

2 Kings 4:8-17 NIV

# Mission Possible: The LORD Gives Life!

Sunday, October 13 at 8:00 &amp; 10:45

Monday, October 14 at 7 PM

21<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Pentecost / 20<sup>th</sup> After Trinity – 2013

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today, we will see how God blessed Elisha through a woman; then, *in return*, how God worked through Elisha to bless that woman. *As we listen and God teaches*, let us think about the ways that He has blessed us; then, *in turn*, how God wants to use us to bless others!

Today's *true* Bible story takes place in the village of Shunem – a place through which Elisha often passed, which is in Northern Israel between Mt. Tabor and Mt. Carmel.

1. **God Blessed Elisha through a Woman:** As people we *have needs AND the LORD knows our needs*, so the Psalm writer prayed: “You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.” (Psalm 145:16 NIV)
  - a. **With food:** **One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat.** // Elisha served the LORD; he *went where* the LORD wanted him to go and he *said what* the LORD wanted him to say. So the LORD moved a woman in Shunem to provide him a meal every time he passed through that area.

- b. **With shelter:** After some time had passed by: **She said to her husband, “I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God [a tree is known by its fruit; Mt. 7:17]. Let’s make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us.”** // Jesus said: “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things [food, clothing, and shelter] shall be added to you.” (Mt. 6:33 NAS) But long before Jesus’ time, *Elisha understood that truth*; therefore, *he wholeheartedly sought to serve the LORD!* Then, *as Elisha was serving*, the LORD was providing *a room, a bed, a table, a chair, and a candle through the Shunammite woman and her husband!*

2. **God Blessed the Woman through Elisha:** In this section we will learn about Gehazi, the servant of Elisha. Edersheim wrote this description: “Gehazi was a man keenly and quickly observant of all that passed around him. He could by a sort of instinct take in the whole process of elaborate reasoning. And his conclusions were [from a secular perspective] generally correct.”<sup>1</sup>
  - a. **Elisha desired to bless her:** **One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there** [as he lay there he was enjoying what the LORD had provided through the woman, so]. **He said to his servant Gehazi, “Call the Shunammite.”**

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Practical Truths from Elisha* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1982), 98.

So he called her, and she stood before him [Gehazi].<sup>13</sup> Elisha said to him [Gehazi], “Tell her, ‘You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?’” [Let us realize that “Elisha had great influence with the most important men in the country...” (Kretzmann, 609) But:] **She replied, “I have a home among my own people.”** // In other words, from the woman’s perspective, *she had everything that could be asked for!* Kretzmann added: “**She was well content with her position among the lowly...**” (610) St. Paul wrote: “...godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Tim. 6:6 NIV) Edersheim wrote: “**To be truly dependent upon our God in Christ makes us independent of men...**” (100) Green wrote: Since we will never be content with things, *let us find our contentment in our relationship with God and with others!*

- b. Elisha discovered that she has no son:<sup>14</sup> **“What can be done for her?” Elisha asked. Gehazi said, “Well, she has no son and her husband is old.”** // Elisha may have been so focused on serving the LORD that he had missed that fact, *but now he knew!* Kretzmann wrote that such “**a fact [being without a son] ...was considered a disgrace, if not a curse of God, in Israel...**” (610) Furthermore, “**her husband is old,**” *implying his physical inability to father a child;* like Abram, he was “**as good as dead...**” (Heb. 11:12 NIV) Though we are not told, *we can assume that Elisha then consulted with the LORD.*

- c. She limited God’s ability:<sup>15</sup> **Then Elisha said, “Call her.” So he [Gehazi] called her, and she stood in the doorway** [*“her modesty and respect not permitting her to advance into the room”* (Kretzmann, 610)].<sup>16</sup> **“About this time next year,” Elisha said, “you will hold a son in your arms.” “No, my lord,” she objected. “Don’t mislead your servant, O man of God!”** // The woman was an unusual combination of ♦godliness, ♦wealth, and ♦humility; she trusted in the LORD, *BUT...a baby for her under her circumstances seemed either impossible or just too much to ask!* We tend to limit God, *yet He is always able!* James wrote: “**You do not have, because you do not ask God.**” (James 4:2 NIV)
- d. Nothing is impossible for God:<sup>17</sup> **But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.** // God is ALWAYS ABLE! In regard to Mary – A *VIRGIN* – conceiving the Christ, the angel Gabriel said to her: “**...nothing is impossible with God.**” (Luke 1:37 NIV)

**Conclusion:** We have needs—*so the LORD provides!* We have sins—*so the LORD has forgiven us through Jesus!* We need guidance—*so the LORD has given us His Holy Word!* As we have been richly blessed, may we – in turn – be His willing instruments through whom He blesses others!

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**