

## The “Big Dipper”—From Thinking To Knowing

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2 Kings 5:1-15 (v. 11-“Behold, I thought...”; v. 15-“Behold, now I know...”)

Many of you have ever heard of the BIG DIPPER. This morning I want to talk about ANOTHER Big Dipper the Bible talks about (v. 15)!

Naaman’s **CHARACTER** (v. 1) –

- Great position—Captain the King’s army
- Honorable
- Brave / War hero—The Lord used him even though he was a idolater (v. 18) and a Gentile!
- Naaman had it all—And he had something he didn’t want to have...

Naaman’s **CONDITION** (v. 1)—He was a leper.

➡ One day while looking in the mirror he noticed a small spot on his hand; next day one on his side; next day face—Makes an appointment to see the doctor. The doctor tells him the sad news, “You’ve got leprosy.”

- Leprosy began as small, red spots on the skin. Later, the spots get bigger, and start to turn white, with a shiny or scaly appearance.
- After a brief period the spots spread over the whole body and hair begins to fall out.
- As the leprosy worsens, finger nails and toenails become loose; they start to rot and eventually fall off.
- Then the joints of the fingers and the toes begin to rot and fall off one piece at a time. Gums begin to shrink and they can’t hold the teeth anymore, and they fall out.
- Leprosy keeps eating away at the leper’s face until literally the nose, the palate, and even the eyes rot - and the victim wastes away until death.

**Leprosy was a type of sin:** Sin is like leprosy. It starts off small and finishes big. “*Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*” (James 1:15).

- Dreaded (feared like cancer).
- Disfigured (a hideous disease);
- Disunited (separated);

- Desperate / Doomed (incurable). Only a miracle could cure a person of leprosy. The saddest slave in Syria would not change want to trade skins with him.

➔ Naaman is a picture of multitudes today who are decent; moral; honorable; great—but their souls are being eaten away with sin.

### I. **The CARING CAPTIVE** (vs. 2-3).

➔ Naaman's fate rested in the witness of a little girl who was kidnapped from her parents and taken captive to an enemy land.

A. This little girl had a cause to want to see Naaman die ("It serves him right!"). Yet, she was not bitter, and loved her enemy.

➔ She knew God had her there for a reason—To tell others what God can do.

B. God hath chosen the weak things—A mere child!

1. Her age, nationality, and position were all against her!

2. Though she was "little" she was a great witness! She is the real hero of this story!

C. She told where Naaman could get some help (vs. 3-5). The little Jewish maid said nothing about going to the King or sending a letter. She said the prophet of Samaria was the man that could solve the problem.

1. The answer, was not in the GOVERNMENT but in a little GIRL.

2. The King of Syria in turn sends word to the King of Israel.

Again, they are going to the wrong person. Vs. 5-7: It is not the political parties that have the answers we need. It is the preachers who preach God's Word that have the real answers to people's problems.

### II. **The CLEAR COMMAND** (v. 10).

A. The message for cleansing was clear and unmistakable.

B. The message of the Gospel is clear (John 1:12; Rom. 10:9-10).

### III. **The CONCEITED CAPTAIN** (vs. 11-12).

➡ *“Behold, I thought...”* That’s his problem! It is not what what you think, but what GOD SAYS. Isaiah 55:7-9—*“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts... For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

A. Problem of a **prideful ego** (v. 11—*“He will surely come out TO ME...”*)

➡ Naaman wanted some “royal treatment.” “I’m more important than to merit a messenger boy!”

B. Problem of **preconceived expectations** (v. 11b).

1. He expected a BIG PRODUCTION. He was a military hero and felt he deserved some heroic and spectacular cure.

➡ He wanted a Benny Hinn performance! Naaman’s problem was he must have been watching too many PTL reruns.

2. Instead of a sensational, magnificent display of power, Naaman is told, “Go jump in the river!” And to add insult to injury, he is told to do it seven times!

C. Problem of **presumptive thinking**. *Behold, I THOUGHT...”* — The *“I thought”* syndrome has sent many to hell!

- I thought being a church member was good enough.
- I thought I was just as good as a lot of church members.
- I thought if I did the best I can, I’d be OK.
- I thought it didn’t matter what you believed as long as you were sincere.

1. My way is better (v. 12).

- Isn’t my Bible just as good as another?
- Isn’t my religion just as good as another?

2. Naaman wanted to be healed, but he wanted to be healed on his terms.

➡ Most people want a Burger King religion — they want it their way!

3. Conflict between the pride of man and the ways of God RESULTS IN ANGER (v. 12b). "It's my way or the highway!"
    - Naaman did not understand it was not a question of the WATER, it was a question of his WILL.
    - Naaman had a choice. He could either die IN his pride, or he could die TO his pride.
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The river Jordan was hard on Naaman's pride, but it was the only cure for his leprosy. Other rivers may have cleaned him of dirt, but they were to no avail on his disease of leprosy.

A story is told of an accountant who was interviewed for a top job with a large firm. At the end of the interview, the chairman asked, "One last question—what is three times seven?"

The accountant answered, "Twenty-two."

Outside he realized his answer was wrong and figured he wouldn't get the job. But to his surprise, two weeks later he was given the job. He asked the chairman why he had been given the job when he had given the wrong answer.

"You were the closest," the chairman replied.

Some people have the mistaken notion God is like that. They think it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you're close to the truth.

There was no other river that could cleanse Naaman of leprosy. And there is no other Savior in which to be cleansed from sin.

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#### IV. The **CONCERNED COUNSELORS** (v. 13).

- ➡ Naaman had some good men who cared about him and offered good counsel.
  - A. It was **sincere** counsel—"My father..." They didn't chide him. They didn't call him an idiot or stupid.
    - ➡ The world is looking for sincerity. God deliver us from a plastic, tinsel, kind of Christianity that looks good on the outside, but there is no inner sincerity of heart.
  - B. It was **simple** counsel.

➡ Naaman was looking for something hard. He was ready to offer a great sum of money. But God's plan is simple, so you can't glory in it (Eph. 2:8-9).

C. It was **sensible** counsel ("*...how much rather then...*").

➡ If you would have done that which is difficult, why don't you try this. What do you have to lose, expect your pride.

## V. **The CONTRITE COMPLIANCE** (v. 14— "*Then went he DOWN...*")

➡ He came down off his high horse.

- James 4:6—*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*
- James 4:10—*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

A. Obedience to God begins with humility. Humility says God's way is better than mine—God is right and I am wrong.

B. Submission to the Word of God —"*according to the word of the man of God.*"

## VI. **The COMPLETE CLEANSING** (v. 14).

➡ **6 times wouldn't have worked.** 7= # of completion... You have to completely rely on God!

➡ It would have been great to see what happened underwater with a snorkel and face mask. It must have a sight to behold!

A. An **EXTREME MAKEOVER!** He's a **NEW MAN!**

➡ All he wanted was to be cured of his leprosy. But he got a whole lot more—His flesh was not only cleansed, but he had skin like a new born baby, not a 40 - 50 year old (Eph. 3:20)! He has "**peach fuzz**" instead of whiskers.

B. **APPLICATION:** When I got saved, I didn't know what I was getting into—All I knew was what I was getting out of! I wanted to get out of going to hell, but when I got saved, I got a whole lot more.

1. I've got life abundant here now.
2. I've got a new family.
3. I've got a new source of comfort.

4. I've got a new purpose in life.
5. I've got a new hope for the future.
6. I've got a new home.

## VII. The **CONVINCING CHANGE** (v. 15).

➡ Naaman was a different man on the inside as well as the outside.

### A. "*He returned...*"

1. Everybody returns somewhere. Where someone returns after salvation shows if they were really changed. Naaman returned to the man of God. He didn't return to the bartender or the drug pusher.
2. Contrast between Naaman's first appearance at Elisha's door and his second! He now describes himself—"*Thy servant.*" A completely different person!

B. He **recruited**. He got all his men involved.

C. He **remunerated** (vs. 15-17). Heart of gratitude.

D. He **renounced** (v. 17).

**SUMMATION:** Naaman went from "*I thought*" to "*I know.*" He had a KNOW SO salvation! Do you **think** you are saved or do you **KNOW** you are saved?

1. You Must Come To The Right Person — Christ
2. You Must Come To The Right Place — Calvary
3. You Must Come To The Right Point — Commitment

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