

Wednesday, November 9, 2022 • Read 2Kings 6:1–7

Questions from the Scripture text: Who speak to whom in v1? What do they say? Where do they ask to go (v2)? For each one do what? In order to make what? What does the prophet answer? What further request do they make (v3)? Now what does he answer? Who go where and do what in v4? What is one doing in v5? What happens? How does he respond? To whom? Why? What does Elisha ask in v6? What does he do when the man shows him the place? What happens to the iron? What does Elisha say to do (v7a)? What does the son of the prophets do (v7b)?

Why needn't we either compromise nor despair for material provision? 2Kings 6:1–7 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these seven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the Lord cares even for our most mundane needs in almighty power.**

God works in almighty providence to attend to mundane things like bunk space and being able to return borrowed axes. This is not the rise and fall of nations, and these aren't royalty, but God works a miracle through His prophet to do it. This reminds of lessons from 4:38–44, now in the context of 5:20–27. Let us seek grace to be content with God's marvelous provision, lest we fall into the sin of Gehazi.

God works in almighty providence through wisdom and diligence. God's provision precludes sinning, but it includes planning and work. Part of how He provides here is observation and planning (v2) together with the diligence required to borrow axes, take the trip, and chop down the trees. Trusting in almighty providence mustn't become an excuse for failure to plan or failure to work. And planning and working must never be where we find our sense of security. They operate under God's almighty providence.

God works in almighty providence through tiny details. It seems like a little thing in v2 when one man expresses his preference for the prophet to come with them. But then an iron axe head ends up on the bottom of the river. We never know what tiny details now are going to end up being significant. But God does. He works through tiny details

God works in almighty providence through almighty power (cf. Gen 30:38). The stick in the water reminds us of Jacob putting striped sticks in the water. The Israel that received Genesis (and probably Jacob himself) knew that this could not change what the baby sheep or goats would look like. And we certainly know that floating sticks don't make floating iron. But as with several of Elisha's miracles already, a prophetic action is added to imprint the Word more starkly in the memory. The stick is not the means of the miracle, because it doesn't need to be. The Lord Himself provides the outcome.

We too, dear reader, live under the constant care of almighty providence. Let us see how He attends to mundane things and even tiny details so that every moment of every day will be an act of trusting. So that we might honor Him in how we live, let us see that He still expects us to plan and labor. And so that we might neither take credit nor lose heart, let us remember that He is free to work by means, beyond means, or even beside (without) means.

What difficulties do you face in everyday life? How will they ultimately be resolved? So, what should you do?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for attending to every detail of our lives in almighty providence. Forgive us for our lack of faith when we view our lives as unimportant to You or distant from You. Forgive us for our foolishness when we don't plan, our laziness when we don't work, and our blasphemy when we excuse ourselves by calling this folly and laziness "faith." Forgive us for the sake of Christ's sacrifice. And grant us His righteousness, that we might trust You, plan wisely, work diligently, and praise You for all of the good that You do. For, we ask it all through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP1 "How Blessed the Man" or TPH256 "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Second Kings, 6 1 through 7. These are God's words on the sons of the prophets, said to Elisha. See now the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. Please let us go to the Jordan and let every man take a beam from there and let us make their a place where we may dwell.

So he answered go Then one said, please consent to go with your servants and he answered I will go. So he went with them and when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees but as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax. Head fell into the water and he cried out.

And he said, a last master for it was borrowed. So the man of God said Where did it fall? And he showed him the place, so he made. So he cut off a stick and threw it in there and he made the iron float. Therefore he said, pick it up for yourself.

So He reached out his hand and took it so far. The reading of God's inspired there and it worked. The Lord provides for his people. We had a couple instances of that back in chapter 4 You remember with the provision of the pod of stew and the healing of the pot of stew and the provision in the middle of the famine, where a man from.

They also Lisa brings the 20 lives of barley bread and the nearly ripened grain and it's enough to feed a hundred men until they're full with some leftover by the miraculous work of God. So God's care for His people as provision for his people and particularly for those who would have been an afterthought to most Israelites, the sons of the prophets has been a theme in recent chapters.

And that's important because remember the sin of Gehazi, right? At the end of the previous chapter that we just came out of where he was dreaming of all the stuff that he could buy with two talents of silver and which led him into the sin, receiving name and money.

And here we see much about God's provision. One is God's provision comes by wisdom and observation and planning the sons of the prophets. Speak to Elijah. Sorry Elisha, and they speak with one voice, which means they've been thinking about it, considering it, they come and they present something to their master Lord also provides through the making of requests.

Notice that they do this in submission to the Word of God and submission to the master who has been set over them. Please let us go to the Jordan and so forth. You know, they're grown grown enough to chop down trees and yet they are in submission to their master who is has the special role right now being the Word of God who set among them, and this very different than what Ghazi did obviously, but it shows not just wisdom and planning and observation but also the willingness to be told no by God.

And even to be told no, by the one whom God has set over them as an authority and an instructure instructor. The Lord's provision is well received when we receive it with humility because humility and gratitude, our cousins, and go together in the heart in the mouth. And in the mind and if we would like to have a more cheerful and happy and thankful life, one of the ways that we can end up there is by starting out in humility and submission.

And notice also that they know the value of the Word of God, they, they have their plan and they ask him about it and he approves the plan. So, he answered go and then verse 3, then one said, please consent to go with your servants. Now this we have no indication in the scripture that Elisha is an expert or mighty tree.

Chopper is not a lumberjack. What is he? Yes. The embodiment of the Word of God among his people, and they never want to be without the Word of God. It is good for us to learn that. The Word of God is the most valuable thing that we can have with us at any point in any place.

And so it is good to have a Bible with you and it is even better to have a Bible in you to make regular study of and meditational upon the Word of God. And yes, memorization as well memorization is very good for meditation but it's that meditation that turning over and mulling the Word of God in your mind on your heart that keeps it in the forefront.

That makes it presently accessible to you sometimes people. Memorize and or think of the Word of God is something that you study and that set aside but that's not nearly as fruitful as having it ready to hand this man of the sons of the prophets wanted to have, Elisha ready to hand.

And that's a good thing because Suddenly, as they are chopping trees down by the Jordan, they are in need of a miracle.

They came to Jordan there cutting down trees and apparently Some of them have had to. And this isn't that surprising Boro ax. Heads are the iron for the ax heads. In order to be able to chop down trees and of course, they are not wealthy, they don't have money, they'd have to pay for it.

If they had money, they would have had their own iron. So this is a problem, iron is denser than water. It is now at the bottom of the Jordan. And yet, the Jordan is often a place where God shows has Supernatural provision for guarding guidance of his people. Remember how the Jordan was a mini red sea, as the people left, the land of Egypt?

They passed through the Red Sea on dry ground. And as they entered the land of Canaan, they passed through the Jordan on dry ground. And then this was re-picture to us, wasn't it? When all I jaw was about to be taken up to heaven, and the rest of the sons of the prophets, were the one side of the Jordan.

And Elijah parted the water on the way out. And well, I'm John. Got taken up to heaven and a live shop part of the water on the way back. And so the Lord does something here that reminds us again of his words. Power overall things, particularly in using. And in using the Jordan Now, Elijah adds something to make it memorable there.

But several times you remember the throwing of the flower in the pot and that was not so that people with bad. Hermeneutics could right instruction. Manuals for how to heal poisonous water in the future, is a prophetic action that gets tied to the prophetic word. That especially for those who are there would make it more memorable, they would remember what they saw as he was doing it and It also gives us a picture in our mind to go along with the word to drive it home.

This is one of the reasons why prophetic action or other times, where you have narrative where you have action in the Bible or so helpful for the instruction of children and is a good practice to take a principal part of part of scripture where the principal is taught and instructed.

And if there is not an illustration there to illustrate from an action, somewhere else in the Bible that teaches the same thing, This is better than the sorts of stories and clever or interesting illustrations that men tend to use in two ways, one because God himself has picked that action by which to drive at home.

And another reason is because it actually exposes them to two parts of the Bible at once and now the Holy Spirit helping them in the future when there are in one or the other part of the Bible that will remember both parts. And then we'll start to build a knowledge and understanding of the Bible as a whole.

So there's this action here and it reminds us of another time that the Lord was providing. You remember Jacob, when he She needs. Thank you. She's trying to get cheese. All right. This reminds us of another time when the Lord was providing this time for Jacob, and we don't think that Jacob was silly enough to think that making striped sticks and throwing them into the water was making striped lambs.

Jacob had been a herdsman from multiple generations of her son. He probably knew in the Israelites who received it, probably knew that this was kind of a an action to accompany his desire before God, and indication of his, is our Jacob might have even meant it superstitiously. At first, as a kind of superstitious action.

But the Lord was merciful and the Lord caused it to go. Well, for Jacob, even after things were changed all those times whatever. So,

Elisha cuts off a stick and throws it in the water and the iron floods Notice also that the Lord wants us to use diligence saying the Lord will provide for me is not an excuse for failing to work hard. We saw earlier that it wasn't an excuse for failing to use your mind.

And observe how many people and observe how much space there is and make a plan, the Lord's provision is not an excuse for not using wisdom. Wisdom is part of the provision of the Lord. And that's one of the appointed means ordained means by which he provides other things.

So also is diligence chopping down trees with iron that you are. Sharpening yourself is not light work and this is even signified to us in the instruction at the end. Sure. It would have been very easy for Elisha to pick up the ax head that had floated to the water in front of him, but he does give the instruction pick it up for yourself.

And so he reached out his hand and took it, but behind all of this is the generous almighty God. We all know that iron doesn't float. It's ridiculous to come to this passage and start to come up with reasons from chemistry or physics that that this could have worked.

Although the theologically ignorant and stubborn and rebellious of heart, often come to passages like this, and try to figure something like that out. And if they can't, then they say this is all obviously a mythological passage and it never really happened. And if they can't, they say this is all they often say this is obviously a mythological passage.

It never really happened. Don't do that. Just say iron. Can't float. God is Almighty. If you try to make natural explanations for everything you're gonna have, If you tried to make natural explanations for everything, you're gonna have a real hard time with the incarnation of the Creator and the resurrection of a crucified men.

Stop and the resurrection of a crucified man trying to make natural explanations for the Bible forgets that God exists and he has redeemed us in Almighty power, not natural processes. And so in the Bible is teaching us that God is Almighty. We should rejoice that he is almighty. So that whenever you are in a situation where you can't see a natural way out, even though God can.

But when you can't, even if there wasn't one, you comfort yourself with the God who made all things from nothing by the word of his power, the God who upholds, all things by the word of His power. The God who became a man in order to redeem me, the God who gave himself to die on the cross and rose again from the dead.

The God man who sits on the throne of heaven. Right now, He is the one who is overseeing all my life. I belong to an almighty God who loves me and takes care of me and the Lord give us humility and contentment that we may be grateful and wise and diligent and not greedy and therefore tracked by our greed into sin.

Like a hazy had been, let's pray.

Our Father in heaven. We pray that you would blessed to us. This portion of your word as you keep reminding us of how good you are. How generous of the means that you appointed that we would love you and serve you with humility and thankfulness and wisdom and effort.

We pray that your spirit would be bringing to mind your word that we might always have it with us. Always have it at hand. We pray that your spirit would be bringing to our mind. Always your Almighty power said that we would have an unassailable comfort in every situation that your spirit would be bringing to mind Christ and what he has done.

So that you're loving purpose for us and your faithfulness to that purpose, would always be before our hearts so that we may live and thankfulness and comfort, and joy and service, love and take away from us. All despair and anxiety and in gratitude and covetousness and all of the wicked things that grow up out of a root of bitterness.

Keep us far from that. We pray In Jesus name amen.