

2Kings 4:1 ¶ Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

2Kings 4:2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

2Kings 4:3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels; borrow not a few.

2Kings 4:4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

This chapter is a record of some of the miracles the LORD worked through Elisha.

We've learned that there were schools of prophets that lived together in communities. One of these prophets died and left a large debt that his widow could not pay; so, in accordance with the laws of that day, the creditors were going to take her sons as his slaves in payment for that debt.

Elisha basically asked her how he could help. He then asked her what she had of value in her house. She answered that all she had was a pot of oil. Elisha then told her to go and borrow as many empty containers as she could from her neighbors. Once she had all the containers, she was to get her sons, go inside her home and close the doors. She was then to take the pot of oil that she had and start pouring into all the empty containers until they were all full. The supply of oil would not run out until all the containers had been filled.

2Kings 4:5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured out.

2Kings 4:6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is not a vessel more.* And the oil stayed.

2Kings 4:7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

The woman was not unfamiliar with the power of God and proceeded to do as Elisha instructed. When all the containers were filled with oil, she went back to see Elisha. He told her to go and sell the oil and pay off her debt. The money that remained after paying off the debt would provide for her and her children.

Though we aren't given any follow-up, it is definitely implied that all went well for the woman after she had done as Elisha instructed.

Application: Elisha is not God, but he is His representative; he spoke in accordance with God's command. If we are obedient to the word of God, we can expect Him to fulfill His promises and provide our needs. We must also always keep in mind, however, that what we deem to be our needs may not always align with what He deems to be our needs.

Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

2Kings 4:8 ¶ And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, 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.

2Kings 4:9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

2Kings 4:10 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.

On another day Elisha went to Shunem. There was a woman of the nobility there that urged him to come and eat dinner with her and her husband. This became a routine any time he traveled through Shunem, which apparently was frequently. Gill offers this note: "...Shunem was not far from Carmel, which he frequented, and lay in the way to Samaria, Bethel, and Jericho, places he often visited, the schools of the prophets being there."

The woman told her husband that she knew that Elisha was a "holy man of God." She proposed that they make a little room for him on the roof and furnish it with a bed, table, stool and candlestick so that he had a place to stay whenever he came their way.

Implied—The husband agreed.

2Kings 4:11 And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

2Kings 4:12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.

2Kings 4:13 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.

One day, as Elisha was resting in his little room at the woman's house, he sent his servant Gehazi to get the Shunammite woman. When she stood before him, he asked her how he could repay her for her kindness. He offered to approach the king or the head of the military on her behalf. She basically said that she wanted nothing in return.

2Kings 4:14 And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.

2Kings 4:15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

2Kings 4:16 And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, *thou* man of God, do not lie

unto thine handmaid.

2Kings 4:17 And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

After she left, Elisha asked Gehazi if he had any ideas as to how to show his appreciation for the woman's kindness. Gehazi pointed out that she and her husband had no children, and her husband was quite old. God used that suggestion to speak to Elisha, and he sent Gehazi to bring the woman to him once again. When she came to the door, Elisha told her that about this time next year she would be holding a son. She evidently thought that impossible and chided Elisha for suggesting it was.

The woman conceived and gave birth to a son just as Elisha had foretold.

2Kings 4:18 ¶ And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

2Kings 4:19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.

2Kings 4:20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died.

2Kings 4:21 And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out.

After several years when the child was old enough to go out to the fields with his father during harvest, he complained to his father that his head was hurting. The father called one of his servants to carry the boy back to his mother. She held him in her lap trying to comfort him, but the boy died at noon. The mother didn't freak out. She took the child up to the prophet's chamber and laid him on Elisha's bed. She then shut the door and left him there.

2Kings 4:22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

The woman called for her husband and asked him to send one of the young men to get her a donkey so that she could go and get "the man of God." It's obvious to me that this woman is expecting a miracle. I am reminded of the words of Jesus.

Luke 17:6 "And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

Matthew 9:29 "Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you."

2Kings 4:23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be well.*

2Kings 4:24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go

forward; slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee.

2Kings 4:25 So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is that Shunammite*:

2Kings 4:26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?* And she answered, *It is well.*

The husband tried to discourage her since it wasn't a special new moon festival or sabbath. The indication is that he didn't even know the boy was dead.

She was not to be dissuaded. The woman saddled the donkey and told her servant to drive quickly and not slow down unless instructed by her. JFB adds this note: "It is usual for women to ride on asses, accompanied by a servant, who walks behind and drives the beast with his stick, goading the animal at the speed required by his mistress."

Elisha spotted her approaching from a distance and told Gehazi to go and meet her and enquire if all was well with her, her husband and her child. She told Gehazi that all was well, but continued on to present herself to Elisha.

2Kings 4:27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is vexed within her*: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.

2Kings 4:28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

2Kings 4:29 Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

When she got to Elisha, she grabbed him around the feet. Gehazi started to push her away, but Elisha told him to leave her alone. He could see that the woman was greatly distressed. He also noted that the LORD had not revealed the reason why to him. Note: All that a prophet knows and does is dependent on the direct revelation and empowerment of the LORD.

The woman finally spoke up and told Elisha that she did not ask for a son and had asked the prophet not to deceive her. Implication—her son was dying or dead.

Elisha gave Gehazi his staff and told him to go without delay and put the staff on the face of the child.

2Kings 4:30 And the mother of the child said, *As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* And he arose, and followed her.

2Kings 4:31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was neither voice, nor hearing.* Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

2Kings 4:32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed.

The woman basically said, "I am not leaving without you."

So Elisha started out with the woman while Gehazi hurried on before them. He laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no response. He went back to intercept Elisha and told him that the child would not respond. When Elisha got to the house, he saw that the child was lying dead upon his bed.

2Kings 4:33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD.

2Kings 4:34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

2Kings 4:35 Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

2Kings 4:36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

2Kings 4:37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

Elisha closed himself in the room with the child and began to pray to the LORD. He lay on top of the child, placing his mouth on the boy's mouth, his eyes upon his eyes and his hands upon his hands. As he stretched himself out upon the child, the boy's flesh began to feel warm. Elisha got up and walked around the house before going back up to the room and stretching himself out upon the boy once again. The boy then sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

Elisha called out for Gehazi and sent him to get the boy's mother. When she got to the room, Elisha told her to pick up her son. The woman fell at Elisha's feet, bowing herself to the ground. She then took her son and left him. Her faith had been rewarded.

Application: Again, faith is the key. It's obvious that the woman's faith was in God and that He would work through His prophet. The mother's faith was proved by her actions. The same should be true of us. Again, I am reminded of scripture.

James 2:21 & 26 "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

2Kings 4:38 ¶ And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and *there was* a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

2Kings 4:39 And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild

vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not.

2Kings 4:40 So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O *thou* man of God, *there is* death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*.

2Kings 4:41 But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

At another time, Elisha was in Gilgal during a time of famine. He was sitting with the sons of the prophets and instructed his servant to make some soup for them all.

One of the prophets went out into the field to gather some plants. He found a vine of wild gourds and gathered several of them as well. He brought them back and cut them up into the soup even though he didn't know what they were. As the men began to eat, they realized that it was poisoned. Elisha calmly asked them to bring him some meal. They did, and he put it in the pot. He then told the servant to serve the soup. They were able to eat because the soup was no longer poisonous.

The IVP Commentary adds this note: "The poisonous ingredient is generally considered the yellow gourds known as colocynths, popularly referred to today as apples of Sodom. They can be fatal."

Application: We need to learn not to be careless when partaking of food—either physical or spiritual. If we are not careful about what we take in—both physically and spiritually—we can come to harm.

1 Peter 2:2 "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby...."

Matthew 4:4 "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"

The word of God is the only true source for identifying good spiritual food.

*Acts 17:10–11 "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that **they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**"*

2Kings 4:42 And there came a man from Baalshalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.

2Kings 4:43 And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*.

2Kings 4:44 So he set *it* before them, and they did eat, and left *thereof*,

according to the word of the LORD.

The chapter closes with another miracle of supplying physical food. A man came from Baalshalisha and brought Elisha a gift of the firstfruits of his harvest—20 loaves of barley and some ears of corn still in the husk. Elisha told his servant to take the food and feed the people. The servant quickly noted that there wasn't nearly enough food there to feed 100 men. Elisha told the servant to do as he said because the LORD had told him that there would be plenty of food for the people to eat and that they would even have leftovers. As always—the words of the LORD were proven true!

Application: God's ways are so above our ways. Our vision of God is limited, but the power and authority of God is unlimited. Our actions often testify that we don't truly understand the power and authority of Almighty God. We are more likely to see the impossible where God sees the possible.

Isaiah 55:8–9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing shall be impossible."