

- It appears that Elisha asked the mother to go with his servant, but she refused. She came to get Elisha and she was determined not to leave without him – *As the LORD liveth.....I will not leave thee*. By her oath she was insisting that Elisha must go with her to her child. To this Shunammite woman, Elisha was a holy man of God & her direct link to God. She could not believe that God gave her a son in such a special way, only so that she would lose him so early in life. The Shunammite woman would not leave Elisha because she hoped that just as he was the one who promised her the child, he would also be the one to restore this child to life. She demonstrated great faith in God (Heb 11:1). Elisha probably had to keep up with the woman as he followed her home. She was one determined woman and God honoured her great faith.
- Gehazi did as he was told. He ran ahead, found the boy in the upper room, and placed Elisha's staff on his face. The staff did not have any effect; the child was not raised from the dead. This was designed to teach Gehazi that the power to work miracles was not magically inherent in Elisha's staff. Arriving at her home, Elisha went straight to the dead child & putting all others out & shutting the door, besought the Lord for the boy. Then Elisha laid on the child, with his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hand on his hand. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm. When Elisha stretched out upon the boy a second time, the boy sneezed 7X and opened his eyes. The boy was restored to life. God raised the Shunammite's son in response to Elisha's prayer.
- This is the key to the whole miracle - Elisha prayed to the Lord. Don't be thinking that it's Elisha that did a miracle here; it's the Lord! Elisha literally stretched himself out on this hopeless problem; and he prayed as earnestly as he knew how, with great intensity and unction and earnestness (cf 1 Kings 17:20-23). It was a spectacular miracle of raising from the dead through prayer (Mt 6:6; James 5:16). The Shunammite woman's faith was rewarded with the life of her son being restored. This woman's faith was not only rewarded by the raising of her son, it was greatly strengthened. She was a woman of great faith (Heb 11:35; 1 Kings 17:22; 2 Kings 4:35).
- The very fact that the Shunammite woman lived in the days of the wicked kings of Israel, when Baal worship was popular and calves worship prevalent, and yet maintained her faith, virtue and piety is a great commendation of the woman. God is always placing us in situations to show us we have no resources to deal with crises (2 Cor 1:9). There is an obvious similarity between Elijah's raising of the widow's son in 1 Kings 17:17-24 and Elisha's raising of the Shunammite woman's son. Surely Elisha is Elijah's successor.

3. The Purification of the Poisonous Stew (4:38-41)

- There was a famine in the land at the time and yet a group of prophets showed up at Gilgal while Elisha was there, and it was obvious that they needed to be

fed. Elisha instructed his servant to put the large pot on the fire and to make some stew. One of the sons of the prophets went out to gather herbs and found a wild vine, from which he brought a large number of wild gourds, slicing them into the pot. When the stew was dished out, some began to eat it, and promptly spit it out. Apparently the wild gourd caused some adverse physical reaction which made the eater think the stew was poisonous. When they cried out to Elisha, he commanded meal or flour to be brought. He threw it into the pot and ordered it to be served to the prophets. When this was done, it was found that the effects of the poison had been neutralized. There was nothing inherently purifying in the flour Elisha put in the pot; it was a miraculous work of God.

- The poison in the pot is analogous to the poison of the false religious systems in Israel. On the other hand, Jesus IS the Bread of Life (John 6:33,35) which feeds & sustains life. He is the antidote who is able to nullify the poisons of the world system. Only He can feed those in the midst of a spiritual famine.

4. Feeding of the One Hundred (4:42-44)

- A man came from Baal-Shalisha, bearing the firstfruits of his barley harvest—twenty loaves of bread and some fresh ears of grain (cf Lev 23:9-14). See how wonderfully the Lord provides for the needs of His people – through a man from Baal-Shalisha! God's resources never run dry. He is never at a loss to know how to supply our needs. Elisha instructed that this bread and the ears of grain be fed to the people who were there. Elisha's attendant pointed out the obvious—the food was adequate to feed a few, but those gathered to eat were about 100. Elisha assured his attendant that God had spoken concerning this matter. It will not only prove to be enough, it will be more than enough. And so the food was set out, as Elisha instructed, and when the meal was over, there was food left over, just as God had said.
- Elisha's attendant was confused and limited by his unbelief, but his unbelief was caused by measuring his own ability to feed so many rather than by Who and what God was and always is. The real issue is not the small number of loaves, but the ability to see beyond the loaves to the Almighty. God wants us to learn to measure life by His infiniteness which is without measure.
 - *Thus saith the LORD:* Elisha trusted the promise of God, acted upon it, and saw the promise miraculously fulfilled. Elisha was teaching these prophets (and us) what God will always be to us if we will adopt the disposition of faith in the Word and the promises of God.
 - *According to the word of the LORD.* It happened just as God promised. God's Word is tried and true. God is faithful to His Word. We can count on the Lord.
- This miracle is the OT anticipation of our Lord's miracles of the feeding of the 5000 (Mt 14:15-21) and of the 4000 (Mt 15:32-38), and it is a glorious illustration of Philippians 4:19.