

File No. 78

II KINGS 4:8–37

THE WOMAN OF SHUNEM

(SBS Bk 3 Story Nos. 22 & 23)

Story Notes

The prophetic community, which had gathered around Elijah, may not have had wide support, and their practical needs quickly threw them back on God.

This woman was perhaps as rich as the widow was poor. She gave freely and asked for nothing, but, as Jesus later said, anyone who serves a prophet will receive a prophet's reward (Matt. 10:41). Elisha enquired as to her need so that he could discharge this 'debt' of love (cf. Rom. 13:8).

Her need was a cry from her heart for a son, a need she could not bear to be trifled with. The son was born, miraculously. When this son died within a few years however, all this giving of God seemed like a cruel joke. Although she felt mocked, she would not rest until Elisha came to her son.

His servant was sent urgently before them and was not to greet anyone on the way. We are reminded of the similar urgency with which Christ sent 70 disciples before him to announce the news of new life for Israel (Luke 10:4).

Elisha applied himself to seek God's favour. The Shunammite woman received the gift of her son again, like Abraham received his son as one raised from the dead (Heb. 11:19). She had encountered Elisha, and the God of Elisha, in her depths.

All this drew Israel on to understand that God is the God of resurrection. Our heart's cry is heard by the God, who has raised up from the dead our Lord Jesus (John 5:20–21; Heb. 13:20).

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