

INTRO: A couple weeks ago we looked at one of the ‘half-miracles’ in the Bible. (*Not really a half miracle, but more of an incremental miracle.*) The miracle wasn’t left unfinished (*Else it would never had been bothered to be recorded*) as Jesus healed a blind man and restored unto him sight.

However, if we were to travel back to the Old Testament, we find a second ‘half-miracle’ in the Scriptures. It is an out-and-out miracle, but this one seems to be more puzzling than the first.

LESSON:

2 Kings 4 accounts of a Shunamite couple (*Being locals of Shunem*) who farmed in the land of Shunem where Elisha passed through. They constrained Elisha to stay with them whenever he passed that way, even so far as to the point of making him a chamber complete with a bed, table, stool, and candlestick.

WHY? Better than a Best Western, he could come and go as he pleased, stay up as late as he liked, and turn in when it suited him. Scriptures to NOT mention anything about a continental breakfast.

NOTE: **Shuni** means ‘My Rest’. Just thought you’d like to know.

Look where this story goes:

2 Kings 4

13 And **he** said unto him, *Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?* And **she** answered, *I dwell among mine own people.*

14 And **he** said, *What then is to be done for her?* And **Gehazi** answered, *Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.*

15 And **he** said, *Call her.* And when he had called her, **she** stood in the door.

16 And **he** said, *About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son.* And **she** said, *Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.*

17 And the **woman** conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

18 And when the **child** was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19 And **he** said unto his **father**, *My head, my head.* And **he** said to a lad, *Carry him to his **mother**.*

20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his **mother**, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

21 And **she** went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.

22 And **she** called unto her **husband**, and said, *Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come*

again.

23 And **he** said, *Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath.* And **she** said, *It shall be well.*

24 Then **she** saddled an ass, and said to her servant, *Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.*

25 So **she** went and came unto the **man of God** to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the **man of God** saw her afar off, that he said to **Gehazi** his servant, *Behold, yonder is that Shunammite:*

26 *Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?* And **she** answered, *It is well.*

27 And when **she** came to the **man of God** to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but **Gehazi** came near to thrust her away. And the **man of God** said, *Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.*

28 Then **she** said, *Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?*

29 Then **he** said to **Gehazi**, *Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.*

30 And the **mother** of the child said, *As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* And he arose, and followed her.

31 And **Gehazi** passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, *The child is not awaked.*

32 And when **Elisha** was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the **LORD**.

34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called **Gehazi**, and said, *Call this Shunammite.* So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, *Take up thy son.*

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

The [New York Times](#) featured this story this past week:

“Eight-year-old Blake Collie was at the swimming pool when he got a frightening headache. His parents rushed him to the emergency room only to learn he had a brain aneurysm. Blake spent nearly two months in the hospital.

His family did not have traditional health insurance. “We could not afford it,” said his father, Mark Collie, a freelance photographer in Washington, N.C.”

The rest of the story uses poor Blake's aneurysm to plead a case for government intervention in religious-exemption ministries that try to work as an alternative to health insurance.

When I saw the article, it very much reminded me of the little boy in **1 Kings 4**.

I would like to point out a few peculiar things regarding this account:

1. “All Is Well” - There is something remarkable to me about the faith that upholds us when times get thin and tough. When you and I are caught up in life so overwhelmingly bigger than us that all we can do is cling in faith to the faithfulness and goodness of God to see what beach He will land us on.

I want to say that she has such calmness and confidence that God can and would restore unto her the child of promise. Not one peevish word escapes from her lips.

She knew exactly who to turn to, and was not going to wait for the prophet to happen by the house on his way through town. She went to where he was at.

There is a dead child in her house, and she says, “All is well.”

2. “She wouldn’t go.” - She wouldn’t leave without Elisha.

3. “She LEFT the child.” - I can understand when someone is too ill to move, but when they are already dead... who here agrees that if it HAD been strictly about the child, she would have cut her time in half by bringing the child to the prophet?

Something is amiss here, and I don’t think the child is as much of the focal point, but more of an additional factor in what is going on.

HERE’S THE DEAL: The key seems to rest on **Gehazi**, the servant.

Gehazi is like an insult everywhere he goes. It is **Gehazi** who tells **Naaman** to dip seven times in the Jordan... and **Naaman** is offended that the prophet doesn’t come out and address him himself.

What a humbling thing to be addressed by the servant of the person you are wanting to see.
... What a humbling thing to be the servant who gets no respect.

If you notice the narrative, while this sweet lady goes out of her way to build a prophet’s chamber, the prophet tells **Gehazi** to call the ‘**Shunammite**’ and ask what it is she wants in exchange for the room.
... note that SHE does not ask for a single thing.

... **NOTE:** WHAT IS IT THAT ELISHA OFFERS FOR HER?! (v. 13) Make a note of this request, because before the end of this lesson, you might just be glad you did. :-P

It is Gehazi who notices that there is no son or heir apparent. He offers this insight to Elisha, who has Gehazi call her again.

... She didn’t come unless called. This was quite an autonomous relationship.

Now, with her child of promise laying dead in the prophet's chamber, she comes to seek out the prophet of her own volition.

Gehazi is sent to inquire of her needs as clearly, the tables have turned of some manner. Gehazi gets the brush-off!

She gets to Elisha and falls at his feet, pleading her heart out.

Elisha doesn't answer her, but sends **Gehazi** to take his own personal staff and go heal the child.

... But this **Shunamite** woman says what? “As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.”

(In effect, forcing Elisha to personally come see to the matter.)

I've often wondered if she simply would have left with **Gehazi**, if a simple touch of Elisha's staff wouldn't have simply healed the child.

2 Kings 13

21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and **touched the bones of Elisha**, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

It was not the cloak of **Elisha** that could part the Jordan waters, but “*the Lord God of Elisha*” that could do it.

HERE'S THE DEAL: This woman didn't need just the miracle, she needed something more. “*Did I not say, Do not deceive me?*” This phrase was her response when Elisha, the man of God... the prophet of the Lord, told her she would have a son by her old husband.

She had never ASKED for a child. When asked what she wanted, she coolly replied, “I dwell among my own people.” She is self sufficient. She is a great woman. She has an attitude. She may well have been doing God a favor by putting up the prophet for the night... And now her soul is vexed because her unsolicited child is not laying dead. She didn't bury the child. She didn't even tell the father the child was dead. She puts the child IN THE PROPHET'S CHAMBER. (As if to say, “*See! Look where your gift has ended up! Thanks for nothing.*”)

She didn't bring the child, as this isn't entirely about the child. (*No manner or custom would have prevented a mother's love and hope from bringing the child to the source of healing.*)

The child's father seems more concerned with the harvest than with the welfare of his son. He is now short a good worker and a donkey while his wife, who insists nothing is wrong, begs leave to go find the prophet.

Gehazi PUTS the staff on the child's face, but the child gives no response. The child does not ‘koots’ (Abruptly awake)

Elisha comes in the room and sees that, clearly, the child is “positively, absolutely, most assuredly... dead.”

Elisha closes the door and prays. - We are not told what he prays. Is he praying to know what to do now? Is he praying for the Shunamite woman?? Is he praying that God will heal the boy??

He lays upon the child’s body, and the flesh begins to wax warm. Clearly, the body was cold to the touch, as often dead body’s tend to do. To get warm flesh, the blood needs to flow through a beating heart, and begin circulating... life needs to be in the body. (*He clearly didn’t pop it in the microwave*)

He paces about. Warm flesh... no response. The boy is alive, but he is not awake... non-responsive.

He lays upon the child once more, and the boy iconically sneezes seven times. Obviously, he had an allergy to the type of wood Elisha’s staff was made out of and this was the delayed response. :-P :-P

Elisha calls Gehazi to call the Shunamite woman into the room.

LOOK AT HER RESPONSE:

36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

But this is not the end of the Miracle!:

CLOSING:

WHY DID THIS MIRACLE EVEN HAVE TO HAPPEN? Giving this woman the same son twice is miraculous, but there is so much more that God, in His mercy, wisdom, and compassion is doing here.

When the land is about to under go judgment of God, and Elisha warns the Shunamite woman of the impending famine:

2 Kings 8

1 Then spake **Elisha** unto the **woman**, whose son he had restored to life, saying, *Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.*

2 And the woman arose, and **did after the saying of the man of God**: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the **woman** returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.

4 And the **king** talked with **Gehazi** the servant of the man of God, saying, *Tell*

me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.

5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the **woman**, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And **Gehazi** said, *My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.*

6 And when the **king** asked the **woman**, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, *Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.*

I'm not certain that the land would have had very much food for the past 7 years, but I'm sure it was more than enough to get started back on her feet.

Gehazi – Congratulations! You are NOW a useful engine!

... But does anyone remember what Elisha first offered to do for the Shunamite woman after she had arranged for the prophet's chamber to be built?

Let me ask a closing question: Where would this Shunamite woman be if God had not given her a son?

By giving her a son, TWICE, He was providing for her future needs YEARS from them ever being known or understood as needs.

We only believe God answers our prayers last minute... We have no idea that it is US who REALIZE that God at the last minute that God has already met our needs. When God does miracles, I notice that He sets Himself up for success long before the miracle is needed. He provides all of the raw ingredients to be present at the same time for Him to work the miracle on the fly. What an amazing and powerful God we serve!

When we seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, God is more than able to take care of every need, as well as the needs we do not even know we will have yet.