

## 2 Kings 4

Verses 1-7

Now a woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord; and the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.” <sup>2</sup> So Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?” And she said, “Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.” <sup>3</sup> Then he said, “Go, borrow containers elsewhere for yourself, empty containers from all your neighbors—do not get *too* few. <sup>4</sup> Then you shall come in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour into all these containers; and you shall set aside what is full.” <sup>5</sup> So she left him and shut the door behind her and her sons; they *began bringing the containers* to her, and she poured *the oil*. <sup>6</sup> When the containers were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another container.” But he said to her, “There are no more containers.” Then the oil stopped. <sup>7</sup> So she came and told the man of God. And he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt, and you *and* your sons can live on the rest.”

Now a woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord; and the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.”

This woman was married to a prophet and had children before he died.

Jewish tradition says that the prophet she married was Obadiah and Josephus stated that the debt was incurred by feeding the prophets who were hidden in caves from Jezebel.

See 1 Kings 18:3 - 4

<sup>3</sup> **Ahab summoned Obadiah, who was in charge of the household. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly; <sup>4</sup> for when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.)**

Under the law a creditor was allowed to take the children of a widow but there were some restrictions.

See Doc. 405

Leviticus 25:39 – 46

1. You may not treat your kinsman like a slave.
2. Your kinsman must be treated like a hired laborer.
3. Your kinsman, and his family, returns to his ancestral land on the Jubilee year.
4. Do not mistreat them, if you fear God.
5. You may have permanent male and female slaves, but they must be non-Israelites.

Deut. 15:12-17

1. If your fellow countryman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you for six years
2. In the seventh year you shall set him free.
3. When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed.
4. You shall give generously to him from your flock, your threshing floor, and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you.

There were laws that governed this kind of situation but that would not bring much comfort to those who were poor because they were living in a godless and therefore lawless society. The treatment of these children depended on the character of the man that would be their master (See #4 in the summary of Leviticus 25). There was a high probability that the man who wanted to take her children was not a godly man because most of Northern Israel had rejected God. The faith of this woman was the only true safeguard against those who had rejected God and did not care for the poor.

**<sup>2</sup> So Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?” And she said, “Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.”**

1. Some think it was oil used for cooking.
2. Others think it was some kind of ointment used to heal.
3. While others believe it could have been hard that she was saving for her burial.

**<sup>3</sup> Then he said, “Go, borrow containers elsewhere for yourself, empty containers from all your neighbors—do not get too few.”**

Elisha was very clear in giving his instructions to the woman because he wanted her to be blessed to the fullest extent possible.

**<sup>7</sup> So she came and told the man of God. And he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt, and you *and* your sons can live on the rest.”**

The money collected from the sale of the oil was enough to redeem her two sons and it also provided enough income for the three of them to survive for a good period of time.

Verses 8 -10

**<sup>8</sup> Now a day came when Elisha went over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she urged him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, *that* he turned in there to eat food. <sup>9</sup> And she said to her husband, “Behold now, I am aware that this is a holy man of God passing by us repeatedly. <sup>10</sup> Please, let’s make a little walled upper room, and let’s set up a bed for him there, and a table, a chair, and a lampstand; then it shall be, when he comes to us, *that* he can turn in there.”**

**<sup>8</sup> Now a day came when Elisha went over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she urged him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, *that* he turned in there to eat food.**

See Map 410



This town was about 20 miles from Mt. Carmel where Elisha lived.

<sup>9</sup> And she said to her husband, “Behold now, I am aware that this is a holy man of God passing by us repeatedly. <sup>10</sup> Please, let’s make a little walled upper room, and let’s set up a bed for him there, and a table, a chair, and a lampstand; then it shall be, when he comes to us, *that* he can turn in there

This woman provided a permanent room for Elisha and Gehazi. We should also recognize her husband because when the woman said let us make a walled room, she most likely meant her husband. Gentleman, can I get an amen. ☺

Verses 11 -17

**<sup>11</sup> Now one day he came there, and turned in to the upper room and rested.**

**<sup>12</sup> Then he said to his servant Gehazi, “Call this Shunammite.” And when he had called her, she stood before him. <sup>13</sup> And he said to him, “Say now to her, ‘Behold, you have taken trouble for us with all this care; what can I do for you? Would you like me to speak for you to the king or to the commander of the army?’” But she answered, “I live among my own people.” <sup>14</sup> So he said, “What then is to be done for her?” And Gehazi answered, “It is a fact that she has no son, and her husband is old.” <sup>15</sup> He then said, “Call her.” When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. <sup>16</sup> Then he said, “At this season next year, you are going to embrace a son.” And she said, “No, my lord, you man of God, do not lie to your servant.”**

**<sup>17</sup> Now the woman conceived and gave birth to a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had told her.**

**<sup>13</sup> And he said to him, “Say now to her, ‘Behold, you have taken trouble for us with all this care; what can I do for you? Would you like me to speak for you to the king or to the commander of the army?’” But she answered, “I live among my own people.”**

It's not totally clear which King Elisha is referring to here but given the harsh words that Elisha had with King Jehoram in the last chapter it is probably safe to assume he is referring to King Jehoshaphat.

The woman declined the favor because she had a good life and was happy where she lived. Also she was not looking for a reward but did this good deed out of a desire to serve God by helping one of His prophets.

**<sup>14</sup> So he said, “What then is to be done for her?” And Gehazi answered, “It is a fact that she has no son, and her husband is old.”**

The Bible records a number of couples that struggled to have a child but were then blessed with a godly child who became great.

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Abraham and Sarah - Isaac                  | Genesis 18               |
| 2. Manoah and his wife - Samson               | Judges 13                |
| 3. Elkanah and Hannah – Samuel                | 1 <sup>st</sup> Samuel 1 |
| 4. Zacharias and Elizabeth – John the Baptist | Luke 1                   |

**<sup>16</sup> Then he said, “At this season next year, you are going to embrace a son.” And she said, “No, my lord, you man of God, do not lie to your servant.”**

After years of hoping and praying and not being able to have a child, it was hard for her to believe that she was about to receive an answer to those prayers.

**<sup>17</sup> Now the woman conceived and gave birth to a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had told her.**

It's great to see people of faith rewarded for their faithfulness. That deserves two smiles. 😊😊

Verses 18-23

**<sup>18</sup> When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father, to the reapers. <sup>19</sup> And he said to his father, “My head, my head!” And *his father* said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.” <sup>20</sup> When he had carried him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and *then* he died. <sup>21</sup> And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* behind him and left. <sup>22</sup> Then she called to her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so that I may run to the man of God and return.” <sup>23</sup> But he said, “Why are you going to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” So she *just* said, “*It will be fine.*”**

**<sup>18</sup> When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father, to the reapers. <sup>19</sup> And he said to his father, “My head, my head!” And *his father* said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.” <sup>20</sup> When he had carried him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and *then* he died.**

She had waited so many years for this child and now she was unable to help him as he slowly died in her arms. ☹️

**<sup>22</sup> Then she called to her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so that I may run to the man of God and return.”**

She knew who to go to for help and avoided any delay by not telling her husband that the boy had died. That was smart on her part.

<sup>23</sup> But he said, “Why are you going to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” So she *just* said, “*It will be fine.*”

It is apparent from this that she was careful to observe the holy days that were an important part of keeping the law of God.

Verses 24-31

<sup>24</sup> Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, “Drive *the donkey* and go on; do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you.” <sup>25</sup> So she went on and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, “Behold, that person there is the Shunammite.” <sup>26</sup> Please run now to meet her and say to her, ‘Is it *going* well for you? Is it *going* well for your husband? Is it *going* well for the child?’” Then she answered, “It is *going* well.” <sup>27</sup> But she came to the man of God at the hill and took hold of his feet. And Gehazi came up to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the Lord has concealed *it* from me and has not informed me.” <sup>28</sup> Then she said, “Did I ask for a son from my lord? Did I not say, ‘Do not give me false hope’?” <sup>29</sup> Then he said to Gehazi, “Get ready and take my staff in your hand, and go; if you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply to him. And lay my staff on the boy’s face.” <sup>30</sup> The mother of the boy said, “As *surely* as the Lord lives and you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he got up and followed her. <sup>31</sup> Then Gehazi went on ahead of them and laid the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound or response. So he returned to meet him and informed him, saying, “The boy has not awakened.”

<sup>24</sup> Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, “Drive *the donkey* and go on; do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you.”

Even though the child had died, it was important to reach the prophet as quickly as possible lest the window for him being raised from the dead was closed for good.

<sup>25</sup> So she went on and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, “Behold, that person there is the Shunammite.

This was a 40 mile round trip. See map 410 above.

**<sup>27</sup> But she came to the man of God at the hill and took hold of his feet. And Gehazi came up to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the Lord has concealed *it* from me and has not informed me.”**

The Lord had not revealed to Elisha what had happened, but he could tell from her actions that she was deeply distressed.

**<sup>29</sup> Then he said to Gehazi, “Get ready and take my staff in your hand, and go; if you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply to him. And lay my staff on the boy’s face.”**

The woman had not yet revealed that her son was dead but it was clear to Elisha that the boy needed some immediate attention so he told Gehazi to take his staff and lay it on the boy’s face and that he should not be delayed for any reason.

**<sup>30</sup> The mother of the boy said, “As *surely* as the Lord lives and you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he got up and followed her. <sup>31</sup> Then Gehazi went on ahead of them and laid the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound or response. So he returned to meet him and informed him, saying, “The boy has not awakened.”**

The woman believed that Elijah needed to be there to raise the boy from the dead so she refused to leave unless Elisha came with her. As it turned out she was correct. Maybe the TV show “Father knows best” should have been called “Mother knows best”.

Verses 32-37

**<sup>32</sup> When Elisha entered the house, behold the boy was dead, laid on his bed. <sup>33</sup> So he entered and shut the door behind them both, and he prayed to the Lord.**

**<sup>34</sup> Then he got up *on the bed* and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, his hands on his hands, and he bent down on him; and the flesh of the child became warm. <sup>35</sup> Then he returned and walked in the house back and forth once, and went up and bent down on him; and the boy sneezed seven times, then the boy opened his eyes. <sup>36</sup> And he called Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, “Pick up your son.” <sup>37</sup> Then she came in and fell at his feet and bowed down to the ground, and she picked up her son and left.**



<sup>32</sup> When Elisha entered the house, behold the boy was dead, laid on his bed. <sup>33</sup> So he entered and shut the door behind them both, and he prayed to the Lord.

The raising of the boy began with prayer.

<sup>34</sup> Then he got up *on the bed* and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, his hands on his hands, and he bent down on him; and the flesh of the child became warm. <sup>35</sup> Then he returned and walked in the house back and forth once, and went up and bent down on him; and the boy sneezed seven times, then the boy opened his eyes.

This part of the healing may seem odd but it was somewhat similar to what Elijah had done for the widow's son.

See 1 Kings 17:21

<sup>21</sup> Then he stretched himself out over the boy three times, and called to the Lord and said, "Lord, my God, please, let this boy's life return to him." <sup>22</sup> And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah, and the life of the boy returned to him and he revived.

Like other miracles in the bible, God decides what should be done and conveys that to his prophet. Jesus used some spit and dirt to heal a blind man.

See John 9:6 - 7

<sup>6</sup> When He had said this, He spit on the ground, and made mud from the saliva, and applied the mud to his eyes, <sup>7</sup> and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he left and washed, and came *back* seeing.

<sup>36</sup> And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, "Pick up your son." <sup>37</sup> Then she came in and fell at his feet and bowed down to the ground, and she picked up her son and left.

Falling down at his feet and bowing to the ground was her way of showing respect and thankfulness to Elisha.

This miracle put Elisha in a very exclusive group.

See chart 415

### People raised from the dead

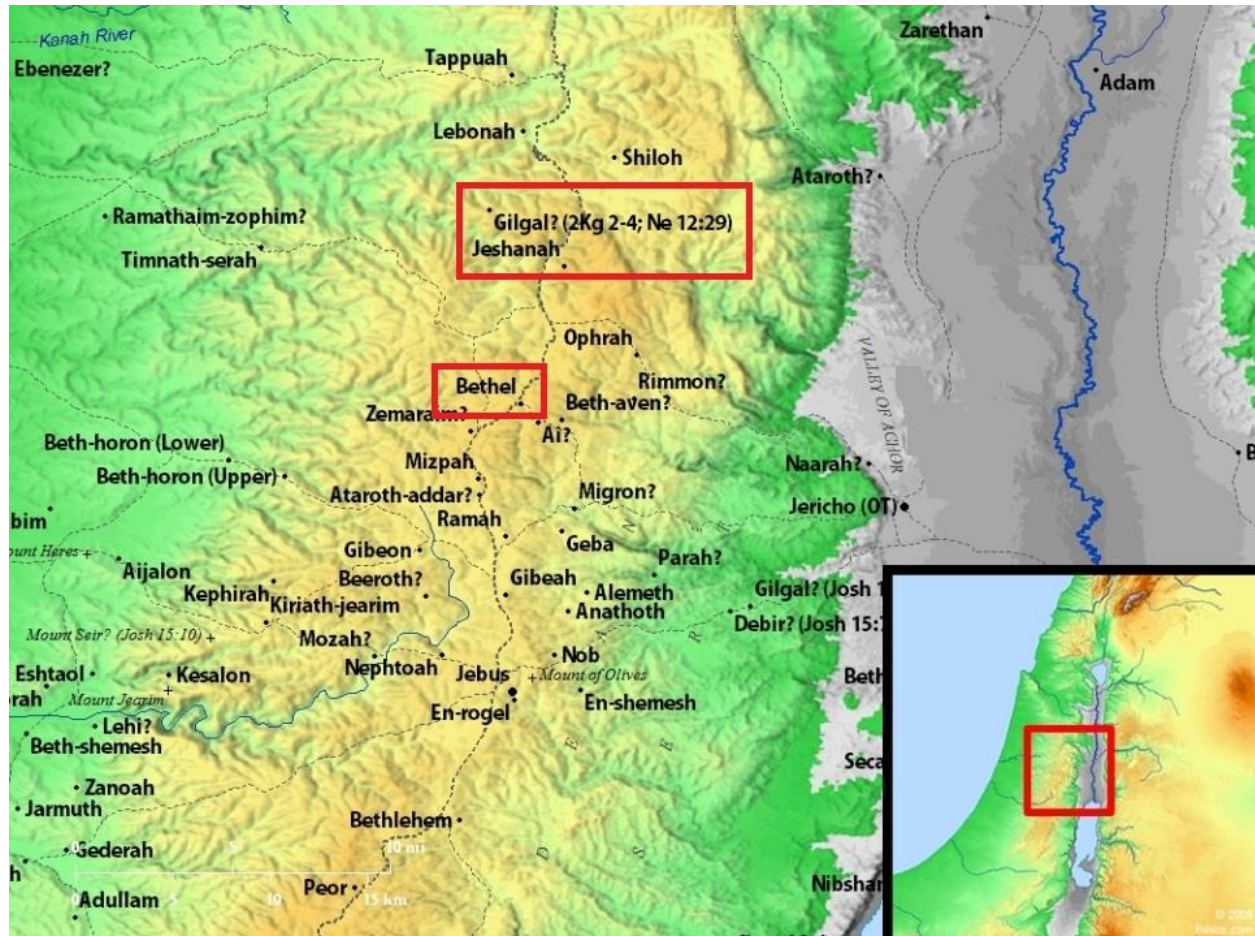
No.	Scripture	Performed by	Person raised
		In the Old Testament	
1	1 Kings 17:17 - 23	Elijah	son of the widow of Sarepta
2	2 Kings 4:32 - 37	Elisha	son of the woman of Shunem
3	2 Kings 13:20-21	Elisha's bones	Man being buried
		In the New Testament	
4	Matthew 9:18	Jesus	the daughter of Jairus
5	Luke 7:12-18	Jesus	the son of the widow of Nain
6	John 11	Jesus	Lazarus
7	Gospels	The Father	Jesus
8	Matthew 27:53	The Father	Many Saints
9	Acts 9:36-41	Peter	Dorcas
10	Acts 20:10-12	Paul	Eutychus

Verses 38-41

<sup>38</sup> When Elisha returned to Gilgal, *there was* a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting in front of him, he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.” <sup>39</sup> Then one went out into the field to gather mallow, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds; and he came and sliced them into the pot of stew, because they did not know *what they were*. <sup>40</sup> So they poured *it* out for the men to eat. But as they were eating the stew, they cried out and said, “You man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they were unable to eat. <sup>41</sup> Then he said, “Bring flour.” And he threw it into the pot, and said, “Pour *it* out for the people that they may eat.” Then there was nothing harmful in the pot.

<sup>38</sup> When Elisha returned to Gilgal, *there was* a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting in front of him, he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”

See Map 420



Most likely this was the Gilgal above Bethel.

<sup>39</sup> Then one went out into the field to gather mallow, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds; and he came and sliced them into the pot of stew, because they did not know *what they were*.

Mallow is a flowering plant that is not toxic. It can be found in the U.S. growing wild but it is considered to be an invasive weed in the United States. We have found this growing in our yard in Indiana.

See Pic 425





The wild gourds may have been wild cucumbers. Wild cucumber or **man root** is a relative of the garden cucumber

See pic 430



The other name, man root, comes from the shape of the root

See pic 435



The root looks like an alien that might be found in a sci-fi movie.



<sup>40</sup> So they poured *it* out for the men to eat. But as they were eating the stew, they cried out and said, “You man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they were unable to eat.

Ladies, this is what happens when men try to cook. ☺

<sup>41</sup> Then he said, “Bring flour.” And he threw it into the pot, and said, “Pour *it* out for the people that they may eat.” Then there was nothing harmful in the pot.

Good gravy makes all the difference. Just kidding, this was another miracle.

Verses 42-44

<sup>42</sup> Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh grain in his sack. And *Elisha* said, “Give *them* to the people that they may eat.” <sup>43</sup> But his attendant said, “How am I to serve this to a hundred men?” Nevertheless he said, “Give *them* to the people that they may eat, for this is what the Lord says: ‘They shall eat and have *some* left over.’” <sup>44</sup> So he served *it* to them, and they ate and had *some* left over, in accordance with the word of the Lord.

**Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh grain in his sack.**

Those who were faithful tried to keep the law to the best of their ability. Normally this should have been taken to the Passover feast at the temple in Jerusalem but for those living in the North that may not have been possible after the split between the North and the South. So this man took his tithe to Elisha.

He did this because the religion introduced by Jeroboam in the north was not legitimate and the false priests of the golden calves did not deserve the tithe of the faithful. The faithful remained faithful to the one true God and His law but they had to redirect their tithes to the true prophets of God.

This offering was given as the first fruits of the barley harvest.

See chart 425

#### Jewish Feasts

Feast	Scripture	Date Observed	Roman Calendar	Sabbath	Offerings	Commemorates
Passover	Lev. 23:05	Nisan 14 At twilight	March/April	No	Numbers 28:16-24	Oldest son saved from death
Festival of Unleavened Bread	Lev. 23:6-8	Nisan 15-21	March/April	Day 1 & 7 Spec Sabbath	Numbers 28:16-24	The hasty flight from Egypt
Offering the First Fruits	Lev. 23:9-14	After the Sabbath	March/April	No	Numbers 28:16-24	Beginning of the barley harvest
Feast Of Weeks (Pentecost)	Lev. 23:15-22	50 days after F.F.	May/June	Special Sabbath	Numbers 28:26-31	beginning of the wheat harvest.
Festival of Trumpets	Lev. 23:23-25	Tishri 1	September	Special Sabbath	Numbers 29:1-6	Civil New Year
Day of Atonement	Lev. 23:26-32	Tishri 10	Sept/Oct	Sabbath	Numbers 29:7-11	Forgiveness of sin for the nation
Tabernacles Temp. Shelters	Lev. 23:33-34	Tishri 15-21	Sept/Oct	Day 1 & 8 Spec Sabbath	Numbers 29:12-38	Wilderness End of harvest

<sup>43</sup> But his attendant said, “How am I to serve this to a hundred men?” Nevertheless he said, “Give *them* to the people that they may eat, for this is what the Lord says: ‘They shall eat and have some left over.’” <sup>44</sup> So he served *it* to them, and they ate and had *some* left over, in accordance with the word of the Lord.

Jesus performed a similar miracle two times when he feed a group of 5,000 and another group of 4,000 men. If one was to include the woman & children the groups were probably around 20,000 and 16,000. And both times there was some food left over.

See Matt. 14:20

<sup>20</sup> And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces: twelve full baskets.

See Matt 15:29

<sup>37</sup> And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.