

The story of Naaman is one of the greatest illustrations of how God calls and brings His elect out of the world and into His spiritual family (*Col. 1:12-13*). The Lord said, “*They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*” (*Mark 2:17*). As great as Naaman was, he was sick unto death. He was a man of high rank and power as “*captain of the host [army] of the king of Syria.*” “*He was also a great man with his master [the king], and honourable.*” “*He was also a mighty man in valour, BUT HE WAS A LEPER.*” Naaman is typical of the spiritual condition of all fallen sinners by nature (*Rom. 5:12*). We all fell in Adam and are sick unto death with spiritual leprosy which is sin (*Rom. 3:9-20,23*). Leprosy in the Bible is a type of sin (*Isa. 1:4-6*). Only the Lord God could cure this disease by a miracle. It is the same with our sin and depravity. Man’s efforts are always futile, but God alone can cure the dreaded and deadly disease of sin. The significance of the story of Naaman, the leper, illustrates this great truth - It shows how that in the salvation of sinners the Lord God humbles us and brings us down in the depths of our sin, depravity, and helplessness to cure the awful disease of sin. It shows how God’s way of salvation is the only way of salvation and brings us to Christ (*John 6:44-45*).

Another very important truth brought out in the story of Naaman is that as God sovereignly chose whom He would cure of this awful physical disease, He also sovereignly chooses whom He will save from the awful spiritual disease of sin. God has chosen a people from every tribe and nation, both Jew and Gentile (*Luke 4:27*), and He saves none based on their persons or works (*Rom. 9:15-16*). Consider how these truths are brought out in the story of Naaman, the leper.

**(2 Kings 5:1)** - Naaman had many commendable traits but something was seriously wrong which made it all useless. He was a great man among men, honorable and mighty in valour, but he was a leper! Disease and death flowed through his veins, incurable by human means. There are fleshly differences among men, but all men have one thing in common which makes all that they are and have eternally and spiritually useless - “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (*Rom. 3:23*). Sin and death are within us by birth, nature, and choice and are incurable by human means (*Eph. 2:11-12; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 5:12*). Our sinful human nature makes even our righteousnesses filthy rags (*Isa. 64:6*). Naaman’s leprosy symbolizes the total depravity of all people by nature. But as leprosy is a physical disease in the blood, sin is a spiritual disease of the heart (the mind, affections, and will (*Matt. 15:18-19*)). Naaman knew his sickness was incurable. By nature we do not know the reality of our sin-sickness. We are all self-righteous and think too highly of ourselves when we imagine that salvation is conditioned on our works and/or wills. But when God purposes to call us, He brings us to realize our sinfulness and drives us to Christ, the great Physician, for the only cure, His blood and righteousness imputed (*John 16:8-11*).

**(2 Kings 5:2-4)** - By God’s providence Naaman heard from a captive girl that there was a cure in Israel. She told Naaman’s wife that he needed to go to the prophet in Israel. Naaman told the king of this news, and the king told him to go to Israel and find the cure. By nature, we are all ignorant of the Gospel of Christ by which God reveals the only cure for sin (*Rom. 10:1-4*). We have to hear God’s Word to know how He saves sinners His grace through Christ (*Rom. 1:16-17; 10:13-17*).

**(2 Kings 5:5-7)** - Instead of going to the prophet, as he was told, Naaman went to the king. Naaman’s opinion was to go to the noblest instead of a lowly prophet, but the king of Israel

had no cure for Naaman. Even the best physicians who diagnose our diseases but present no cure can only give us bad news (*Luke 8:43-48*). The good news (the Gospel) brings sinners to Christ, the great Physician, Who has the only cure for our disease. Naaman went with a letter of recommendation from his king and with gold, silver, and other gifts to buy deliverance. This illustrates our natural aversion to God's way of salvation from sin. We want salvation, but we want it OUR way so that we can glory (*Prov. 14:12; 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:14*). It is foolish to seek salvation by our religious attempts to find favor with God by our works. The natural man wants to work and earn salvation? (*Matt. 7:21-22; Mark 10: 17*). Instead of coming to Christ as guilty sinners with nothing in our hands, we come bearing our morality, works, decisions, baptism, and church membership. God's way of salvation is Christ alone. All that God requires and all that sinners need are fulfilled in Christ (*Col. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 4:4-5*).

**(2 Kings 5:8)** - God's prophet, Elisha, heard of the king's sorrow, and he sent a message to the king to send Naaman to him to receive the cure. The Lord God always sends His messenger to call His people unto Himself and bring them to Christ (*John 6:44-45*). This prophet of God represents Christ, who is our prophet, priest, and king (*Deut. 18:17-19; Heb. 1:1-2*). Salvation is of the Lord in its origination, execution, application, sustaining power, and ultimate perfection. How foolish it is to turn anywhere or to anyone else. If we go to the law, it condemns us (*Rom. 3:19-20*). Christ, our Lord, is the only physician who can cure our disease. His blood alone cleanses us from all sin. His righteousness imputed to us and received by God-given faith is the only way of justification before God.

**(2 Kings 5:9-12)** - When Naaman finally came to the prophet of God, he came with the wrong attitude. He stood proudly outside the humble dwelling of Elisha. He wanted to be treated as a great man who happened to have leprosy, when in reality he was only a leper who happened to be a great man. Elisha knew his pride and arrogance and would not come out to meet him but instructed him to strip off his earthly garb of glory and wash in the muddy Jordan seven times. How degrading this appeared to Naaman! Sinners today want special recognition, special attention, and the praise and honor of men, even in their religious professions (*John 5:42-44*). We, like Naaman, want to be treated as great ones who happen to be sinners, instead of what we are - sinners who, for a while, may have certain status among worms. There is none good nor righteous (*Rom. 3:10-11*). Washing in the Jordan river seven times illustrates the precious blood of Christ Who took our death upon Himself based on our sins imputed to Him, went under the wrath of God for us, and finished the work of redemption (*Heb. 10:14*).

Naaman had wrong thoughts about mercy. He said, "I thought, he will surely come out to me and call on his God." Naaman's way (which would preserve his own pride and position) and God's way (which would humble the proud leper and give God all the glory) were opposites. Salvation by free grace, through the righteousness and cross of the Lord Jesus, is offensive to natural man (*1 Cor. 1:18-24*). Our thoughts are not God's thoughts, and our ways are not God's ways (*Isa. 55:6-9*). Total depravity offends man's dignity, divine revelation offends man's wisdom, and the blood of the cross offends man's pride. God will humble us before Himself, or He will destroy us.

**(2 Kings 5:13-14)** - Naaman was finally humbled by God, and he went down. He came down from his pride and bowed to the way of God. When sinners are ready and made willing (*Psalms 110:3*) to quit trying to establish a righteousness of our own and bow to the Lord Jesus Christ to receive salvation as the free gift of God, they will be saved (*Matt. 5:3-6; Matt. 9:10-13; John 1:12-13*). This is a miracle of God's grace and power in saving His people from their sins.