

## THE WORD OF THE LORD.

HEARING, MIXED WITH FAITH, LEADING TO OBEDIENCE, OBTAINING SALVATION.

**2Ki 5:1** Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was* a leper.

**2Ki 5:2** 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.

**2Ki 5:3** And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

**2Ki 5:4** And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel.

**2Ki 5:5** 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.

**2Ki 5:6** 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.

**2Ki 5:7** And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

**2Ki 5:8** And it was *so*, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

**2Ki 5:9** So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

**2Ki 5:10** 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.

**2Ki 5:11** 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.

**2Ki 5:12** *Are* not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

**2Ki 5:13** 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?

**2Ki 5:14** 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.

In this account we are given an object lesson in the essential place of the word of the Lord in the operation of salvation in men.

The little maid spoke the word of the Lord (evangelized) to Naaman's wife when she saw his need of healing. (In Hebrew and Aramaic healing, salvation, wholeness and well being are all linked in the same root word Y'shua, which the Greeks wrote as Iesous (Jesus).

Naaman acted on hearing this word from his wife in a positive manner. He obviously had some faith in what he heard. Faith comes by hearing, and by hearing the word of God. He took the first step of seeking permission from the King of Syria to go to Israel, repeating the message to him.

Notice how the original message of healing/salvation went from God to the maid, to the wife, to Naaman, to the King! Because it had originated with God it remained the word of the Lord no matter who the messenger was.

When the King of Syria wrote the letter to the King of Israel he did not convey the word of the Lord. He put his own interpretation of that word into the letter. Accordingly the King of Israel was very distressed, as if he could heal anyone of leprosy.

When Elisha heard of the matter he told the King to send Naaman to him, that he may learn that there was a prophet in Israel. A prophet is one who conveys the word of the Lord. He is not a magician or a wizard. It is the word of God that achieves God's purposes, so that it will not return to him void, nor be of no effect.

Elisha the prophet did not go out to meet Naaman when he came to his door but sent his servant. Again this underlines the very important point that it is not the messenger, but the message which accomplishes God's work.

The message on this instance to Naaman was that he should be washed, immersed, dipped (Greek baptizo) seven times in the river Jordan, and that he would then be clean and his flesh that had rotted away would come again to him.

Perhaps because this didn't make sense, Naaman was angry. There was no logical or scientific reason why washing in the Jordan would be more effective than washing back home in Damascus. The word of the Lord does not always make sense to the natural man, some things can only be spiritually discerned. God was not asking for understanding here, but obedience. Sometimes we need to be persuaded to just obey the word of the Lord, contrary to our own thought processes. As it is written in Isaiah, our thoughts are not God's thoughts; therefore our ways are not God's ways.

The Greek word 'metanoia', translated in some English versions of the scriptures as repentance, literally means to have a change of thought. Without repentance in this sense there is no conforming to the command or thought of God.

Sometimes we need the help of other people to realize we need to abandon our thought and simply comply with God's thought, as Naaman did here.

The result of this 'metanoia', abandoning his own thought for God's declared thought, was that Naaman was dipped (baptizo) in the river Jordan seven times exactly as per the command of God, through the prophet, via the prophet's servant. Accordingly he was made clean and his flesh became as new.

Doesn't this serve as an excellent foretelling of the command of Jesus Christ through His servants on the day of Pentecost, "repent (metanoia, change your thoughts) therefore and be immersed every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"?

**Act 2:1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

**Act 2:2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

**Act 2:3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

**Act 2:4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

**Act 2:5** And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

**Act 2:6** Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

**Act 2:7** And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

**Act 2:8** And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

**Act 2:9** Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

**Act 2:10** Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

**Act 2:11** Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

**Act 2:12** And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

**Act 2:13** Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

**Act 2:14** But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

**Act 2:15** For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

**Act 2:16** But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

**Act 2:17** And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

**Act 2:18** And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

**Act 2:19** And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

**Act 2:20** The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

**Act 2:21** And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

**Act 2:22** Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

**Act 2:23** Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

**Act 2:24** Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

**Act 2:25** For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

**Act 2:26** Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

**Act 2:27** Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

**Act 2:28** Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

**Act 2:29** Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

**Act 2:30** Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

**Act 2:31** He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

**Act 2:32** This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

**Act 2:33** Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

**Act 2:34** For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

**Act 2:35** Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

**Act 2:36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

**Act 2:37** Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

**Act 2:38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

**Act 2:39** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

**Act 2:40** And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

**Act 2:41** Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

Notice how many times prophecy, word and prophet are mentioned in the above passage. The word of the Lord through prophets and prophecy, the whole company who were baptized in the Holy Spirit, on this occasion making the thought of God known.

Those who believed this word of the Lord of salvation and remission of sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ were obedient to the word and were accordingly baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

Just as the water of the river Jordan did not make Naaman whole, but rather his obedience to the word of God to him, so immersion in water in the name of Jesus obtains remission of sins because it is obedience to the word of the Lord. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, but it becomes effective in us when we hear, believe and obey the word we hear. Those who believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and who are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ receive cleansing from sin and replacement of rotten flesh with the new man of the Spirit.

Obedience is better than sacrifice. Naaman went to the prophet with gifts, but no gifts were required, only obedience to the message from God for his healing and salvation.

We may think we need to bring gifts to obtain the blessings of God, but the price has been paid fully, we need only to obey the message. But we do need to hear, believe and be obedient to the word of the Lord, whatever He says to you, do it.

**Heb 4:2** For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

**Mat 13:15** For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

**Mat 13:16** But blessed *are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*

**Mat 13:17** For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

**Mat 13:18** Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

**Mat 13:19** When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

**Mat 13:20** But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

Mat 13:21 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.

Mat 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

Mat 13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Mat 13:9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

To those of us who have tasted of the goodness and mercy of God through faith in the Christ, Jesus, prophecy is an important means of grace to us. Paul encourages the saints in Corinth to earnestly desire that they may prophesy. Prophecy is the way that the word of the Lord is sown into the Hearts of those desiring to do the will of God. When prophecy is given and received with faith and obedience then that word brings forth fruit.

**1Co 14:1** Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

**1Co 14:2** For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

**1Co 14:3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

**1Co 14:4** He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

**1Co 14:5** I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

The ongoing work of perfecting or the making mature and fruitful of the saints is accomplished by the word of the Lord. This is the main function of the Holy Spirit in each one of the disciples of Jesus and among the members of the body of Christ.

Joh 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Joh 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Joh 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

May we not be found to be among those of whom it can be said; 'O slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.'

Let us take heed to how we hear.

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