

Elisha Raises the Shunammite's Son

After Elisha prophesies that a kind, childless woman will have a son, the boy dies years later. Elisha prays and God miraculously restores the child to life.

2 Kings 4:8-37

CHARACTERS: Elisha, Shunammite woman, Gehazi, The woman's husband, The woman's son

THEMES: Hospitality rewarded, God's power over death, Persistence in faith, Prophetic ministry

AS ELISHA PASSED through Shunem, a prominent woman constrained him to eat bread. Thereafter, whenever he passed by, he turned in for a meal. This woman recognized Elisha as a holy man of God and said to her husband, '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.' Her hospitality was generous and thoughtful, requiring nothing in return. One day, Elisha asked his servant Gehazi what might be done for her. She needed nothing—she dwelt among her own people, content. But Gehazi observed, 'Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.' Elisha called her and stood in the doorway, prophesying, 'About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son.' She could hardly believe it: 'Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.' Yet the word proved true—she conceived and bore a son. Years passed. The child grew, going out to his father among the reapers one day. Suddenly, he cried, 'My head, my head!' A servant carried him to his mother, where he sat on her knees until noon, then died. The Shunammite woman demonstrated remarkable faith. She laid the child on Elisha's bed, shut the door, and immediately journeyed to Mount Carmel to find the prophet. When Elisha saw her coming, he sent Gehazi, but she would not leave without Elisha himself: 'As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will

not leave thee.' Arriving at the house, Elisha found the child dead upon his bed. He shut the door, prayed unto the LORD, then lay upon the child—mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. The child's flesh grew warm. After pacing the room, Elisha stretched himself upon the boy again. The child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. 'Take up thy son,' Elisha told the mother. She fell at his feet in overwhelming gratitude, then took up her son. The God of Elijah and Elisha was the God of resurrection life.

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