

The Burden of Jehovah

“And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of Jehovah? then shalt thou say unto them, What burden! I will cast you off, saith Jehovah. And as for the prophets, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of Jehovah, I will even punish that man and his house. Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, What hath Jehovah answered? and, What hath Jehovah spoken?” (Jeremiah 23:33-35). How do you regard what Jehovah hath spoken?

In light of “what Jehovah hath spoken,” consider the following: There was a captain of the Syrian host named Naaman. He was a leper. After being told by the Prophet Elisha, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shall be clean” (2 Kings 5:10), “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 Jehovah his God, and wave his hand over the place, and remove the leper” (2 Kings 5:11). The instruction was simple enough, but it didn’t meet with Naaman’s preconceived idea. Solomon said, “There is a way which seemeth right unto man; But the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

Naaman’s anger didn’t change the command, nor did it result in his cleansing, i.e., “Then went he down, and dipped seven times in the 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” (2 Kings 5:14): simple obedience. It’s interesting that Naaman didn’t question the water, but the river in which the water flowed. God commanded it, and when Naaman obeyed, he received the desired results: “he was clean.”

Saul of Tarsus, though a repentant believer, indicated by his response to the Lord, said, “What shall I do Lord?” (Acts 22:10), immediately went to Damascus, and awaited his instructions. During his wait, “he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink” (Acts 9:9), an indicator of remorse and contemplation. When Ananias came to Saul, as commanded by the Lord, he told Saul what it was that he was to do, i.e., “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). Following his obedience, “he took food and was strengthened” (Acts 9:19). Which came first: 1. repentance, salvation, fasting, breaking fast, baptism, or 2. repentance, fasting, baptism, (i.e., “arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins”), salvation, breaking fast?

Cornelius: Peter said, “Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord” (Acts 10:33). Thus, Peter spoke unto Cornelius, “words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house” (Acts 11:14), and Peter said, “Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days” (Acts 10:47-48). The baptism of Cornelius would have accomplished the same in his life, as it did in Saul of Tarsus, i.e., “wash away thy sins.”

Reflect upon the words of Jehovah, saying, “And the burden of Jehovah shall ye mention no more; for every man’s own word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of Jehovah of hosts our God. Thus shall thou say to the prophet, What hath Jehovah answered thee? and, What hath Jehovah spoken? But if ye say, The burden of Jehovah; therefore thus saith Jehovah: Because ye say this word, The burden of Jehovah, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of Jehovah; therefore, behold, I will utterly forget you, and will cast you off, and the city that I gave you and to your fathers, away from my presence: and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten” (Jeremiah 23:36-40). ret