

NAAMAN THE SYRIAN

TEXT: II KINGS 5:1-15

Introduction:

1. Naaman was the captain of the Syrian army. He is described as “a great man with his master, and honorable” (II Kings 5:1).
2. This means Naaman was a man of influence, and prestige. He was "a great man" like George Washington or Douglas MacArthur or the Duke of Wellington.
3. Naaman was "a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper”
4. It was approximately 895 BC. Syria was a heathen country to the north of Israel, and they were frequently at war with Israel. Things have not changed much in 3,000 years!
5. In this story of Naaman the Syrian, the king of Syria is referred to but not his name (5:5).
6. Also, the king of Israel is referred to but not his name (5:5). This is because the emphasis is on God, not on mortal kings. Psalm 10:16 says, “The LORD is King for ever.”
7. By the way, most scholars believe the King of Syria at this time was Ben Hadad II, and the King of Israel was Joram.
8. Besides Naaman, the king of Syria, and the king of Israel, there are some other interesting characters in this story. There is a little Jewish maid, who worked for Naaman’s wife (5:2). We’re not told her name either, but we are told that this little maid knew the Lord (5:3).
9. Rather than being worried or bitter about being brought as a captive to Syria, she was content working for Naaman's wife, and suggested that Naaman go to Israel to be healed of his leprosy (5:3).
10. Though far from home and from her country, she never forgot her God.
11. And there is the prophet Elisha (5:3, 8). Our Lord said in Luke 4:27, "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."
12. Even the great prophet Elisha stayed in the background, because the emphasis here is on God. God healed Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy.

I. NAAMAN NEEDED THE LORD

II. NAAMAN WENT SEEKING AFTER THE LORD

III. NAAMAN RESISTED THE LORD

IV. NAAMAN TRUSTED THE LORD

I. NAAMAN NEEDED THE LORD (5:1-3).

1. Please note that little phrase at the end of II Kings 5:1 – “but he was a leper.” In the Bible, leprosy is a picture and type of sin. Leprosy is incurable by human means, and so is sin.
2. Leprosy has a tendency to spread, and so does sin. Leprosy defiles and so does sin.
3. Leviticus 13:3 says leprosy is deeper than the skin, and so is sin.
4. Only God can cure leprosy and only God can save a sinner.
5. NOTE: Lepers were not excluded from society in pagan countries. But God gave Israel a law regarding how they were to carefully segregate lepers to keep the disease from spreading. Today, all over the world lepers are kept in leper colonies. And that is because God gave Israel instructions about this many years before the other nations realized it was necessary.
6. Another interesting fact is found in II Kings 5:1. Naaman probably did not realize it but it was God who gave him his victory over the Assyrians.
7. God has a covenant and a special relationship with the nation Israel. They are referred to as His “chosen people.” However, God is also the LORD of all the nations.
8. God is referred to as the "King of nations" in Jeremiah 10:7.
9. Psalm 47:7, 8 says, "For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness."
10. We see the providence of God and the grace of God in II Kings 5:2. God had placed a Jewish girl in Naaman’s house to be his wife’s maid. And this little maid knew the Lord.
11. God uses little people. This little maid had a genuine burden for Naaman the Syrian (5:3). Do you have this same burden? This concern for all the lost sinners around you?
12. God uses little people. God took her simple words and carried them to the king of Syria (5:4, 5).
13. This little maid’s witness was so sincere and so convincing, that Naaman’s wife reported what she said to her husband, who in turn told the king of Syria.

II. NAAMAN WENT SEEKING AFTER THE LORD (5:4-10).

1. God was at work in the life of Naaman, though Naaman did not know it. God gave him the victory over the Assyrians (5:1), and God placed a Jewish maid in his home (5:2, 3).

2. This led to the king of Syria writing a letter of introduction for Naaman (5:4, 5). Naaman also brought along “ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment” (5:5). That was a large sum of money, and no doubt the clothing was very costly as well.
3. The Jewish maid said nothing about money or expensive gifts, but worldly people often assume that money can find favor with God.
4. Remember Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8. “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:18, 19).
5. Sometimes when I am out knocking on doors, an unsaved man will show absolutely no interest in the Gospel, but as I am leaving he will offer to “make a donation.”
6. Unsaved people need to get saved first, then they can learn about stewardship, and tithing, and supporting missionaries, etc.
7. Salvation does not come by giving, but by receiving. “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:12).
8. The sinner does not give. God gives. “For God so loved the world, that He gave...”
9. Joram, the king of Israel was not a saved man. In fact, after God split the nation of Israel in two there was not one good king in Israel. They were all wicked sinners. (There were some godly kings in Judah – Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Hezekiah, Josiah, and a few others, but none in Israel)
10. King Joram was a worldly, unsaved man. He misunderstood the king of Syria’s letter. He misunderstood the king of Syria’s intentions (5:6, 7). He thought the king of Syria was starting trouble (5:7b)
11. God was providentially working behind the scenes. God was providentially working in the life of Naaman the Syrian, but the king of Israel was without a clue.
12. Most people are like Joram, the king of Israel. Joram had a good heritage. He probably considered himself a believer in Jehovah God, just like most Americans claim to be “Christian.”
13. But the king of Israel did not know what God was doing, just like most Americans do not know what God is doing. But Elisha the prophet knew what God was doing.

14. Upon hearing of the matter, Elisha sent word to the king, “Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel” (5:8).
15. Soon Naaman and his entourage were at Elisha’s front door (5:9). Elisha did not bother to personally answer the door. This is significant. Elisha knew that Naaman had to be humbled before he could be healed.
16. Naaman expected a big reception (cf. 5:11a). After all, he “was a great man” (5:1). He was “a mighty man in valor” (5:1).
17. But Elisha did not go out to greet Naaman. Instead he sent a messenger with some instructions (5:10).
18. This brings us to my next point.

III. NAAMAN RESISTED THE LORD (5:11, 12).

1. We are told that the distance from Elisha’s house to the Jordan River was about 32 miles (5:10). Damascus was over 100 miles away. That was quite a distance on horseback. “Naaman was wroth” (5:11).
2. He thought Elisha would come out of his house and heal Naaman instantly (5:11).
3. But God does not always do things the way we expect Him to. In fact oftentimes He does things much differently than the way we expected.
4. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8, 9).
5. Naaman was a proud man, but the Bible says, “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (I Peter 5:5).
6. Naaman was offended that Elisha would have him dip into the Jordan River seven times (5:10). The great evangelist, D.L. Moody, preached a message on Naaman the Syrian and said this, “Ah, that is just the trouble. He had marked out a way of his own for the prophet to heal him, and was mad because he didn’t follow his plans.”
7. God does not care to follow our plans. We need to learn to do things God’s way, whether we understand it or not.
8. The LORD told Joshua and his army to march around the city of Jericho for six days with the priests blowing their trumpets (Joshua 6).
9. Gideon's victory over the Midianites was also very unusual.
10. Naaman would have questioned the LORD about these military tactics. But the LORD says, "Your ways are not my ways."

11. If you are saved, then God's ways should please you! And if you are not saved, nothing you do can please God because the Bible says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).
12. Naaman thought his healing came from the water so if that was the case he figured, "Why travel to Israel?" (5:11, 12).
13. But healing does not come from the water – it comes from God. And salvation does not come from water (baptism) but from God.
14. Naaman "turned and went away in a rage" (5:12b). Oftentimes sinners get real mad before they get saved.
15. And this brings us to my fourth and final point.

IV. NAAMAN TRUSTED THE LORD (5:13-15).

1. Just as God used a little maid to bring Naaman this close to salvation, He now uses one of Naaman's servants to try and reason with him (5:13).
2. Elisha was not asking Naaman to do something difficult or impossible. He was asking him to do something quite simple.
3. Sinner friend, God is not asking you to do something difficult or impossible. It is quite simple – "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."
4. Naaman swallowed his pride. Naaman humbled himself. Naaman obeyed Elisha's instructions and submitted himself to God (5:14).
5. In like manner, sinners need to swallow their pride, and humble themselves, and submit to God.
6. When Naaman swallowed his pride, and humbled himself, and obeyed Elisha's instructions, and submitted himself to God, his leprosy disappeared.
7. When Naaman came up out of the Jordan River the seventh time his leprosy was all gone. By his obedience he demonstrated his faith in God's promises.
8. Again I will quote Moody, "He lost his temper; then he lost his pride; then he lost his leprosy; that is generally the order in which proud rebellious sinners are converted."

CONCLUSION:

1. This interesting story can be outlined this way:
2. Naaman's description -- "a great man" (5:1).
3. Naaman's opportunity -- his little maid told how he could be healed.
4. Naaman's mistakes -- he went to the wrong man. He went to the unsaved king of Israel. The little maid said to go to Elisha the prophet (5:3).
5. Naaman's mistakes -- he thought he could be healed with money (5:5).

6. Naaman's mistakes -- “Behold, I thought...” This is still a problem today.
Sinners think they understand God’s ways but they really do not. They want to come to God on their terms, rather than God’s terms.
7. They do not want to repent of their sin. They do not want to humble themselves.
8. “Behold, I thought...”
 - thought I could be saved by my good works
 - thought if my good deeds outweighed my bad deeds
 - thought I was all right
 - thought everything was OK because I was baptized
 - thought you did not have to be born again, etc.
9. Naaman's cure -- he humbled himself, and then he went down, "and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (5:14).
10. Naaman's testimony (5:15).