

April 8, 2021

The account of Captain Namaan and the Little Maid is a favorite Bible story for both young and old. In 2 Kings, chapter 5 we learn of Namaan, a successful army Captain who contracted Leprosy. In those days Leprosy was a death sentence that included years of isolated decline. The Little Maid, a captive child in service to the Syrian household, tells the family that all Namaan needs to do to be healed is to go to the prophet Elisha in Israel.

So Namaan makes the trip to Israel, but when he shows up at the prophets house, a messenger comes out and tells him to go wash in the river seven times. The messenger tells him that is what he needs to do to be healed. Furious that his presence was spurned, Namaan heads home with no intention of following the prophets directive. His companions, however, talk him into it because, after all, what hope does he have without a miracle?

The story has a happy ending. *So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. 2 Kings 5:14.* He was healed! He was clean! Rejoicing, Namaan returns to the prophet's house to bestow the caravan of gifts he had brought with him to purchase his miracle. Elisha refuses the gift, despite Namaan's urging.

The account of Captain Namaan and the Little Maid foretells the beautiful truth of the gospel! *"Unless you become as little children"* Jesus said, *"you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."* The faith of a young child led Captain Namaan to seek healing and cleansing. But Leprosy had made the Captain unclean, and unworthy, so he could not stand in the presence of God (represented in this story by Elisha, the prophet). Yet God was not without mercy, and a way for healing was provided through the obedience to a simple, easy task of dipping seven times in the river. Jesus said, *"Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."* John 3:3. Namaan is cleansed in this story, reborn so to speak, restored.

Restoration and cleansing from sin is the gift that Jesus offers each of us. It is a free gift, not one that we can purchase with money, power or favors. It is given to all who will believe.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16*