

THE FAME OF ABANA AND PHARPAR  
2 Kings 5:1-14

Intro: You have heard me say repeatedly that the Gospel of salvation is the same from Genesis to Revelation. We have been seeing that in our study of Genesis. Abraham was justified by faith. Circumcision, the Law, baptism, and all of the other additions that men have added to salvation as a condition came along after it was stated that "Abraham believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). Faith is not doing something for the Lord, but depending upon the Lord to do something for us.

The doctrine of salvation is clearly presented all through the OT.

It also appears in types, perhaps the greatest of which is the account of the Passover Lamb in Exodus 12.

But it is even apparent in history. Thus we can see the hand of the Lord forming human history for His own glory and for the conveying of the message of salvation.

One of the most wonderful of these stories is the story of the healing of Naaman the Syrian. Please turn to 2 Kings 5.

Let us look first of all at:

I. NAAMAN.

What can we say about him?

The first is that he was a Gentile. The second is that he was a man of great authority and power. The third is that he was outstanding for his military accomplishments. And it is very apparent as we read through the chapter that he was a very proud man. Undoubtedly he was a very wealthy man along with everything else. He was so valuable to the King of Syria that the King personally got involved in appealing to the King of Israel for help.

But all of his accomplishments, his personal power, and everything else that could be said about him were nullified by one ominous fact: HE WAS A LEPER! His life was threatened by this fatal disease, and humanly speaking there was no hope for him, and no help.

But the second thing that we need to note in this interesting story is the evidence of . . .

II. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

One of the nations over which Naaman had been victorious was

the nation Israel. And, among the captives taken, was a young servant girl. We do not know how old she was, but it is very likely that she was only in her teens. She could have been in her twenties, but we know that she was young.

Now we often wonder why things happen as they do. Jehoram, who was the king of Israel at this time, was a wicked king. He lived in all the sins of Jeroboam who had become the example of all ungodliness in that nation. And so God had judged the nation by defeating them at the hand of the Syrians.

But it is very clear in this instance that God, Who is working all things out according to His will even where men are not interested in His will at all--God, had this young lady in the right place at the right time for the accomplishment of His purpose with Naaman.

### III. THE WITNESS.

It is very interesting to see how God has seen fit to use people when it comes to the testimony of the truth concerning God. He could have sent Elisha over into Syria. He could have done any number of things to accomplish what He did through this girl, but it was through war that God was at work in order to exercise His grace to a mighty Syrian.

But notice that there is a twofold witness: one negative (and there are a lot of those); the other, positive.

#### A. The servant girl's witness (vv. 3, 4).

She was no expert in theology, but she told what she knew, and it was that there was a prophet in Israel, a man of God, and her faith was strong that the prophet, through the power of God, could help Naaman when no one else could.

And the message spread from there. How important it is that we tell what we know about the Lord.

#### B. The king's witness (v. 7).

The kings of Israel were really supposed to be the spiritual leaders of the people. They were supposed to know the truth. But this man was so wicked that he could only suppose that the king of Syria thought that he could perform some kind of a miraculous act of healing.

How pitiful! The only one he was concerned about was himself!

The next thing we see is:

#### IV. THE REVELATION OF GOD'S WAYS.

##### A. Elisha heard (v. 8).

How he heard, we do not know. Undoubtedly this was a very significant time for the people in Israel.

##### B. Elisha called (v. 8).

##### C. Elisha did not go out to him; he sent a messenger with the message of what Naaman was supposed to do (v. 10).

Now it is apparent that God was at work, but it is also apparent that Naaman was not yet ready for what God was going to do. God was teaching him the importance of one very important Biblical word: the word GRACE--THE GRACE OF GOD.

#### V. NAAMAN'S RESPONSE (vv. 11-14).

##### A. He was a very, very angry man.

##### B. There were two things he did not like about the way he was being treated:

1. He did not appreciate the reception that he got from Elijah. This is like a lowly preacher not even giving a foreign dignitary the honor of coming out of his house to see him.
2. He did not like what he was told to do.

He had other ideas about what would happen. BUT BE SURE TO NOTICE THAT NAAMAN WAS BELIEVING THAT HE WOULD BE HEALED; HE WAS JUST KEENLY DISAPPOINTED AT THE WAY HE WAS TO BE HEALED.

If he were going to wash in a river, why could he not go home to the rivers of Abana and Pharpar. (These are now called Barada and Awaj--but I had to search through several books before I could get even this information.) Undoubtedly they were greater than the Jordan--and probably cleaner. But Elisha said the Jordan.

This shows how men stumble at the Word of God, and at the simplicity of the Gospel.

What did Naaman need?

- 1) He needed to be humbled.
- 2) He needed to realize that it was the Jordan R. or death.

And so we read of . . .

C. Naaman's obedience--and what happened after that (v.14).

We read that "his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, AND HE WAS CLEAN." It was not enough to dip once, or twice, or three times. After six times he was just as sick as he was before he went down into the river. BUT ON THE SEVENTH TIME THE MIRACLE TOOK PLACE! It seems that health-wise the Lord gave him a new beginning.

What an illustration of 2 Cor. 5:17!

Concl: What are Abana and Pharpar famous for? This is the only time that they are mentioned in Scripture. The Jordan, on the other hand, is the river where John the Baptist baptized, and where he baptized the Lord Jesus Christ. Many things could be said about the Jordan. It is mentioned approximately 200 times in the Bible--Ot and NT.

Abana and Pharpar stand in sacred history as being famous for man's rebellious heart, rebellious against God and His Word. It stands as a memorial of man's desire to want to do something else besides what God wants Him to do.

But on the other hand, <sup>Jordan</sup> stands as a memorial of the faithfulness of God, of the grace of God, of the power of God. And it stands also as evidence of the sovereignty of God. All that was in Naaman rebelled at what God told him to do, but, in the end, he did it, and was healed.

Be sure to notice also that God in this instance saw fit to use a number of little people--the captive Israelite maid, the lowly prophet (the king did not think of him), Elisha's servant, and Naaman's servant.

See Naaman's confession of faith.

And then notice the tragic story of Gehazi from vv. 20-27.