

## ~PHARPAR (36) (Phar'par)

- **One of the two rivers of Damascus** that Naaman considered superior to all the waters of Israel.
- Are not the Abanah and the **Pharpar**, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Can I not bathe in them and certainly be clean? With that he turned and went away in a rage. (2 Kings 5:12)
- The fact that Naaman mentioned the **Pharpar** second may indicate that it was the smaller stream. This river is usually linked with the **Nahr el-ʿAʿwaj**. Besides the **Nahr Barada**, identified with the Abanah, it is the only independent stream in the Damascus area.
- But the volume of the **ʿAʿwaj** is about one quarter that of the Barada. The smaller streams that unite to form the **ʿAʿwaj** take their rise on the eastern slopes of Mount Hermon and merge about 30 kilometers (19 miles) Southwest of Damascus.
- From this point the river winds its way through a deep rocky channel until finally losing itself in a swamp to the Southeast of Damascus. The airline distance spanned by this river, including its sources, is about 64 kilometers (40 miles)
- The major objection raised to the above identification is that the **ʿAʿwaj** is not actually a river of Damascus, since it flows about 15 kilometers (9.5 miles) and more to the South of that city.
- For this reason some favor identifying the **Pharpar** with the **Nahr Taura**, a branch of the **Nahr Barada**. However, Naaman's reference to Damascus could have included the Plain of Damascus through which the **Nahr el-ʿAʿwaj** courses.