

2 Kings 5:1-19 • God's Conduit

Introduction

There are many times throughout the Bible wherein one person coming to know God personally results in entire groups or nations coming to Him. Philip witnessed but to one Ethiopian who would bring the Gospel to his entire nation; Solomon won over the Queen of Sheba; one little boy's lunch of fish and bread was used to feed thousands. It's the repeated demonstration of our willingness to be a conduit of God's Word in every circumstance so that **HIS** name is multiplied, not our own.

¹Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, but he was a leper.

[Read v.1]

Q: What is so unusual about Naaman?

A: He is a Gentile from the nation of Aram, but it is widely recognized that God has used him greatly. One might refer to him as a conduit of God, someone through whom God worked, even though he's not an Israelite.

Q: What other famous Jew came from Aram?

A: This is a trick question, because Abraham—also from Aram (see Deuteronomy 26:5)—is not actually a "Jew", a term that will come into use much later, but the father of many nations including Israel. The point, however, is that there seem to be people from this country that continue to believe in the One True God.

Q: Does being "used by God" mean the same thing as having a perfect relationship with God?

A: No. There are many cases where people and nations are used by God for His purposes who themselves don't recognize God as their Lord and Savior. However, the hint here is that everyone including Naaman himself is aware of something special in regards to the Lord.

Q: What is obviously different about being a leper in Aram as opposed to Israel?

A: Lepers were allowed to go about their life and business as anyone else; in Israel they were separated from the general population and direct contact was prohibited.

[Read v.2-5]

²Now 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. ³She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy."

⁴Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel."

⁵Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold and ten changes of clothes.

Q: Who also appears to be a "conduit" or messenger of God?

A: The captured Israelite girl.

Point: In spite of her personal circumstances, she is still thinking of and espousing God and has become a witness of Him.

Q: Why would Naaman be inclined to take such riches with him? Is it a sacrifice or gift for God?

A: More likely it's because the false prophets, magicians, and seers of the day were paid in such a manner. He's probably still thinking in pagan terms that the power is with the Elisha the prophet, not Elisha's God.

⁶He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, “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.”

⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me.”

⁸It 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.”

⁹So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha.

¹⁰Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean.”

¹¹But Naaman was 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.’ ¹²Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage.

¹³Then his servants came near 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?’” ¹⁴So he went down and 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.

[Read v.6-7]

Q: Why is it probably logical that the King of Aram would write such a letter to the King of Israel?

A: At that time, false prophets, sorcerers, and such were most often paid members of a king's staff. It would probably be logical to the King of Aram's mind that a prophet he assumes works for the King of Israel must have that king's approval. The King of Aram is working according to the spiritual principles as he understands them, not according to biblical standards.

Q: What is the good news about the King of Israel's response to the letter? What does it indicate about him personally?

A: He recognizes that he is **NOT** a conduit of God and makes no pretense that he is able to do God's job.

[Read v.8-14]

Q: Is Elisha boasting about himself when he states “he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel”?

A: No, it's a way of stating that the evidence of a true prophet of God is the reputation and power of God Himself. Elisha is stating in a colloquial manner that it is **GOD'S** name that will be glorified, not Elisha's, and therefore the truth will become evident.

Q: So why does Elisha send a messenger instead of meeting with him personally?

A: Elisha is still bound by the Old Testament Law which stipulates that he cannot have direct contact with a leper. In addition, it's an effective method by which to deflect attention from himself and direct it entirely to God, for Elisha's presence is not what's required but God's.

Q: Why is Naaman perturbed?

A: Things aren't happening the way he had planned or imagined. It's an indication that the real issue at hand is God's working on Naaman's heart, and that things have to happen on God's terms, not Naaman's.

Q: What is the lesson we should learn from Naaman's belated obedience?

A: That what God desires is that we ultimately come around to submitting to Him and His ways, even if we digress a little.

Q: Why do you suppose it took seven times before Naaman experienced healing?

A: Most likely it's the breaking down of self and submitting to God's ways, reflecting Naaman's real need to forsake his own ideas and embrace God's ways. It's what was necessary to break Naaman's pride.

Q: Of what is Naaman a representative or picture of spiritually?

A: Baptism, which is supposed to be the external indicator of a changed heart resulting in being cleansed from all sin and made new and whole.

¹⁵When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, “Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now.”

¹⁶But he said, “As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will take nothing.” And he urged him to take it, but he refused.

¹⁷Naaman said, “If not, please let your servant at least be given two mules’ load of earth; for your servant will no longer offer burnt offering nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. ¹⁸In this matter 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 myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter.”

¹⁹He said to him, “Go in peace.” So he departed from him some distance.

[Read v.15-19]

Q: How do we know that the right spiritual result was achieved in Naaman?

A: He recognizes the source not as Elisha but God.

Q: How do we know that the right spiritual result was achieved in Elisha?

A: He refuses to take any credit for what God has accomplished.

Q: What is the most likely reason Naaman is requesting to take some of the soil of Israel back with him?

A: To make an altar to the One True God, something separate from similar altars already established for the false gods worshiped in his homeland.

Q: How do you explain Naaman’s final apology and Elisha’s seeming approval for Naaman to bow alongside his king but to only sacrifice to the One True God?

A: Naaman is an example to us of someone that must live **IN** the world, but not **OF** the world. Having gone through a type of baptism and having a born again experience that changed his heart, he is now a **TRUE** example of someone that God works through from the heart, not just as a result of winning a battle. His example will serve as a much greater witness. In the end, **NAAMAN** is the conduit of God by which others will come to know the One True God.

Overall Application

- *Are you now or have you ever been like the little girl, in less than ideal circumstances? Did your witness continue? Do you recognize that God uses such things for **HIS** purposes?*
- *Have you ever been in the position of the King of Israel, requested to be involved on a level for which you have no authority? What is the proper reaction? How do you direct them to the right source?*
- *What is the right response when God uses you as a conduit of His power, work and/or message? Are we always careful to exalt His name to the exclusion of our own?*
- *How have you been like Naaman at any point in his life? Do you realize the need to come to God on **HIS** terms? How are you an example to others in what God has done in your life?*