

### BEHOLD I THOUGHT

Jun 23, 2013

Naaman, the Syrian, was a rich, very powerful, and politically well-connected man; after all, he was the commander of all the armies of Syria (2 Kings 5:1). Though he was in a position that was doubtlessly envied by many, he still had a problem: he was a leper! However, because he was beloved by his king and nation, he was sent to Israel to be cleansed of the disease that would have eventually taken his life.

Upon his arrival at the home of Elisha the prophet, things began to unfold differently than what Naaman wanted. Instead of Elisha coming out and putting on a big show (2 Kings 5:11), he sent a message by his servant. The message was very brief and to the point, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." The core problem can be identified within Naaman's response, "Behold, I thought..." (2 Kings 5:12). What Naaman surely meant was "behold I wanted..." This is a problem that is destroying the world and the church today. Most in the world, and many in the church, are just like Naaman.

The world wants to do what they desire and yet have a clear conscience when it comes to religion. The denominational world is full of people that change biblical doctrine to fit what they want. It is done by teaching that homosexuality is an "alternative" lifestyle (Rom. 1), by allowing women to hold leadership positions (1 Tim. 2:12), and by corrupting God's worship (Jn. 4:24). We have all heard the phrase "attend the church of your choice." Jesus gave His life so people could find salvation in the church (Acts 2:47; 20:28), so it is very reasonable to understand that He would, without doubt, disagree with that statement. In fact, He said to Peter, "**And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it**" (Mt. 16:18). Christ built only one church and if any person is going to be pleasing to Him, they must become members of that church through obedience to the gospel plan of salvation. Doing that consists of having faith in Him (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6), repenting of past sins (Acts 2:38), confessing that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God (Acts 8:37), being immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16), and faithfully serving God until our time on earth is passed (Rev. 2:10). If there is disagreement with God's plan, instead of accusing God of causing religious division (1 Cor. 1:10), one should simply say "behold, I want to be a part of an organization that does things the way I want them done whether God agrees with it or not."

This doesn't only happen in the world of denominations. Naaman's attitude has invaded the Lord's church as well. Many members have endorsed "social drinking." Drinking has undergone a makeover, so to speak, over the past several years. Just like using the word "gaming" instead of gambling, a drunkard now drinks "socially" instead of simply "hitting the bottle," which removes the adverse connotation that it formerly had. The name doesn't matter though, because drinking, whether "social" or not, will certainly cause one to lose his soul (1 Pet. 4:3). Notice that Peter talked about the "excess" use of alcohol, but he didn't stop there. He also mentioned "revellings" or boisterous parties where alcohol is the drink of choice, as well as "banqueting" which is what we know as "social drinking." We must also keep in mind that no one ever became a drunk until they took their first drink. Solomon pointed out that, "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Pro. 20:1, NKJV). Instead of accusing God of condoning sin, it would be better if individuals would simply do as Naaman did and say "behold, I want to enjoy drinking alcohol."

Also, there are those that believe they can simply attend services and offer no other type of participation within the church. Offering worship to God is not what He had in mind when He said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen” (Mt. 28:18-20). In reality brethren who refuse to participate in the works of the church are saying “behold, I want to sit by while everyone else carries the load.”

These are just a few of the instances where one begins with “behold I want...” There are many more that cover a wide range of behaviors that are not pleasing to the Father and that will not aid one in receiving the crown of righteousness that awaits those that are faithful in all aspects of Christianity, not just in attendance (2 Tim. 4:6-8). May we all have a soft heart and be willing to change areas in our lives that need it and may we never be like King Zedekiah who simply chose to disobey God (2Chron. 36:13).