

ELISHA AND THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN

Introduction

- 1) **Elisha** (“God saves”), the son of Shaphat, was anointed as the successor of the prophet Elijah and served him (1 Kgs. 19:16, 19-21; cf. 2 Kgs. 3:11)
- 2) After Elijah the prophet was taken to heaven in a whirlwind, **Elisha** “took up the mantle of Elijah” and proceeded to continue the work of a faithful prophet of God (2 Kgs. 2:11-13)
- 3) Elisha had asked for a “double portion” of Elijah’s spirit to be upon him (v. 9)
- 4) Elisha’s work and influence would be significant – performed more miracles than Elijah (cf. 8:4)
- 5) This lesson and others about **Elisha** will be built around people that he knew and encountered

I) **Early Activities of Elisha**

- A) Divided the Jordan with Elijah’s mantle (2 Kgs. 2:14; cf. v. 8)
- B) Purified water of Jericho (2 Kgs. 2:19-22)
- C) Cursed mocking youths of Bethel (2 Kgs. 2:23-24)
- D) Provided water for armies of Israel, Judah, and Edom (2 Kgs. 3:9-20)
- E) Multiplied oil for a prophet’s widow to pay a debt (2 Kgs. 4:1-7)

II) **The Shunammite Woman (2 Kgs. 4:8-37)**

- A) Lived in *Shunem*, a small village in the tribe of Issachar, east of Mount Carmel, north of Jezreel, and south of Mount Tabor (v. 8; cf. 1 Kgs. 1:3)
- B) Described as a “great/notable” woman (v. 8; prominence, wealth, faith – contrast with Jezebel)
 - 1) Many important women mentioned in the Scriptures (**OT** – Eve, Rahab, Deborah, Ruth, Abigail, Esther; **NT** – Mary (mother of Jesus), Mary Magdalene, Dorcus, Phoebe, Priscilla)
 - 2) She is unnamed, but not unknown to God or Elisha (“gentle lights without a name”)
 - a) Other unnamed women – wives of Noah, Lot, Job, Pilate, Peter; woman at well, etc.
 - b) Names of all the faithful are written in heaven (Lk. 10:20; Rev. 20:15)
- C) Active Hospitality (vv. 8-10)
 - 1) Provided Elisha food to eat as he traveled (v. 8 “constrained him” cf. Acts 16:15)
 - 2) Perceived that Elisha was a “holy man of God” (v. 9)
 - 3) She and her husband (“let us”) make a room for Elisha to use for rest and work (v. 10)
 - 4) *Hospitality* = attentive to needs and providing for those needs (v. 13; 1 Pet. 4:9; Rom. 12:13)
 - a) Loving in word *and* deed (1 Jn. 3:17-18; Gal. 6:10); reward for kindness (Matt. 10:41-42)
- D) Elisha promised that she and her elderly husband would have a son (vv. 11-17)
- E) Her son died suddenly (vv. 18-21)
 - 1) In time of despair, she goes directly to “the man of God” (vv. 22-30)
 - a) We turn now to the Son of God in times of need (Heb. 4:16)
 - 2) Elisha raises her son and returns him to her (vv. 31-37; cf. Heb. 11:35)

III) **The Shunammite Woman’s Faithfulness Rewarded Again (2 Kgs. 8:1-6)**

- A) Elisha tells her to move away because of a coming seven-year famine (v. 1)
 - 1) Spared by the mercy of God, she moves to the land of the Philistines (v. 2)
- B) Upon her return, she and her son go to the king to appeal for her house and land (v. 3)
- C) *At that very moment*, Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, is telling the king about her story (vv. 4-5)
 - 1) King restores her house and land, and the proceeds from the field since she left (v. 6)

Conclusion

In the Shunammite woman we see a great woman of faith who showed respect and kindness to a prophet of God. Her faithfulness and hospitality were rewarded with the love and power of God!