

2Kings 8:1–6

Specific, Surprising, Spectacular Mercy in the Midst of Corporate Judgment

Wednesday, November 30, 2022 ▫ **Read 2 Kings 8:1–6**

Questions from the Scripture text: Who spoke to whom in v1? What did he tell her to do? For what had Yahweh called? For how long? What does the woman do in v2? According to what? With whom? When does v3 take place? What does the woman do? To whom does she go to do what? As she was coming to him, to whom does the king just happen to be talking, and just happen to be asking about what (v4)? What was Gehazi talking about in v5? Who appears? Doing what? And who interrupts? Saying what? Who asks her about it (v6)? What does he award her, even on top of what she asked?

What hope can member believers have, when God is judging their nations or their churches? 2Kings 8:1–6 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God's sovereign, all-encompassing providence orders and overrules all things for the good of those whom He is redeeming.**

Specific, surprising mercy in the midst of general judgment, v1–3. Many times (cf. Ex 15:26; Deut 7:15, 28:60), the Lord had warned Israel that behaving like Egypt would bring upon them the afflictions that He had brought upon Egypt. Now, the Lord was about to bring a seven year famine, but it was not preceded by seven years of plenty. Yahweh had shown How great (and, surprising, as His mercy often is) is His power and mercy by turning back the Syrian siege, but there still had not been repentance.

Sometimes the Lord frightfully judges churches or nations. But for the believer in Christ, he receives mercy in the midst of the judgment. His mercy to the Shunammite woman (cf. ch. 4) is a wonderful example. Before sending the famine, Yahweh sends the prophet to warn her and send her.

We see what He does for her, and we remember that the Lord remembers the least of His servants and the least of their kindnesses (cf. 4:10; Mt 10:41–42). We remember David's shelter among the Philistines, and we conclude that the Lord sometimes uses the most unlikely instruments to provide for and protect His people.

If you are in Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation for you (cf. Rom 8:1). And while there may now be afflictions (cf. Rom 8:18a), they are hastening an eternal weight of glory (cf. Rom 8:18b), as God works all things together for your good (cf. Rom 8:28), making you glorious (cf. Rom 8:30), and freely giving you all things (cf. Rom 8:32). This is true even of afflictions that come via judgments upon wicked nations and unfaithful churches (cf. Rev 3:16–21).

But there is a warning, here, too. We're surprised to see Gehazi in the king's presence in v4 (cf. 5:27) and must conclude that chapter 5 was presented out of chronological order (suggesting that the works of Elisha were gathered into one place in a similar manner to what the king is asking for in v4 of our passage). The warning is that even those who know the greatness of God and hear His Word faithfully preached may yet bring dreadful consequences upon themselves and their descendants.

God often gives personal mercy in the midst of general judgment, but often believers bring upon themselves personal judgment in the midst of others who are receiving mercy (cf. Heb 6:4–6).

Comprehensive, specific, sovereign providence in service of personal mercy, v4–6. One of the marvelous things about being the object of this God's mercy is how complete and detailed His sovereign rule over all things is.

It's been seven years, but the moment that she is about to come to the king (v3) just happens to be a moment in which the king is asking about all the great things that Elisha has done (v4). And then the moment that she enters the very room (v5b) is the moment that Gehazi has just gotten to the story of her kindness to Elisha, the gift of the child, and the raising of the child from the dead (v5a, 5c).

This puts her in the position of being able to give the king what he especially wanted at that point: firsthand accounts of the great works that Elisha has done (v6a)!

If she had just come in and asked, and the king had given not only what she asked for, but a great deal more (v6b, n.b. if the field was productive during famine, how great the proceeds would have been!), then surely she ought to have concluded that this has come in the providence of God. But we are often slow on the uptake, and the Lord often does things in a way that "shows off" what is always true: His mercy toward those whom He is redeeming is the goal of every smallest part of His providence, in every place, at every moment.

O, believing reader, how the mercy of God follows you, wherever you go! How it determines everything that will happen, everywhere, all the time for the purpose of doing you good! Only by His grace do you ever do that which is good, and yet He in His abundant generosity is pleased to repay that good that you do in Christ. What a God! What personal mercy! What powerful and all-encompassing providence!

What troubles do you see might be coming upon the church and the nations? What has He done, in His work in your heart and life, to encourage you that if the trouble does come, He will still be focused upon showing you mercy? If you don't have such hope, because you are not sure that you are in Christ Jesus, then what ought you to do? But if you are in Christ Jesus, then what are all of these mercies bringing you to at last? How many of the events in your life are aiming at that?

Sample prayer: Lord, You rule and overrule all things in perfect justice. We confess that if You were to judge our church for unfaithfulness or our land for unfaithfulness, we would have to shut our mouths and know that You are just and righteous in doing so. But, we cling to Christ, knowing that if we have Him, then all must work together for our good. O that we cling to Him more!

But, we confess before You that we are often ungrateful because we do not see how merciful You have been; and, we are often fearful because we do not see from Your Word how merciful You are and how merciful You will be. We forget that Your power and Your love are perfectly steady and infinite—controlling every detail of Your providence in perfect wisdom.

What hope can there be for those who know such truths about You, but live so often in such forgetfulness of You? You Yourself are our hope! The righteousness of Jesus counted for us is our hope! The sacrifice of Jesus atoning for us is our hope! The love in which You planned to give Him is our hope! The love in which You gave Him is our hope! The love in which You are freely giving us all things, together with Him, is our hope!

So it is through hope in Jesus that we ask You to forgive us of our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteous, which we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP46 "God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength" or TPH256 "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

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Second kings, chapter 8, verses 1 through 6, these are God's words. Then Elijah spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life saying. Arise and go you and your household and stay wherever you can. For yava has called for a famine and furthermore, it will come upon the land.

For seven years. So the woman rose and did according to the saying of the man of god And she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistine seven years. Came to pass at the end of seven years. That the woman returned from the land of the philistines and she went to make an appeal to the king.

For her house and for her land. When the king talked with ghazi, the servant of the man of god saying, tell me, please all the great things Elisha has done. Now, it happened as he was telling the king, how he had restored the dead to life. There was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land.

And gas. He said, my lord okaying. This is the woman and this her son. Him always will restored to life. And when the king asked the woman, she told him, So the king appointed a certain officer for her saying. Restore all that was hers and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land, Until now.

So far the reading of gods inspired and In there and toward This is a time. Of judgment. The. Form of the verb or the prefix on the verb. At the beginning of the chapter tells us that this is an order from Chapter 7. Uh, that's important and helpful because when we find gases in the king's court instead of outside the gate as a leper, Uh, we realized that The.

Account of, Name and healing in chapter 5 is not in chronicle. Chronological order, we realize That the lord has arranged the signs of elijah. Uh, all together in one place and that not all not. Everything is in. Uh, chronological order. Uh, but here, this does follow upon chapter 7.

Uh, which tells us that god, although he was merciful and made Display of himself, his power, his word. In turning the Syrian army away. And delivering. Uh, for the moment, the northern kingdom israel and its capital city, especially Samaria. Uh, yet there had not been repentance. And the covenant curse would come back into or still be in effect and there would be famine In fact, it's a famine that reminds us of something from genesis.

Uh, when it tells us that the famine When Elijah tells the woman rather that the famine is going to last for seven years. An exodus and in Deuteronomy, the lord had warned his people. That if they were not faithful. Uh, to walk in his ways to obey all of his commandments.

That what had come upon Egypt would come upon then? In fact, in Deuteronomy 28. He says and worse we'll come up on you and this is worse. Because this is seven years of famine, but they have not been proceeded by seven years of plenty. Uh, nor heads there have been someone appointed.

To make sure that there would be enough gathered from those seven years of plenty. And so, the context here is one of judgment upon the church and upon the nation. And this. Interests us because we live in a time in which the church is at a very low end.

And where many of the threatenings that the lord makes against his church. Throughout the Scripture and especially the The lord jesus in the seven and the letters to the seven churches, several of those churches receive warnings that The church in our land and our day as well. Deserving love.

And so when we see god giving this display of how through his word and through the faith that he brings By his word and as evidenced, by the grace that he worked, In believers. Uh, that the lord is merciful to individual believers, even in the mints of seasons of judgment that gives us good.

Hope and stirs us up to attend upon his word and to trust in jesus christ and cling to christ. That we may know that even should judgment come. Upon the church and the nation, or Perhaps better to say at this point greater judgment. Come Upon the church and the nation.

That it would come with personal mercy. Unto each of us. And for each of you, That will have to be individually true for you. You can be in a blessed house or a blessed congregation in the midst of a general judgment and still be one to whom. Judgment personally belongs.

Remember, the ones in hebrews 6? Who are in such a A congregation where it could be said of them that they were tasting of the heavenly gift. Uh, and that they were Experiencing the power and the working of the holy spirit, they were in a true congregation a spiritually alive congregation.

And yet, there were those who were not genuinely converted, And the result was that they were hardened to be onto the possibility of repentance by virtua having been In such a congregation. And so each of us, Must deal personally genuinely with god ourselves. With just to say, we must attend upon his word seeking that god would deal with us by his spirit through his word.

As he had done with this woman, Well, you're not just given the woman. Faith, such that. She? Believed the word of the lord and appreciated, the man of god and loved him. And his very much like Lydia. Uh, remember in the passage on the lord's day, one of the first evidences or fruits of her conversion, was her desire to give hospitality to the preacher of the gospel who had come to her.

And this was what we saw with the Shuna might woman in chapter 4 of second king kings that she had told her husband. You know, let's make a a A spare room on the roof. That the man of god can stay in. Whenever he's in our area, let's claim the privilege of showing him hospitality and the lord jesus tells us Uh, that he Has special kindness and reward for those who show, kindness to the preachers of the gospel.

Matthew 10 verse 41, he says someone who receives a profit for his sake receives him and that Um, that he will remember, even the cup of cold water. That is given in the name. Of the lord jesus christ. And so, The lord had produced in this tune of my woman.

As he produces in Lydia, as he produces. In believers gracious. Fruit evidence of his gracious work and so surprising mercy finds her in the midst of this judgment irresist. Here's this general judgment. Famine is going to come upon the land for seven years but the lord doesn't send to tell the kings that famine is going to come for seven years.

Uh, that had happened. You remember with ahab and Elijah. And, Elijah had been told to tell the king. That the that there was a famine coming but here it's not the king who's told the the there's a family coming, it's a woman. It's the shunamite. Uh woman who is told because god has special care specific care for the life of each one.

Of his saints whom he has lobbed, and whom he is redeeming. Our blood is precious in his sight as it is set of king jesus, and psalms 72. Uh, which we have been studying together. These Uh three weeks and so there's a specific mercy here which you know, must be the case if you belong to jesus by faith.

If the holy spirit is working in you, Uh, to do. Um that which the law was not able to do in you because it was weakened by our sin. Uh, but we having been crucified with christ raised having been raised again to newness of life, being led by the spirit of god, walk in the righteous requirements of the law and put to death, the deeds of the body.

It doesn't mean we don't have suffering, we do have a flicks affliction's. Still thinking in romans eight there, but these afflictions are hastening. An eternal weight. Of glory that is about to be revealed to us and it's in that context thinking about how the lord is using, the afflictions of this world for the good of his saints.

That we have such precious texts as Uh, we know all things work together for good. For those who love God and are called according to his purpose. Why do we love him? Because he called us according to his purpose. Why did this tune of my woman? Love the word of god and wants to show hospitality to the prophet because the lord had called her according to his purpose.

And so even the famine Even a seven-year famine was going to be worked out. For her good. Uh so specific mercy perhaps even surprising because of who it comes upon. At least from a human perspective. Mercy. And also surprising in whom the lord uses to show her the mercy, the place that he protects and provides for hers.

The Philistines and this wasn't the first time that God had done that. He had done that for david when he was Uh, on the run. And so it reminds us. That the whole earth and even the enemies of god or at his disposal, through whom to do his people good, even during times of judgment upon the church, Uh, yet.

May he Show. Such surprising and powerful mercy to us. And so that gives us. Uh confidence already in the goodness of our god, towards us and the specificity how personally he is working things out for us. He's not just concerned with what happens on a macro scale with the whole world.

The lord cares about what happens. Uh, with the individual life of everyone. Of his saints. And then you see the reminder? Of how? Uh, detailed, this providential care is when she comes back. The end of seven years, a woman returns from the land of the Philistines. Why? At the end of seven years.

The famine is just ending. There's not the new crop yet. Um, How does she know it's going to end well, because she believes what the word of god says, God gave her god sent us word to her by the prophet. It's like jeremiah. Um no jeremiah. It's like daniel who had read in jeremiah About the 70 years.

And when the end of the 70 years comes, As we heard a book of daniel recently, Daniel prayed because he knew from the word of god that this was the time. So she returns at the time that the word of god says and now she's going to the king.

Uh why does he have to go to the king? Well if you're gone for seven years, People. It's why finders keepers with your home and with your land? And she Uh, would like to have her home and her land back. These were perpetual and alienable rights in israel. And so she was in in the right to ask the king for it.

Um, well, as we said earlier, the, this is before the incident would name in the Syrian or rather name? It Syrian comes after that. And the king is chatting with ghazi. It's sort of, like, Um, When? Uh, When Mordecai is, In the Uh, when the king can't sleep at night later and In persia and he knows exactly what i'll put him to sleep.

Reading the historic records, Uh, but he reads the historical records. How Mordecai had been used to. Uh, to spare his life and haman comes in just at the time and so forth and all of these providential timing. Well, The. The tax, the second half of our passenger kind of goes in slow motion, it shows you the woman on her way to the to the Uh, to the throne room and then that scene changes and it's in the throne room.

And the king is asking ghazi, uh, to tell them about the great deeds of elisha. And then this pans back to the woman and the woman's Uh, now about to enter the room and it pans back to the king and Gehazi and ghazi's just getting to the part of the story.

When he says, Elisha's even raised people from the dead, and he's telling her about the woman, and he's telling her about his son, her son, and then the two scenes become one, because the woman has entered the room there Now, it happened as he was telling the king, how he had restored to dead, the, the dead to life.

There was the woman who son he had restored to life. Appealing to the king for her house and her land. And gas. He said my lord of king. This is the woman and this is her son. Mliser restored to life. And so, the woman is now, Not just been talked up to.

Uh, by Uh, to talked up to the king by ghazi, but she has something that is what the king happens to want right now. He wants firsthand accounts. Of the great deeds of elisha and she can give a perspective that even gases Can't give and so she gets to tell Uh, verse 6, when the king asked the woman she told him, And so, she has Not just common appealed to the king.

Now she has given the king something that he wants. And he appoints an officer, not just a restore to her. All that was hers. Uh, but it sounds like in the midst of the famine, her field had actually produced And she's gonna get the profit from the seven years.

Uh, so that Even though she was told by Elijah to go, Um, When the lord had taken care of her. Uh yet the lord was taking care of her in both places. At the same time, he was taking care of her among the Philistines where she was And at home, Where her field was producing.

Uh, that which The lord would use. Uh, to provide for her. When she came back. And so you see the way the lord did this? Now, if she had just gone to the king, And made her appeal and the king had said, yes. And even hadn't said yeah and add the proceed to the land to it too and i'm gonna send an officer specifically assigned to your case to make sure it happens.

And all if the king adjusted yes she ought to have come away saying Behold how personally, and particularly, the lord works out the details of my life. We all ought to do that all the time. It is the providence of the spirit as we were hearing about in act 16.

In the morning, sermon on the lord's day. And yet, sometimes the lord does things with such a spectacular flare. To show off. How specifically he rules and overrules of specifically, he orders out every little thing. For our good. Uh, so as to stir up our faith, He who knows?

The weakness of our frame. How cold we are and slow to see. Uh his goodness slow to remember what we know from his word. He often does things in our lives, in such a way. As to make it. Um, Obvious and display his greatness. Give us occasion for greater praise.

And adoration. As he did for the woman here. So, how wonderful? Is the sovereign mercy of our god, even In times. When the church generally, Or the nation generally or both. Are under his judgment. If we are his through faith in christ. That comes from an everlasting love. That was determined to give us that faith.

And it comes. And perfect, wisdom and power. That orders every moment. Everywhere. Everything that happens. For our good. In that electing converting a love. Praise god. Let us praise him for it. Our father in heaven, we thank you for this portion of your word. We thank you for giving it to us at the end of this day.

We pray that you would stir up our faith in christ. That we might. Remember, and be sure. Of your personal and particular mercy towards us. In every detail of everything that happens. Thank you for the way you sometimes, do this. In such a manner as to remind us that you are always doing.

When we pray that it would have its effect that your spirit would Blessed to us your words. So we would understand our lives correctly. And that your spirit would bless to us your word, especially so that we would understand your word correctly. Help us. Oh, lord. To rejoice over your goodness to us, to be confident of your mercy toward us.

If we ask these things in jesus name, Amen.