

## Cleansing

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### 2 Kings 5:1-14

We have something unique in this account that we do not see too much in the bible. That is, a testimony from scripture that by the hand of Naaman, a Syrian general no doubt, that the Lord had given deliverance to Syria. We do not know what oppression Syria might have been under, but we know that this Hebrew word (deliverance) indicates a victory or rescue. We can tell though that whatever victory Syria had experienced, they ended up with Israelites as slaves. It is possible that they actually made war and delivered themselves from subjection to Israel. We note that in **1 Kings 22**, Syria warred against Israel during the reign of Ahab who was killed during that battle and this could have been the battle in which the Lord allowed Syria to get the victory spoken of here. At any rate, we have an account here about Naaman that gives us a great message about human attitudes and how they run counter to the truths and realities of God. Naaman's experience in seeking to be cleansed from leprosy gives us an excellent type of lost people, their preconceptions about salvation, and God's way of providing it.

I. Coming into God's presence with pomp, pride, arrogance, and a sense of status is a bad start

- horses and chariot: Naaman was somebody to the world (**Ch. 5, v.1**); he was a hero in Syria; he was the right-hand man of the king of Syria; the king of Syria knew he could bully the King of Israel; Naaman knew that his king could bully the king of Israel; Naaman had just traveled in a limousine from Syria to Elisha's door; Elisha was just a common servant of the king of Israel
- Note however, that **v. 1** also says, "but he was a leper." which accurately symbolizes the condition of all natural humans, regardless of status in the world.
- stood at the door: Naaman was not standing with his hat in his hand; he was standing because that was a posture of demanding; Naaman was standing and demanding; if Naaman had a proper sense of his rank before the mighty God of heaven he would have been kneeling...not to worship Elisha, but to petition Elisha's God

humans habitually act arrogant before God; it is out of ignorance and pride, just as it was with Naaman

II. God will be certain to challenge this arrogance with a response that reveals how much above such pride He is: **v. 10** "sent a messenger...."

- Nebuchadnezzar learned this critical lesson in his confrontation with God and after 7 years of acting like an animal, he was able to say (**Dan. 4:37**) "... those that walk in pride he is able to abase."
- There is a really crisp statement by the Lord in **Ezekiel 18:4** that captures the reality of the status of every one of us in creation. At the same time, this statement should be a powerful reminder that arrogance before God is foolishness. "Behold, all souls are mine...."
- **Job 41:34** He beholdeth all high *things*: he *is* a king over all the children of pride.
- James

III. The message from God demanding humility and obedience to His way will not alter for the proud (go wash seven times in Jordan)

- There is not enough prestige or status on earth to alter the decree of God concerning the way of salvation
- Cleansing from spiritual leprosy can only happen through the washing away of sin by the blood of Jesus Christ
  - > **Act 4:12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.
  - > In **Rev. 1:5** Christ is identified as “...him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood....”

IV. The arrogant man will be offended by the abasement that God’s solution for cleansing demands: **v. 11-12**

- “I thought” is the death knell to listening to what God thinks
  - > Carnal man has his own fantasies about how the cleansing of God is supposed to occur:
- “...he will surely come out to me” reveals that the hearts of carnal men imagine that God will condescend to them (Jesus Christ humbled Himself once in providing the way to salvation, but the road of salvation for a human is a road of repentance and obedience to the gospel)
- **v. 12** - The human mind always imagines that there is a better way to be cleansed than abasing oneself before God on the merits of a lowly Jew who was condemned and put to death as a criminal.

V. **v. 13** - when God intends to circumvent the rebellious spirit of a natural man, he will always have a faithful servant standing by to speak the final words which work by the Holy Spirit to give the unregenerate a new heart with power

- notice that for all their power, the message of Elisha, and the words of that servant he sent did not result in stopping the arrogance of Naaman, but the timely words of those lowly servants of Naaman’s afterwards did)
- Hard hearts ought to never be a deterrent to us in providing timely wisdom from God’s word.
- The simplicity of the gospel message about cleansing is THAT message which converts the soul.

VI. **v. 14** - There is a certainty that a person will be cleansed when he obeys God

- “go wash in Jordan seven times” stands as a symbol of the challenge to humans to just obey God and nothing more or less
- It must be according to God’s pattern; according to God’s design; on His terms only
- When the Philippian jailer asked that question, (Acts 16:30) “sirs what must I do to be saved,” Paul said simply, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” That is the simple truth that humans must obey in order to be saved.