraat*. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 14, he is totally cured, his *tzaraat* is gone.

In vv. 2, 3 the Israelite (servant) girl speaks to her mistress; offers advice. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 13, Naaman's servants give him advice

In v. 5 the king of *Aram* is mentioned. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 12 the rivers which are in *Aram*, near Damascus are mentioned.

In v. 6 Naaman physically travels to Israel; he brings the letter to the king of Israel. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 11 Naaman physically storms off, but clearly he still is in Israel.

In v. 7 the king of Israel is distraught, thinking that he is being asked to cure Naaman of *tzaraat*. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 10, Elisha tells Naaman what to do to rid himself of *tzaraat*: Go and immerse yourself seven times in the Jordan River.

In v. 8 Elisha, the man of God, is first mentioned. He tells the king of Israel, send Naaman to me so that he knows that there is a prophet in Israel. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 9, Naaman stands at the entrance of the house of Elisha.

### **The fifth example of the chiastic quintet**

The *fifth* and final example of the chiastic quintet addresses verses 15—27, the second half of the chapter.

Here (vv. 15—27) one can see that there are additional chiastic patterns.

R. Now cured of *tzaraat*, Naaman returns to Elisha (15)

S. Elisha refuses to *take* (*eqah*) a gift (16)

T. (Naaman, standing before Elisha, *-l'fanav-* v. 15) seeks gifts of earth to take with him (17)

U. Naaman: when back home his master will lean on his arm, literally my hand (*yadi* -18)

V. Elisha and Naaman, Naaman takes his leave presumably with the earth - (19)

W. Gehazi plans to go to Naaman to get some gifts (20)

X. Gehazi pursues Naaman (21a)

X'. Naaman descends from his chariot and greets Gehazi (21b)

W'. Gehazi asks for the gifts (22)

V'. Two anonymous servants/lads are mentioned, they leave (carrying the goods – 23)

U'. Gehazi returns with the “stolen” goods, he takes it from their hands (*yadam* - 24)

T'. Gehazi stands before, but literally against Elisha (*el adonav*); denies going anywhere (25)

S'. Gehazi reprimanded for *taking* (*laqahat* – twice) gifts (26)

R'. Gehazi, now cursed with *tzaraat*, leaves Elisha (27).

Verse 15, totally cured, his *tzaraat* gone, Naaman approaches Elisha. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 27, now newly afflicted with *tzaraat*, Gehazi leaves the presence of Elisha.

Verse 16, although offered gifts by a grateful Naaman, Elisha refuses to accept these presents. In the corresponding verse, v. 26 Elisha upbraids Gehazi for his theft of talents and clothes.

Verse 17, Naaman openly asks Elisha for a favor, he wishes to take certain items back with him to Aram, mounds of earth, presumably to build an altar. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 25, Gehazi dissembles, he lies about having followed after Naaman, and makes no mention of his deceitful acts, taking/bringing back certain items.

Verse 18 Naaman explains that back in Aram he will be asked to assist his master, who will literally lean on Naaman's *arm*. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 24, Gehazi takes off from the *hands/arms* of the servants, the stolen gifts.

Verse 19, Naaman is on his way back home northeastward to Aram. In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 23, the two young men carry the ill-gotten gifts southwestwardly back to Israel.

In verse 20, Gehazi thinks to himself, or probably says out loud, “I will run after him (Naaman) and get something out of him.” In the corresponding chiastic verse, v. 22, he claims that Elisha in effect had changed his mind, and that he had sent him (Gehazi) for some gifts.

Verse 21a. This is the center point of the fifth chiasm. In the first half of this verse Gehazi chases after Naaman, intending to defraud him.

In the second part, v. 21b, Naaman seeing that he is being sought not only stops but gets off from his chariot to interact with Gehazi personally.

### Concluding remarks

2 Kings 5 contains its own prophetic lessons about the power of God to heal, and further that God is open to effect healing for people who live outside of the land of Israel and Judah. The chapter can be read with just that message. In addition, however, the very structure of the chapter, literally and literarily shows that there are five concurrent chiasmic parts to this narrative involving the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE Aramean general Naaman and the prophet-the man-of-God Elisha, and secondarily Elisha's servant/ attendant Gehazi. These chiasms each serve somewhat different purposes. They highlight the different major personalities of this chapter, an Aramean general, a prophet in Israel, and his avaricious servant. As noted at the beginning of this article, it is impossible to know when these chiasms were set down. Further, by their very nature chiasmic structures can be subjective. Someone else may propose a different set of chiasms for this narrative. Still, the chapter allows for, at the very least, this quintet of chiasmic readings.

Verses 11—12 are the *first* chiasm. They center on Naaman's angry reaction to what he perceives to be Elisha's trivializing his *tzaraat*. He feels that the prophet is indifferent to his plight. Verse 18, the *second* chiasm discussed consists of Naaman's expression of dismay and his request to be forgiven ahead of time by YHWH when, accompanied by his master, the king of Aram, Naaman needs to be present in the house of Rimmon, the Aramean god. The whole chapter, all twenty-seven verses in themselves form the *third* chiasm, which, following Naaman's cure centers itself on Naaman's desire to present a gift to Elisha and the prophet's refusal to accept this. Verses 1—14 which form the first half of the chapter feature the *fourth* chiasmic structure which focuses on Naaman and Elisha. Verses 15—27, forming the second half of the chapter features the *fifth* and final chiasmic structure which focuses on the three main protagonists, Naaman, Elisha, and Gehazi. 2 Kings 5, a testament to the power of YHWH and of God's prophet, Elisha, is a forceful narrative in its own right. In addition, this chapter is consciously structured in such a way as to feature a quintet of chiasms, each highlighting a different viewpoint, and collectively enriching the messages of this narrative.

## End notes

<sup>1</sup> Wayne Brouwer, "The Literary Development of John 13-17: A Chiastic Reading." Ph.D. Dissertation, McMaster University (1999): 6-7. Slightly adjusted for American spelling.

<sup>2</sup> Elie Assis, "Chiasmus in Biblical Narrative: Rhetoric of Characterization." *Prooftexts*. 22(3) (2002): 273 [273-304]. As a subset of literary criticism, "rhetorical criticism ... [is] a method which only examines the present or final form of biblical texts." T. B. Dozeman, "OT Rhetorical Criticism." In D. N. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (Vol. 5). Doubleday: New York, NY (1992): 714.

<sup>3</sup> Tzaraat. "For centuries translated as 'leprosy,' the dreaded Hansen's disease, but modern scholars understand it as some sort of unsightly but not contagious or serious skin rash." Everett Fox, *The Early Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings*. Schocken Bible II. Schocken: New York, NY (2014): 721. A good description of *tzaraat* is found in Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Yale University: New Haven, CT (2008 [1988]): 63.

<sup>4</sup> Marvin A. Sweeny, *I and II Kings: A Commentary*. OTL. Westminster John Knox: Louisville, KY (2007): 296.

<sup>5</sup> T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, WBC. Word: Waco, TX (1985): 59.

<sup>6</sup> Gina Hens-Piazza, *The Supporting Cast of the Bible*. Lexington/Fortress Academic: Lanham, MD (2020): 47, 48.

<sup>7</sup> Robert L. Cohn, "Form and Perspective in 2 Kings V." *Vetus Testamentum* XXXIII, 2 (1983), 171. Van Wijk-Bos also suggests three divisions, but hers are: 1—12; 13—18; and 19—27. Johanna W. H Van Wijk-Bos, *The Land and Its Kings. 1-2 Kings*. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI (2020): 193.

<sup>8</sup> Cohn, "Form and Perspective," 173.

<sup>9</sup> Fox suggests that Gehazi hides the stolen goods at the Ofel in Jerusalem. Fox, *Early Prophets*, 725. This locale is unlikely as Hobbs explains. "Gehazi would not hide his loot in the capital city of a foreign country, nor would he live there." Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 67 n. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Long agrees with Cohn's tripartite division but offers "a slightly different model [of] a series of waves undulating along a line, each one containing within itself the energy that gives rise to the next ... The waves roll toward a shoreline, where originary energy subsides." Burke O. Long, *2 Kings. The Forms of the Old Testament Literature* (FOTL). Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI (1991): 68-69.

<sup>11</sup> Cohn, "Form and Perspective," 173, 174.

<sup>12</sup> Long, *2 Kings*, 71.

<sup>13</sup> Robert L. Cohn, *2 Kings. Berit Olam*. Liturgical Press, Michael Glazier: Collegeville, MN (2000): 39. Cohn suggests that in a broad sense chiasmic structures are found throughout *2 Kings*. Cohn, *2 Kings*, 4 n. 4. The chiasm suggested here, however, differs somewhat from that of Cohn. For another understanding of this chiasmic verse, see Assis, 280-282. Cogan and Tadmor write that most “commentators have noted the repetition of the phrases ‘in this thing’ and ‘to bow down’; they have excised one or the other, considering them ‘a misplaced gloss’ (Stade) or ‘clumsy’ (Montgomery-Gehrman). But the wordiness of Naaman’s statement reflects his halting speech, as he apologizes for his continued worship of the god Rimmon, a custom which he perceives to be offensive to Israel’s God.” Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 65 n. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Although the English translations in NRSV and NJPS begin with the phrase “May YHWH pardon your servant,” the Hebrew begins with “on one count” ... *ladavar hazeh*.

<sup>15</sup> Cogan and Tadmor suggest that “Naaman’s conversion is ... an expression of ‘ancient Israelite universalism,’ an idea which surfaces frequently in the Elijah-Elisha cycles of stories,” Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 67. “Elisha seems unconcerned that Naaman is an Aramean ... he even seems unconcerned that Naaman will accompany his master to a foreign god’s temple. Rather what seems to be important to Elisha is the fact that Naaman has been converted to Israel’s God.” Alice L. Laffey, *First and Second Kings. New Collegeville Bible Commentary*. Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN (2011): 102.

<sup>16</sup> Fox, *Early Prophets*, 721.

<sup>17</sup> Long, *2 Kings*, 76.

<sup>18</sup> Van Wijk-Bos draws a parallel with the items stolen by Achan at the time of Joshua (Josh 7:19—21), Van Wijk-Bos, *1-2 Kings*, 198 n. 157. Achan, however confesses his wrongdoing, Gehazi denies wrongdoing.

<sup>19</sup> The monarchs of both Aram and Israel are unnamed. Hobbs suggests that they probably are Ben Hadad I of Aram and Jehoram of Israel. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 63 n. 5. An alternative view for the Israelite king is Ahab. Laffey, *First and Second Kings*, 167.

<sup>20</sup> Hens-Piazza, *Supporting Cast*, 62.

<sup>21</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 38.

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