

The Shunammite Woman

2 Kings 4:8-37

2 Kings 8:1-6

by Don Falkos

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Elisha often passed through the town of Shunem. A wealthy Shunammite woman and her husband prepared an upstairs room for him to stay in whenever he wished. To thank them Elisha told the woman, who had never been able to have children, "By this time next year you will have given birth to a son."

A year later she gave birth to a son. The boy grew and one day was helping his father with the harvest when he suddenly fell ill with a splitting headache. A few hours later he died. His mother carried him up to Elisha's room and laid him on the bed. She went to Mount Carmel to find the prophet.

Elisha gave his staff to his servant, Gehazi, and sent him to heal the boy. But the woman proclaimed, "As surely as the Lord lives... as surely as you live... I will not go home without you." Elisha went with her.

Gehazi arrived first. He placed Elisha's staff on the boy's face as he had been instructed, but nothing happened.

When Elisha reached the house he went alone into the room with the dead boy. He prayed and then stretched himself out on top of the boy's body. The body grew warm. Elisha got up and paced the room then once again stretched himself out on top of the boy's body. Suddenly the boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

Elisha called in the Shunammite woman and said, "Your son is alive." She expressed her gratitude, took her son, and went downstairs.

Elisha sent the woman and her family away for seven years because of a famine. When they came back, the king was moved by the woman's story and gave back all her land. He even paid her for the crops that had been harvested in her absence.