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## THE HEALING OF NAAMAN

BY: C. D. COLE

***"And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean," II Kings 5:10.***

Our text shows how God gives help to the needy. This is a needy world. We have but to look on the inside of us and on the outside of us to realize the need of the world. We have but to look at our hearts and homes to see how needy we are. If we could look into the hearts and lives of the men and women of this world we would be appalled and astounded at the need of this world. Most of us need help and want it; want it more than we openly confess. Our text has a message on how God helps man.

### HOW MAN WANTS HELP

Our text's Scripture shows that man wants help. It is the picture of a needy man, and in the picture of Naaman we have the picture of many another man. What is that picture?

It is the picture of a man who needed help badly. Naaman had many things to make life attractive. He had position and prominence. "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable...he was also a mighty man in valour," II Kings 5:1. He had friends and funds. He was great in the eyes of the king. He was popular at home and famous abroad. He had a wife and home and servants interested in and concerned about him.

He had all these things, "but he was a leper," II Kings 5:1. He had a diseased body and a lost soul and a mighty religion. There is always something to take the joy out of life if the springs of joy are all in this earth. The man whose joy cannot be killed is the man whose springs of joy are in God.

*"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," John 4:13,14.*

Naaman did much to get help. He accepted advice, prepared to pay liberally for help, and went a long way from home to get help. "And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy," II Kings 5:5, 6. He left nothing undone to get the help he felt that he needed. True, he was concerned most about his lesser need; the need of his body. His greater need was a soul need, an eternal need. All the things a lost soul does to get help is not needed. No need for Naaman to bring money.

Naaman wanted help in his own way. He was willing to pay for the help he wanted but it must come in his own way. "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha," II Kings 5:9. And his way put his dignity above his disease. He thought his dignity was the main thing; "But Naaman was wroth, 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 strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper," II Kings 5:11. The prophet thought it was his disease. "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and

wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean," II Kings 5:10.

Naaman wanted to lend his advice to the prophet and to God. He was not willing to leave the way of help to the prophet of God. He wanted to tell the doctor how to help him. He wanted to tell the doctor what kind of medicine to prescribe. He wanted to be helped in such a way as would distinguish him from other men.

### GOD GIVES HELP

God had help for Naaman. His providence had been a help. God had given victory in battle. By strange providence God had given him victory over Israel, His own chosen people. "By him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria," II Kings 5:1. He had a little maid in his home that had been taken captive in a raid on Israel. "And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife," II Kings 5:2. There are no accidents with God. Even wars and captives have their place in His providence and plans. Even humble tasks of servants in the home become mighty ministries of His grace. "And she [the little maid] said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy," II Kings 5:3.

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# THE TRUTH

BY: C. D. COLE

**"For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth," II Corinthians 13:8.**

The truth is the most valuable of all possessions. The most glorious heritage of Baptists today is the truth. Truth will still be truth when all earthly possessions are gone. *"Buy the truth, and sell it not,"* Proverbs 23:23. *"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,"* John 8:32. *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth,"* John 17:17. *"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,"* John 1:17. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life,"* John 14:6. *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,"* John 4:24.

Christ, who is the truth, is ever opposed to the Devil, who is the lie. *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When, he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it,"* John 8:44. Truth's trail through the centuries is a bloody trail and the story of it is shocking. Millions have given their lives and other millions have suffered persecution for the truth's sake. Abel lost his life over the way of true worship. *"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood*

*crieth unto me from the ground,"* Genesis 4:3-10.

There was conspiracy against Daniel. *"Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God...All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions...Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God...Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet...Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also*

*before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God,"* Daniel 6.

The three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace because of truth. *"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon...There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up...Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach,*

*Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God," Daniel 3.*

John the Baptist lost his head because he dared preach the truth about adultery. *"Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's*

*head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison," Matthew 14:3-10.*

John the Revelator was exiled because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. John Bunyan lay eleven long years in jail because he dared preach the truth. Paul expressed his disappointment to the Galatians in these words: *"Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"*

#### **MEANING OF THE TEXT**

It does not mean that the truth has no enemies, for it has. As long as the devil is out of the pit, he will oppose the truth; as long as the world is out of hell, it will oppose the truth; as long as human nature is what it is it will fight the truth. The meaning is that it will do nobody any good to oppose the truth, truth will triumph. Over sentiment--prejudice--preconceived opinions--the devil--the world--the flesh. The Coat of Arms of the French Bible and Tract Society is an anvil around which lie many broken hammers. The anvil remains but the hammers were broken.

#### **MESSAGE OF THE TEXT**

In light of other Scriptures:

1. Those who oppose the truth only hurt themselves. *"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," II Timothy 2:25. "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean," Acts 18:6.*

2. Those who stand for the truth will meet with persecution. *"Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended," Matthew 13:21. The Apostle Paul was certainly persecuted for*

*the truth sake. "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches," II Corinthians 11:23-28. Stephen was stoned to death. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye...When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep," Acts 7:51, 54-60.*

3. The truth is not easily acquired. *"Buy the truth, and sell it not," Proverbs 23:23. Truth costs and many are not willing to pay the price. It cost God his Son. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved," John 3:16-17. It costs money, friendship and peace. A man is a growing Christian just in proportion as he grows in the knowledge of the truth. Growth is measured by the increase in knowledge. Many do not see this. They think if they have been made*

to feel good that is an evidence of their soul prosperity. If it were only a question of feeling good, you could drink whiskey and feel good.

The man who is trusting his faith for salvation is just as much lost as the man who is trusting his work. Faith does not make one righteous; it is the empty hand that takes righteousness. Faith is not our righteousness; Christ is our righteousness. *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,"* Romans 10:4.

*(Continued from page one)*

God had a prophet prepared to help the needy Naaman when he reached the land of Israel. God gives help in his own way. God deals with man's need and not with man's notion. God looks at man's disease and not his dignity. When the great man from Syria arrived after his long journey, God's man Elisha did not receive him as a great man but as a needy man.

The prophet threw the needy man entirely upon God's power to help, and kept himself in the background: so that the healed man would not return home praising the prophet, but praising the prophet's God. *"And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel,"* II Kings 5:15. Elisha called upon Naaman to respond to God's way of help. He pointed Naaman to supernatural and not to superstitious help.

## **THE HOW OF HELP**

God did not help Naaman in the way he thought he would. He expected Elisha to pronounce some superstitions incantation over him. He thought there would be much ado about the way of help.

But the help came in such a way as to make it evident that the help was from God. Elisha did not even go out to meet Naaman, but *"sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times."*

The help came on the level of life. That is, He helped Naaman just like he would have helped the poorest man in Syria. He did not deal with him as a great man that happened to be a leper, but he dealt with him as a leper who happened to be a great man. Here is a lesson for preach-

ers. We are to know no man after the flesh. We are not to deal with the banker who is lost as a banker, but we need to deal with him as a sinner. We are not to deal with a rich man who is lost as a rich man but as a sinner. We are not always fair to the needy Naamans' about us. We let their prominence turn us from their need and deal too much with their dignity rather than with their need. The king and the beggar have the same need before God. There is a striking similarity between patients in a hospital. The medicine for the wise man is the same as for the ignorant man. There is a striking similarity between the soul needs of men. The king on the throne has to be saved just like the boy that blacks his boots, or the servant that cooks his meals.

In spite of all his blunders, Naaman was healed. His first blunder was in going to the king of Israel. *"He brought the letter to the king of Israel,"* II Kings 5:6. His second blunder was in looking to Elisha. *"Naaman came...and stood at the door of the house of Elisha,"* II Kings 5:9. His third blunder was in refusing to wash in the Jordan as directed. *"So he turned and went away in a rage,"* II Kings 5:12.

But he finally gave way to his own reason and followed the word of God. *"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean,"* II Kings 5:13,14.