

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Healing of Naaman

The scripture reading for this article can be found in 2 Kings 5:1-19. Naaman was a captain of the army of the king of Aram. Because of Naaman the Lord had given victory in battle to King Aram. Naaman was a valiant warrior but was a leper.

Because of the nature of this disease, the leper was often considered as dead. In Israel, according to the Law, lepers were excluded from society as a picture of sin and its effects. God used leprosy as a reminder to Israel of His holiness. Cleansing a leper meant being restored to a normal life. "Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, 'I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria!'" (2 Kings 5:2-3). Because of God's grace, this little slave girl came into Naaman's life as an instrument of God's love.

Though small, weak, and insignificant, this little girl knew the sovereign Lord of the universe with whom there was healing. Naaman went in and told the king what the little girl from Israel had told him. "Then the king of Aram said, 'Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.'" Naaman departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothes. The letter from King Aram said, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy. It came about that when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, 'Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy?'"

In verses 4-7, we have an excellent illustration of how salvation cannot be obtained by goods and riches. Naaman believed he could have a part in his healing and was trusting in his power, position, and riches. He thought that God's grace would heal him based on terms of favoritism, the leverage of power, and wealth. Naaman was sent to the king of Israel rather than the prophet of God.

Now it happened when Elisha "the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes that he sent word to the king, saying, 'Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.'" Elisha was in the likeness of Jesus when He said "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (forgiveness of sins) Matt. 11:28.

Naaman represents the seeking soul of today, one in need of the Lord. The leprosy of Naaman is in the likeness of sin which starts small and then spreads through the life of a sinner. Because of man's sin there is separation from God (Isa. 59:1-2). Mankind is in a spiritually dead condition because of the hardness of his heart (Isa. 59:9-13). He becomes insensitive, calloused, restless, and never satisfied.

So Naaman came and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha. Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you and you shall be clean." This made Naaman furious and went away and said, "Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord, his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper." Then his servants came and spoke to him and said, "My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" So then Naaman dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.

In the New Testament Jesus told us how to be saved and how our sins can be washed away so we can be made clean (John 3:5; Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38, 22:16). However, false teachers and the religious world are just like Naaman and become furious because they have their own idea how one is to be washed and be made clean from their sins. They are unwilling to obey the simple command that one must hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe (Acts 16:30-31), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Romans 10:9-10), be baptized (1 Peter 3:21), and continue to be faithful (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Naaman's leprosy would not have been healed if he had not been obedient to exactly what the prophet Elisha said he needed to do to become clean. Our sins [leprosy] would not be forgiven [cleansed] if we are not obedient to exactly what Jesus and the apostles told us to do to be cleansed from our sins (Ephesians 2:20-22).

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