

=LITTLE-KNOWN BIBLE CHARACTERS=

Lesson 2

Naaman, the Leper

POINT OF CONTACT: Discuss the disease of leprosy.

1. Leprosy was a terrible disease starting on the hands and on the eyes. Sin is the same way. Sin usually starts with the eyes, and then once we see, we take. These words were mentioned in Achan's sin: He "saw...coveted...and took..." See Joshua 7:21.
2. Leprosy was very contagious. The leper had to put his hands over his mouth and cry, "Unclean!" when in public. Sin is the same way. Our sins cause others to sin.
3. Leprosy at first doesn't seem bad. Later it causes the eyes to fall out of their sockets, parts of the body to rot and fall off at the joints, etc. Sin doesn't seem bad at first. As we have often said, the best day in the world is the first day; the worst day in Christ is the first day. In Christ it gets better every day; in the world it gets worse all the time.
4. Leprosy was humanly incurable. The same thing is true with sin. There is nothing man can do to save himself.
5. In the end, leprosy separated people from their loved ones. (Leprous people were placed in leper camps, etc.) The same is true with sin. A person who dies in his sins must be separated for eternity from all that is holy and righteous.

INTRODUCTION: Now let us look at Naaman and something about his background. The name "Naaman" means "pleasantness" or "delight." He was the commander of the army of Ben-hadad, the king of Damascus. He had won deliverance for the Syrians. He was not separated from society because in Syria, leprosy did not exclude one from human society, as was the case in Israel. Naaman had the disease of leprosy and was told about Elisha by a little slave girl who became a slave to Naaman's wife when brought away by the soldiers during one of the Syrian raids into Israelite territory. This little girl expressed to her mistress the wish that Naaman were with Elisha in Samaria and that the prophet could heal Naaman of his leprosy.

- I. NAAMAN'S INABILITY TO SAVE HIMSELF. See II Kings 5:1.
 1. He was a captain. He was an able general, and yet the last five words in this verse say, "...but he was a leper." In other words, being an able warrior will not eliminate the need of salvation.
 2. He was a great man. In other words, great men must be saved just like all others.
 3. He was an honorable man. He was a good man, respected in his neighborhood; yet, good men and respected men must be saved like all others.
 4. He was a mighty man. He was brave, courageous, strong, noble—and yet these people need to be saved, too. So often people think the old-time religion is well and good for the simple, the poor, and those that need it. The truth of the matter is, the Joe DiMaggios, the Liz Taylors, the bankers, the millionaires, the politicians all must be saved the same way as the poor man—by faith in Christ.
- II. NAAMAN'S ATTEMPTS TO SAVE HIMSELF. Man hates to admit he cannot save himself, and even after admitting so, he hates to admit that he cannot help in some way. Such was the case of Naaman. He tried to add his efforts to God's plan.
 1. Man wants to help by ceremony. Read II Kings 5:9. Picture Naaman and all of the pomp and ceremony of coming with his chariot and horses at the door of Elisha. It is a good day for man when he realizes that his candle-burning, ordinances, ritual, bead-counting, etc. cannot save him. Just his simple faith in Christ saves him.
 2. Man wants to help make salvation. In II Kings 5:11, notice the words, "I thought." Naaman was angry that the plan was apart from his own thinking. Oh, proud man wants to think up his own salvation! This is as much idolatry as a heathen making a god of wood or metal.
 3. Man is full of pride. Naaman was too proud to follow the simple plan of God. He thought his rivers were better, as we see in II King 5:12.
 4. He got saved only when he yielded to God's plan. Notice II Kings 5:13, 14.
- III. THE RESULT OF HIS SALVATION.
 1. He made a public profession of his faith. See II Kings 5:15.

2. His attitude changed toward the preacher. A few minutes ago he was mad at the preacher; now he loves him and wants to give him something. Read II Kings 5:15.
3. He had a desire to give. See II Kings 5:23. It's amazing how liberal a person can become when he realizes how liberal Christ has been in offering him salvation.
4. He immediately thought of worshipping God. Read about this in II Kings 5:17. He set about to build an altar whereby he might worship God. As you know, the altar in that day was the place of worship. People who are saved always include this in their activities.

CONCLUSION: May we thank God for several things: (1) Let us thank Him for salvation, realizing the condition we were in. (2) Let us thank Him that there is nothing man can do to be saved. (3) Let us thank Him that there is a plan whereby God saved us. (4) Let us thank Him for the desire He gives us to serve Him.