

Go and Wash in the Jordan River (II Kings 5:1-19)

Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man... He was also a mighty man of valor, but Naaman was a leper. Leprosy is a chronic disease caused by bacteria. The skin, nerves and eyes are affected. It is a progressive and permanent disease causing the loss of ability to feel pain. Naaman, seemingly a great man, with high position of commander of the army of king of Syria, was a victim of this dreadful disease. It was then an incurable disease. Dark days were ahead for him. Because it is a contagious disease, he probably would have had to move away from every body, abandon his social life to isolation. But in the midst of his turmoil a small voice came from a young maid. She had been taken captive by the Syrians from the land of Israel and was now serving Naaman's wife. "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy", she suggested. These were words from an insignificant maid. Naaman was a man of high rank in the army; normally someone in this position would not have heeded to a maid. But Naaman was desperate. He had to put pride aside, his health was much more important. Who knows but that for a time such as this, this young girl had been captured?

Naaman, a man who did not know the true God of Israel, neither about His power, was about to know Him through the work of the prophet Elisha. He left for Israel in pursuit of his healing with the blessings of gifts for Israel's king. But that was the wrong door he had come to and almost got into trouble with Israel's king, for he was Israel's enemy. However when Elisha, the prophet, heard about it he told the king, Let Naaman come now to me and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel (II Kings 5:8). Let it be known to Naaman that the true God is the God of Israel; the God who performs miracles, the Creator of all living things. Let it be known to Naaman that nothing is impossible for the true living God of Israel. Naaman then went to see Elisha, the prophet. But Elisha sent a messenger to meet him, instead, with a message that irritated Naaman greatly, to go and wash in the Jordan River.

When Naaman was about to receive his healing, he rebelled against the idea of washing in the River Jordan. He said, Are not Abana and Parpar, the river of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in rage (II Kings 5:12). Naaman had forgotten that he was not to be in the position of commander at that time, but in the position of a subject under the authority of God. Although he had lost focus, his servants came near him and advised him to follow the directions. They said, My father, if the prophet had bid you to do some great thing, would you not have done? How much rather, then, when he says to you, Wash and be clean (II Kings 5:13)? Our God is merciful and patient with us when we rebel against Him, by giving us another chance, just like in Naaman's case, when He used Naaman's servants to guide him in the direction of his healing. The message sent to Naaman was to wash in the Jordan seven times, and was guaranteed by the words, "your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean" (II Kings 5:10). The message sent to Naaman was with instructions and with assurance of his healing. There was not a maybe, but "Your flesh shall be restored and your will be clean". Why not only one time, why seven times he had to wash in the Jordan River? Because the number seven is of great significance in the Bible; it

means completeness, perfection and wholeness. Naaman was about to experience the complete healing in the waters of the Jordan River; not only physical, but also spiritual healing. The meaning of the number seven was to be completed in him.

Leprosy symbolizes sin. It is the outward picture of the innermost. Many Christians are suffering the symptoms of leprosy without realizing it. They have been in this state so long until they have no more feeling of conviction of sin. Like lepers whose nerves have lost the ability to feel pain. They have no regard of the presence of the Holy Spirit and continuously grieve Him. The Holy Spirit is the symbol of water, the cleansing power available for all believers who are spiritually leprous. He calls them to come to submerge in the Living Water for complete cleansing. Naaman was completely healed when he accepted the waters of the Jordan River. No other river would have had the power to heal him. He went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, as the man of God had said, and his flesh was restored like that of a little child, and he was clean. He returned to the man of God and made a proclamation: Behold now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel (verse 15b)! Gehazi, Elisha's servant however, guided by the lust of the eye, went after Naaman's gift which Elisha had rejected and he lied to him saying, "My master has sent me to say, There have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets. I pray you; give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments (verse 22) and Naaman did so. When Gehazi came in to the presence of his master Elisha, he asked him the question: Where have you been, Gehazi? Your servant, he said, went nowhere (verse 25). Gehazi tried to hide his sin with more lies and had to pay the consequences. Naaman's leprosy cleaved to him and to his offspring forever, according to the words of the prophet Elisha. That was tragic for Gehazi and his family. He saw Elisha no more and died a leper. There was no water for him to bath in to be healed. That's the picture of the consequence of sin in one's life. Gehazi was continuously in the presence of the man of God; he had seen and experienced the power of God in Elisha; he knew God was real. But he suffered from spiritual leprosy; he was spiritually numb and became its victim.

Israel and Judah have refused and despised the waters of Shiloah that go gently and rejoice in and with Rezin (Isa. 8:6b). The waters that would cleanse them and make them whole; Israel, in her leprosy did not know her Lord; she had not listened to His calling to be clean, because Israel was a nation loaded with iniquity, they were offspring of evildoers, sons who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One... they have become utterly estranged (Is. 1:3,4). Israel became victim of her spiritual leprosy. But the Lord continued calling her to repentance. Come now, He said, and let us reason together, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool, (Isaiah 1:18).

When YAHSHUA lived here on earth, He cured many from physical leprosy, but those who suffered from innermost leprosy—the spiritual kind, rejected Him and died in their leprosy. John introduced Him as the Lamb of God that washes away the sins (leprosy) of the world; he offered Israel the solution for their sins in the person of their Messiah, but Israel did not want to be cleansed. O Jerusalem, said the Lord, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved! How long shall you iniquitous and grossly offensive thoughts lodge within you (Jeremiah

4:14)? As a result of not heeding to the voice of God Israel was severely punished in their leprosy. YAHSUA continued calling Israel to repentance, many years later, when He came to live among them. Before He went to the cross to pay the ultimate price for the sin (leprosy) of the world, He said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who continue to kill the prophets and to stone those who are sent to you! How often I have desired and yearned to gather your children together as a hen her young under her wings, but you would not; behold, your house is forsaken, and I tell you, you will not see Me again until the time comes when you shall say, blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord (Luke 13:14)!

The word of God is the fountain of living water, where we can be washed and cleansed. YAHSUA the Messiah will present His bride to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things, sanctified by the washing of water with His word (Eph. 5: 26, 27). He is the Word, the life of His bride. He has given her eternal life through the new birth of water and the Spirit. For every time that Naaman submerged in the water of the Jordan River something was happening in his innermost. When he submerged the seventh time, then he was made complete physically and spiritually. He experienced peace and joy and rested from all his anxieties. He had been made new. His leprosy had been washed away and by faith his spirit was renewed and born again. After being cleanse from leprosy, he said to Elisha, I pray you, let there be given to me, your servant, two mules burden of earth. For your servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice to other gods, but only to the Lord; in this thing may the Lord pardon your servant; when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, may the Lord pardon your servant in this thing. Elisha said to him, Go in peace. So Naaman departed from him (II Kings 5:17-19a). Elisha confirmed his new birth by sending him away with peace.

When cleansed by the washing of water with the word, from all sin (leprosy) the believer will be sanctified and ready to be presented to his Lord and Savior, YAHSUA. Have you been cleansed from the leprosy of sin? YAHSUA is the way the truth and life; turn to Him today to be submerged in the Living Water for your spiritual healing.