

**ARE YOU GOD**  
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In a world with many false gods, how are we to know which one is real? How do we decide which to worship? There were a number of prophecies telling the Jewish people what to expect from the God who would come to Earth as the Messiah. One such prophecy is noted in **Luke 4:17-21**, quoted by Jesus from the book of Isaiah. It was his turn to read, so He chose this passage. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Afterwards, when He had closed the book and returned it to the minister, He had the attention of everyone in the synagogue. Referring to Him self, He then claimed this messianic prophecy was being fulfilled before them. So they tried to kill Him for blasphemy.

John the Baptist was nearing the end of his life. He had dedicated his entire life to preaching about the coming of the Messiah. He was sure in his heart Jesus was the one. He had heard a lot about what Jesus was doing. But now, about to die for his message, he wanted a little more assurance for his heart that his life had not been in vain. He sent his disciples in **Matthew 11:2-5** to Jesus with a heavy question. They asked, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus did not answer them directly, but gave them specific instructions. They were to tell John what they had seen and heard. They were to inform him, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." In other words, Jesus told them to tell John Isaiah's prophecies were being fulfilled. Who else but God could demonstrate the power of God?

Paul explained to Agrippa in **Acts 26:6-8**, what he based his unshakeable faith and hope in God upon. God had promised eternal life, the fulfillment of which, and the foreshadowing of which, had been demonstrated by the raising of Christ. It was belief in that resurrection which resulted in the accusations that brought Paul before this king for judgment. He said, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Paul knew Jesus had been raised from the dead by the power of God. That level of power made Him worthy of worship.

Note the taunting of the observers at the cross and trial of Jesus. In **Matthew 27:40**, one mocked, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Jesus not only came down from the cross, but when He appeared three days later, the temple was rebuilt. The wounds He had received had healed and in two days, were now scars, no longer open wounds. It was one small miracle hidden in the larger ones. It was definite proof of the power of God, both to heal and to raise the dead.

A Syrian commander, Naaman also had a moment of truth and a moment of choice when confronted with the power of God. In the **fifth chapter of 2 Kings**, Naaman shows up at Elisha's door. He is greeted, not by Elisha, but by a servant who tells him to go wash in Jordan seven times to make his flesh clean. The process was simple enough, but also illogical enough that faith in God was required to do it. The Jordan River is a filthy one, potentially deadly to those with open sores of leprosy. It was odd enough that Naaman's initial reaction was disbelief and anger. He had concocted in his mind, a much more dramatic version of how his healing would be accomplished. Luckily, his servants talked some sense into him before he threw away his chance. They put it like this, "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?" Naaman's servants basically asked what he had to lose by having faith in God. He decided to give Gods method of cleansing a try. Leprosy was used in scripture as an allegory of sin in our lives making us insensitive to the presence of God. Notice that Naaman was essentially being baptized here in order to wash away the deadly disease that was a symbol of sin. He dipped himself exactly seven times as instructed. Only when he came up the last time was all of his sickness washed away and his skin like a baby's skin. When we are baptized, all of our sin is washed away and we start over like a baby.

Naaman still had one more decision to make upon finding himself clean. The Jordan River separated the wilderness the children of Israel had wondered in from the Promised Land where the blessings of God were available. When Naaman left that water, where he had been cleansed, he still had to decide the direction in which he would leave. He could either move into the promises of God or return to the wilderness. Since we know he returned to Elijah's house, he obviously went back into Canaan, back into the Promised Land.

There he committed his life to the service of God. Having been resurrected from the brink of death, Naaman at that point knew, without a doubt, there was a living God. With such undeniable proof, he chose to follow after the God who had real power.

When we come from the waters of baptism, with guilt and sin washed away and our soul as clean as that of a baby, we must understand we have just received a miracle. We should realize we have just been saved from the death that is a natural and spiritual consequence of a life of sin. With such undeniable proof of the power of God, it should be easy to decide to walk with the God. What other god, worshipped in this world, can do that for us?

Many around us, who are dying, wonder whether there is a God and whether He cares. If we have received the miracle of salvation, we have the assurance to declare of the power of our living God. How beautiful to share the true gospel, to be able to tell the hurting that; the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dumb speak, and we who were dead in our sin have been brought back to life. If your god doesn't do that, change Gods. There is One who has power. He can prove He is worthy of our worship.