

## **A Great Woman**

We now concentrate on the woman who had her son raised to life under the ministry of Elisha.

This story is found in II Kings 4:8-37.

8. And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunern, where was A GREAT WOMAN: and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

9. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I PERCEIVE that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

10. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

Something is stated here about this lady that was not mentioned of the widow in I Kings 17. This woman is called GREAT. She is called this because in verse 9 we see how spiritually sensitive she was. When Elisha passed by, she perceived in her spirit that he was a man of God. She must have spent a lot of time in worship, prayer, and study of the Word. She is also different in that she does not have a NEED. The other woman was in distress, but this woman was fine in all areas. She was prosperous, spiritual, healthy, and seemingly had everything going in the right direction. Out of her great heart of love, SHE GAVE TO ELISHA. This was probably refreshing to Elisha since he was a minister. All day, every day, everybody was needing something from him. Now we find a woman sensitive to the spirit who perceived that he was a man of God and wanted to do something for him. No wonder she was called "great".

We also see something of her greatness in verse 10. She asked her HUSBAND if the building of the room was alright. We are not told anywhere in the story that her HUSBAND was great, only of the woman. She was definitely the more spiritual of the two, yet she knew that a wife's proper place in the home was in submission to the husband. SHE ASKED HIM FIRST.

Her only concern for Elisha was for his comfort. She wanted to give him a private place to rest, study, and pray apart from the rest of the world. We need many more like this today. Again, there is little doubt as to why she is called "great".

11. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

12. And he said to Gehazi, his servant, call this Shunamite. And when he had called her, she stood before him,

13. And he said unto him. Say now unto her. Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.

14. And he said. What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered. Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.

15. And he said. Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

16. And he said, about this season, according to the time of life, thou shall embrace a son. And she said. Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

17. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

The Word tells us in Luke 6:38 that if we give to God, He will give back to us, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. This woman sowed in the ministry of Elisha for the right reason, strictly for love. She was not looking for anything in return. She knew the principle of sowing and reaping, but in this case, she only wanted to see Elisha blessed.

This woman was so blessed in the natural that Elisha had to SEARCH for some way to bless her. He first offered to drop her name to the king or captain of the host of Israel. In other words, see that she received favor of those in high places (Proverbs 22:11).

She immediately Told him that she did not want that kind of favor, and Elisha continued to probe into her needs until he found that she had never had a child, and her husband was too old to give her' any. He then told her she would have a son, and SHE DID NOT BELIEVE HIM. In other words, her faith was not out at this time for a child. She had resigned herself a long time ago that she would always be without children. So when Elisha said this, she could not comprehend it. This was exceedingly abundantly above all she could ask or think.

I know that God has done many things for you like that. He has blessed you far above what you were trusting Him for, simply because He loves you. The blessings in Deuteronomy are for those who trust in Him and follow the Word. But the Lord also states, that all these blessings will come upon you and OVERTAKE you. It's almost like they run up from behind you and JUMP on you (Deut. 28:2).

But we see the importance that God puts on His Word through Elisha in verse

17. because the woman Truly did conceive and she had a son about one year later.

18. And when the child was grown (growing) it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19. And he said unto his father. My head, my head. And he said to a lad, carry him to his mother,

20. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

Satan comes IMMEDIATELY to steal the Word which is sown (Mark 4:15). The child was not yet very old and satan came and stole his life.

We are often guilty of reading over these verses too fast without feeling the emotion and agony that this woman must have felt when her son died in her arms. I'm sure when he first came in from the fields she thought that he must have just had a heat stroke. When he fell over in her arms, she probably thought that he had just

fainted. Then she began to, have fear sweep over her from her head to her feet as she realized that he was dead.

I'm sure that she wanted to do the same thing that the other woman in Elijah's ministry did. She wanted to just scream out and blame God. She wanted to blame Elisha for playing a trick on her. Her emotions were running a mile a minute with her.

But it was in this minute of agony, that her greatness came through.

21. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.

She did not open her mouth. She took the child's body up to Elisha's room and laid him on the prophet's bed. WHY? Because this was the very place she received the prophecy of the child's birth. SHE RETURNED TO THE WORD. She knew nothing else TO do.

My friend, when you do not know what to do, KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT. Jesus said in Matthew 6:31, "Take no thought, SAYING". You cannot keep the thoughts from coming, but you do not have to let them come out of your mouth. If you know nothing else to do, GO BACK TO THE WORD.

This woman went back to the place where Elisha gave the prophecy, and then put the body of her son on the very bed where Elisha spoke God's Word to her. She then shut the door on him, showing her trust in God that the next time it was opened, her son would return to her. By putting his body on the bed, it was almost like saying, "All right God, YOU spoke the Word, Now, it's up to you to make it good."

## **A Great Woman Part 2**

In the last issue, we studied the story of the Shunamite woman of II Kings 4. Closing with verse 37, we saw the greatness of this woman as she received her dead son to life again. And now we find in chapter 8 that a famine is about to come upon the land.

II Kings 8:1-6 “Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the Lord hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.

2. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

3. And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.

4. And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, “Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.”

5. 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.”

6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, “Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.”

Refer again to verse 1. We see that Elisha goes to warn that woman. Notice out of all the people he's worked with, he goes to that woman and tells her that famine is about to come on the land. He tells her to get her household and move out, and at the end of seven years she is to return. God has come to supernaturally spare the woman from the persecution that is about to come on the land.

The Bible says in Romans 11:22, “Behold the goodness and severity of God...” His goodness is upon his children; his severity upon the children of unbelief. We have taken one concept and run too far with it in teaching on faith. Revelation came along and set us free, and we need to come back into balance on the subject. Look at Proverbs

3:33. “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.”

In your life the good things are of God. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...”(James 1:17). But then evil comes into your life; we know who is sending it – the author, satan himself. The Word of God teaches us clearly so we’ll know how to stand in faith against those things: satan is the one sending evil.

But we took that concept and began to go through the Word. Everything that looked good we said was from God, and everything that looked bad we said was from satan. We carried it one step too far: God CAN curse, God CAN send plagues, he CAN send evil, but it’s always sent upon the evil men who reject God. You see, God doesn’t send plagues and judgement first; he comes with mercy, grace and longsuffering. But to keep evil from spreading around the world, God has to stop it through supernatural judgement. When it does come time for supernatural judgement, God finds his righteous seed and protects them by removing them from the judgement.

When satan brings trials and temptations, God won’t remove you from the midst of them because he’s given you the weapons to fight them. But when God brings judgement, you WILL be spared.

God’s longsuffering had reached its limit in II Kings 8. Now supernatural persecution from God is coming in the form of a seven-year famine. Notice the LORD called the famine. We know this is the Lord that called the famine, because satan had already called a famine. One had already been going on for many chapters in the book of Kings. But you think you’ve seen a famine? Wait until this one comes along. God has gone his limit, and now the supernatural famine is coming.

And the first thing God does before the famine starts, is to tell Elisha to go to the Shunamite woman and warn her to leave. Not only was she to leave, but her household was also to be spared. Recall Lot’s deliverance from Sodom and Gomorrah – his wife and daughters accompanied him. Noah’s family was delivered with him. Rahab’s entire family was preserved along with Rahab. The Roman centurion who was saved when Paul was in prison had the promise that he AND all his house would

be saved. Just because YOU'RE born-again, not everyone in your house is automatically born-again. BUT, if you get one person in a household born-again, it's easy to get the rest. The intercession of the saved one will stop any evil from coming near the household.

In verse two we see the response of the woman: "And the woman arose, and did AFTER THE SAYING of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. Verse 3: And it came to pass AT THE SEVEN YEARS' END that the woman returned and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land."

Notice that she didn't come back when the famine was over; she came back at the seven years' end. We see in verse two, "the woman did after the SAYINGS of the prophet." That is, she trusted his word. If he said seven years, she obeyed and left. She didn't argue or go by her own observations and knowledge; she marked her calendar and left. When she was in the land of the Philistines, she checked off the last day and said to her household, "It's time to return." Imagine her husband asking her, "Have you checked the news lately? Is the famine over?" She would have replied, "It's not the famine I'm guided by, it's the prophet. He said to be gone seven years. Today's the day – let's go back." She trusted the prophet explicitly to his word. She might have gone back and seen the ground still brown with no crops anywhere, but the prophet had said to be gone seven years, not to be gone until the famine was over.

Referring again to verse three we find that while she has been away for seven years, some squatters took over her land and her house. Imagine this woman as she returns, expecting to find an overgrown yard and instead finding someone living there. What does she do? She doesn't just give up and say, "Oh, well, I guess it's God's will." No! She knows she has favor with men since she has favor with God. So she begins to march in faith toward the king.

Isn't it just like God to prepare the path for you? At the very moment she is marching toward the king, Gehazi is in there talking to him. As a side note, the fact that Gehazi is in the presence of the king tells us that these stories are not in chronological order. This story must have occurred sometime between the time when

the child was raised from the dead and the time Gehazi was struck with the leprosy of Naaman. If this story was in chronological order, Gehazi must have looked terrible after these seven years of leprosy. It is doubtful that the king would have had him in his presence, especially to question him.

II Kings 8:4 “And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.” So Gehazi starts naming them off. Then he gets to the one about the woman. Verse 5: “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.”

Isn't it just like God to prepare the way! You may not see the end result right now. You only know you have a task to do, but if you're working at it in faith, God's already preparing it ahead of you. When you get there it is already taken care of. Got some business troubles right now? Looks like there's nowhere to turn? Keep marching in faith – God's arranged it for you up ahead. When you get there it will all be taken care of.

If this woman obeyed the Word of the Lord from Elisha, don't think God's going to quit there. He knows she is going to face some hardships when she returns, because Satan has come in to invade her property and take it over. But if she left it in obedience to the Lord seven years earlier, God is going to protect her rights now. Look at Verse 6: “And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.”

Right now we're in the devil's world. We talk about this being God's world; yes, he created it, but right now there's a different landlord whose name is Satan. God owns the building; the landlord just happens to be the devil right now. The devil stole the right to have it. But there's coming a day when that landlord's lease will be up, and God is not going to renew his lease! When that lease comes due, Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

At present Satan has one tenant he doesn't like: the church. They oppose him everywhere he turns. We are the ones that are in the world right now but not of it. There are curses around us every day. Satan has a perfect legal right to do this to us, because he has the contract. He is causing plagues around us, including sickness and disease, but we don't have to receive it. Why? Because we've got the weapons to fight them off. In the meantime Satan will attack, but keep marching on in faith, and the victory will always come to you in the end.

As much as the church is growing today, so is evil. There's coming a showdown. The church and the forces of Satan will come up against each other. That's the day when Jesus is going to return from heaven declaring, "God has called for a seven year famine. The persecution has gone on long enough; my patience has run its limit and it's time to take my church out of here. We're going up!"

When we do go up, we're going to sojourn for seven years. And we're not coming back when the TRIBULATION is over – we're coming back when the SEVEN YEARS end. In fact, we're going to come back just a few days before the tribulation ends, to help Jesus clean up.

What will happen to your house while you're gone? Imagine all those sinners out there – they'll look down the street and say, "My, they haven't been home now for three weeks. Their car is still out in the driveway. Wonder where they went?" Several months pass and they begin to say, "Hmm, their house sure is nicer than ours. They always did talk about that prosperity stuff. Look at that house. Look at that car. Let's take it for ourselves!!" And they'll move in and possess it.

One of these days, though, we're coming back, and the king is going to accompany us. Each of us will have a captain assigned to us – an angel. The Bible says that the angels are going to come back with him. They will take the sinners right off this earth and cast them into hell itself. The earth will be possessed and populated only by believers when the millennium starts. We're not only going to get our house back, but Satan must restore to us seven years that were taken away from us. Hallelujah!

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