

How God May Save You From Suffering

International Bible Lesson

2 Kings 8:1-6

Sunday, July 22, 2012

“And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life” (2 Kings 8:5—KJV).

“While Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had brought a dead person back to life, the woman made her appeal to the king. Gehazi said to him, ‘Your Majesty, here is the woman and here is her son whom Elisha brought back to life!’” (2 Kings 8:5—GNB).

“While Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had restored a dead person to life, the woman whose son he had restored to life appealed to the king for her house and her land. Gehazi said, ‘My lord king, here is the woman, and here is her son whom Elisha restored to life’” (2 Kings 8:5—NRSV).

When God must punish others, He often saves His people from suffering, and God uses many ways to rescue those who trust in Him. After he restored a dead man to life, Elisha warned the mother that if she stayed in her home she would suffer seven years of famine. He advised her to leave and settle wherever she could. By moving, she would escape God’s punishment on the rebellious kingdom of Israel. She obeyed and settled in the land of the Philistines, Israel’s enemies. In order to escape the discipline others justly deserved, she needed to trust God and His prophet.

After the famine, the woman returned to reclaim her home and land, and went to the king for his help. She needed a miracle! Therefore, with perfect timing Gehazi was telling her story when she came before the king, and he restored her land and gave her more than she asked. In different ways, Elijah and Elisha saved widows from famines (see 1 Kings 17:7-24).

It may be difficult, but God’s people must sometimes leave their comfortable homes and places of work to avoid unnecessary suffering or undeserved punishment. For example, Joseph brought his father and family to Egypt to escape seven years of famine, and Naomi moved with her family to Moab to escape a famine. In all of these cases, God led them or led their descendants back to the Promised Land.— © Copyright 2012 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. Why was the woman’s obedience to God’s word through Elisha essential to God saving her from the coming seven years of famine?

2. How is obeying God a sign of faith in God?

3. Why does true faith in God always lead to obeying God?

4. Do you think God still works providentially in the lives of His people today? Can you think of any examples of God’s providential working in your own life or in the lives of others? Would you like to share your experience or experiences of God’s providential working in your life with others?

5. What might happen to someone who settles someplace with the resolve never to move no matter what? What might you say to such a person who says this.

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