

BOOK OF 2 KINGS
DIVINE DIRECTION AND BLESSING
2 KINGS 8:1-6

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Introduction

Often we find ourselves having to **make decisions that vitally affect ourselves, our families, our future interests and our relationships.** Some decisions that we make are full of things we have no idea about what the outcome will be! But listen, the LORD knows all that stuff ahead of time! Amen!

We don't know what tomorrow holds, but we know who holds our tomorrow!

Therefore it is absolutely necessary that we be guided by the LORD's wisdom because His wisdom is higher than our own wisdom!

In our passage this evening, the Shunammite woman that **ministered unto the Prophet Elisha's physical needs** is back with us in our text! A few chapters back, we saw how that as a reward for her goodness and generosity to the man of God, the LORD opened her womb and gave her a son! And then some years later as that son tragically died, we saw the power of God demonstrated on her behalf once again as the LORD raised him back to life!

This godly woman had been blessed mightily already as she walked by faith! She had already experienced the promise, provision, and power of God.

And yet we know that, **as one walks by faith, there are always new tests that come our way to challenge us!** There are new calls for us to continue to walk by faith and not by sight! There are even sometimes new sacrifices to be made as we follow the LORD's leading in our life!

But understand that all of these are new occasions for the LORD to show up and manifest Himself and His Power in our life and its circumstances!

The *first six verses* here are just such a test for this godly Shunammite woman who trusted the LORD! **(LET'S READ THE VERSES!)**

I. THE DIVINE DEARTH! (Vs 1)

There was a seven-year famine from the LORD coming!

Last week we saw how the LORD brought an end to the famine that was limited to the city of Samaria! So what is the mention of another famine here? That famine in the city of Samaria was caused by the blockade by the Syrians and was ended by the LORD just as He said He would do!

However, by-and-large, the king and the people of the northern kingdom of Israel were still living wickedly and **the LORD had determined a seven-year famine on the land in response to their wickedness!**

Now understand that there was still a godly remnant of people who feared the LORD in the land! The Shunammite woman and her household were a part of the God-fearing remnant!

There is a great message here for us who know the LORD: Even though we may live in a land that appears to be being judged by the LORD right now, if we know Him and are obedient to Him, He will give us direction and see us through these tough times!

II. THE GODLY GUIDANCE! (Vs 1)

The LORD had Elisha warn this woman of faith about the approaching calamity of this famine on the land and gave her instruction as to precisely what she should do!

In obedience to the Divine Direction of the LORD, she was called to leave her home behind and take up temporary residence elsewhere!

Don't you know that had to be tough on her and her household?! After all, **"MOVE"** is a four-letter word! It is not easy to pick up and leave what you have known behind and go to a land where you don't know anybody and don't have any established connections!

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But understand that she really didn't know what to do about this coming famine in her own wisdom, so it was important for her to listen to the direction of the LORD from His Prophet!

The best thing that we can do in our lives is to look to the LORD for direction and guidance in ALL THINGS that come our way!

This woman received **GUIDANCE** from the LORD through Elisha! There are some things here that I want you to note about the **GUIDANCE** she received!

A. She Was Guided Personally! (Vs 1a)

There is no reference made to her husband here, so it is possible that he was no longer living. Thus, this lady proved *Psalm 146:9, "The Lord... relieveth the fatherless and widow"*.

It's good to remember that God treats all of us as individuals, and not as statistics or numbers.

The LORD does not just deal with us as part of His Church, but He also has a personal plan for each of our lives!

Isaiah 58:11 says, "The Lord shall guide thee continually."

The LORD had a plan for His Disciples as a whole, but He also had a plan for them individually! The same is true with us!

So the LORD can guide corporately as a Church body, but He also wants to guide us personally and individually. But notice:

B. She Was Guided Particularly! (Vs 1b)

There was definite and specific instruction given to her. *"Arise, and go thou and thine household,..."*

Here we see specific details regarding what she was supposed to do!

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1. **She was to immediately depart from her own country!** *" Arise and go thou..."*
2. **This applied to her and her sphere of responsibility!** *"...thou and thine household..."*
3. **She had a choice to make in this!** *"...and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn..."*
Now, don't you imagine that she sought the direction of the LORD even in that choice that she had to make?
4. **She was told the reason for the sudden emergency!** *"...for the Lord hath called for a famine..."*
5. **She was given the time period involved!** *"...and it shall also come upon the land seven years..."*

Here was a lady who received particular guidance.

God also guides Believers in a number of ways:

1. **We Are Guided GENERALLY by His HOLY WORD!** *(Psalm 1:1-3)*
The Word of God helps us in the steps we should take!

In the Bible there are many clear directions and essential principles to guide and govern our lives!

And where there is a clear and unequivocal statement in the Scriptures, then no other guidance is needed!
2. **We Are Guided SPECIFICALLY by His HOLY SPIRIT!** *(e.g. Acts 16:7, 10)*
Often, as we read His Word and pray, the Holy Spirit will guide us with His prompting of the will of God!
Often in the NT we find the Holy Spirit constraining!
At other times we find the Holy Spirit restraining!

3. **We Are Guided PROVIDENTIALLY Through CIRCUMSTANCES!**
I've said this before and I'll say it again, if we believe that *"...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purposes..."*, (Romans 8:28) then we must believe that God can guide us through providential circumstances!
4. **We Are Guided HELPFULLY by other BELIEVERS!**
For the Bible says in Proverbs 11:14—*"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."*

In the case of this godly woman, guidance came from the lips of Elisha.

She Was Guided Personally...Particularly...

- C. **She Was Guided Partially!**
She wasn't given all the nitty gritty details of what the future held! She was given no explanation as to what would happen to her during those seven years, and no prediction concerning what would happen after the seven years.

She was only given a partial plan, but she discovered the truth of following God's wisdom found in Proverbs 4:12—*"When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble."*

The LORD does not usually set down before us a full-scale plan or program mapping out every turn of the way! He doesn't show us every hill of difficulty! He doesn't reveal every wilderness of trial and every sea of struggle! But rather, God leads us one step at a time! Why is that? So that we might continually depend on Him each step along the way!

- THE DIVINE DEARTH...THE GODLY GUIDANCE...*
- III. **THE COMPLETE COMPLIANCE! (Vs 2)**
How did this woman respond to this revelation of the LORD's warning to her and will for her?
- Like her obedient ancestor, this daughter of Abraham went out not knowing whether she went. (Cf. Hebrews 11:8) She obeyed the Word of the LORD which came through the servant of the LORD!
Now notice she obeyed this Divine Directive in spite of some things:

- A. **She Obeyed In Spite Of WHEN IT CAME!**
You see as yet there was no evidence of famine at this time. There was still plenty in the land, her fields were still fruitful, her kitchen was still full!

But she accepted the testimony of the man of God without the least hesitation and proceeded at once to act upon the warning that was so graciously given to her.

Argumentativeness, hesitancy, and reluctance when the LORD has spoken may lead us into trouble.

Ill: Someone has said that *"delayed obedience is disobedience"*. But here was a lady who calmly accepted the will of God as being *"good, and acceptable, and perfect"*. (Cf. Romans 12:2)

When God calls on us to do something which is contrary to human wisdom, how do we respond?

She Obeyed In Spite Of WHEN IT CAME!

- B. **She Obeyed In Spite Of WHAT IT COST!**
"She went with her household..."
She did not leave behind a member of her household to look after her property and possessions.

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We see no reliance at all upon her own human reasoning. She put her case in the hands of the LORD and left everything.

What did it cost her? **Her comfort-zone!**

1. **It Cost Her Being Separated From Her Circle Of Friends!**
2. **It Cost Her Being Separated From Her Land And Home!**
She didn't know this would happen, but in her absence the family house and land were lost—either snatched by squatters or more likely confiscated by the king.
3. **It Cost Her Being Separated From All She Had Ever Known In Her Life Other Than The LORD And Her Household!**

Obedience to the LORD's, will always cost, but in the end it pays!

Matthew 19:29 – “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

Are you determined to do the LORD's will no matter what it may cost you? Are you prepared to go through with Him regardless of the price that has to be paid

*She Obeyed In Spite Of WHEN IT CAME!
She Obeyed In Spite Of WHAT IT COST!*

- C. **She Obeyed In Spite Of WHO IT CROSSED!**
Can you imagine the various objections that her neighbors raised to such a plan?! She might have been dubbed a fanatic! No doubt the various dangers and difficulties would have been pointed out as her friends sought to dissuade her!

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Do you know what I've discovered? There will always be those who seek to turn us from the path of obedience!

When the LORD Jesus revealed His path of obedience to the cross that was to come, one of His inner circle men, Peter said, *Matthew 16:22–“...Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”*

Ill: I remember when we set out to homeschool our children, family and friends sought to dissuade us from such a thing! The same thing is true when I answered the call to preach!

Are there some well meaning people saying something similar to you trying to dissuade you from what you know is the LORD's will for your life? Just remember that you're not to listen to your friends, but rather to the LORD Who's calling you!

THE DIVINE DEARTH...THE GODLY GUIDANCE...THE COMPLETE COMPLIANCE...

IV. THE PROVIDENCE PROVIDED!

What do we mean by **providence**? While the actual word "**providence**" does not occur in the Bible, the doctrine does!

"Providence" is that work of God in which He is active in all that happens in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end!

Do you see God's providence here in:

A. The PROVISION Received by this Woman!

Why did God sent Elisha to her? Because God is faithful and will not forsake His own! Throughout all the movements of our earthly pilgrimage we have a God Who knows, Who cares, and Who provides!

Matthew 6:32–“...for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”

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B. The PROPERTY Restored to this Woman!

Can you picture her making her way home after 7 years of exile? Can you imagine the joy that filled her heart as she made her way back to Shunem? But then the shock of discovering that her property and possessions have been taken over by others.

1. It Seemed That She Lost Everything! (Vs 3)

When every step she had taken was in obedience to the will of God, I'm sure her heart questioned "Why?" What disappointment! But this was actually another opportunity for her to trust the LORD!

2. In The End She Lost Nothing!

The LORD worked on her behalf yet once again!

Do you see how God overruled in relation to PERSONS? (Vs 3b-5)

This woman needed to see the King to present her case to him and at the very time she sought an interview with the King, Gehazi was in his presence.

Do you see how God overruled in relation to TIME?

Gehazi was telling the King about her boy's restoration just at the moment when the woman came in.

The world would say "*What a COINCIDENCE!*" or "*Oh how LUCKY she was for that to take place!*"

No...this was the very PROVIDENCE of God!

Proverbs 21:1—"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

The LORD turned the king's heart in favor toward this woman. The result was that she had everything she had lost restored along with whatever the value of the fruit it had gained while she was gone! **(8:6)**