

Surely, Goodness and Mercy
 Second Kings 8:1-6

It was King David who in his meditation reminisced on the way God had led and blessed him over the years, *Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, (and then) I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.* Those who serve the Lord also share this testimony. Despite the trials, and testings of life, we can look back and trace the daily blessing of walking in His way. So also could this woman, and we can learn much from her example

First, recall this woman from our prior reading. 2 Kings 4. She was the wife of a farmer, prominent in his community, and she was active in the interests of the family. She fitted profile of the model wife of proverbs Ch.31. She feared the Lord when many and gone awry. She provided a room for Elisha. God granted her a son, who later died, but was revived by Elisha.

Testing follows testing. Then the country fell into a seven year drought 2 Kings 4:38. It is the same for us. God has not promised a trial free life, in fact, He uses the trials of life as a discipline to correct us, as a fire to refine us. Blessed is trouble. Chapter 8:1 follows the narrative of 4:38. The famine is the one and the same. We know this from the Hebrew used. It does not come out clearly in some English translations, and the AV is the most misleading. Ch. 8 v1 The NIV "Now Elisha had said ..." is

closest. The verb is perfect, the conversation was completed long ago. The seven dry years had passed. The siege of Samaria and the axe head event, also occurred during those years. God uniquely leads and provides for each of His people, and it is not always in the same way. It is important for every believer to walk in fellowship with the lord every single day, to read His word and be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

When the cat is away, the mice will play. Squatters had moved in. The farm which was extensive and productive had been occupied, perhaps by the king himself. Obviously every food resource such as a farm was a national asset in the drought. In obedience they had moved out, but they were free to choose their destination. The Gaza Strip was more fertile than their limestone hills, and it was

supported by its trade route ports. But now they had to appeal to the king to appeal to the king.

God provides for all our contingencies. And, 'my God shall supply all your need' too, says Paul when you walk in His way. God's answer was of the kind that only God can provide. It has all the bench-marks of His handiwork upon it. It was unique, it was pre-planned, it was timed to the second, and it was complete.

King J(eh)oram was in the act of getting intelligence about Elisha from his garrulous 'ex-servant' . Gehazi ¹ was telling him about the raising of the woman's son when they both turned up with their petition. He even restored all the produce taken from the land from the royal stores. Compare this largesse with the answer to Ben Haddad II's request for healing. His servant, Naaman had been cured of leprosy. Although Elisha approved the actual request he immediately also foretold his death. 'Will recover' is more

exactly 'will certainly survive 2421' the disease; but 'will certainly die' The word 'to slay' here means is 'to definitely be slain 4191+4192.' Perhaps Hazeal took this as an instruction, or maybe a confirmation of an idea he already harboured. This event was already in the mind of God. It was no ad hoc decision on His part. See 1 Kings 19:15-18.

The Shepherd Psalm. This family could read Psalm 23 and easily identify with David:
 I shall not want.
 To lie down in green pastures.
 He restores my soul.
 He guides me.
 I walk through the shadow of death.
 Your rod & staff comfort me.
 You provide a table in my enemy's presence.
 You have anointed my head.
 Surely, goodness and mercy . . .

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His word, what a glory He sheds on our way.

Endnotes: 1. We are not sure whether Gehazi was still in them employ of Elisha, after his disgrace, or whether this refers to his prior status. The NASB was used for the preparation and quotations in this study, except where noted. Word Numbers conform to the Strongs Lexicon.

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 Lower Road, Eltham North
 Sundays 10.30 am

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