



A Great Woman! (Part One)

by Rev. Michael J. Burns

We now concentrate on the woman who had her son raised to life under the ministry of Elisha.

This story is found in **II Kings 4:8-37** .

8. Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food.

9. And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly.

10. Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there." NKJV

Something is stated here about this lady that was not mentioned of the widow in **I Kings 17** .

This woman is called GREAT. She is called this because in **verse 9 we see how spiritually sensitive she was. When Elisha passed by, she perceived in her spirit that he was a man of God.

- She must have spent a lot of time in worship, prayer, and study of the Word. She is also different in that she does not have a NEED. The other woman was in distress, but this woman was fine in all areas.

- She was prosperous, spiritual, healthy, and seemingly had everything going in the right direction. Out of her great heart of love, SHE GAVE TO ELISHA.
- This was probably refreshing to Elisha since he was a minister. All day, every day, everybody was needing something from him. Now we find a woman sensitive to the spirit who perceived that he was a man of God and wanted to do something for him. No wonder she was called "great".
- We also see something of her greatness in **verse 10**. She asked her HUSBAND if the building of the room was alright. *We are not told anywhere in the story that her HUSBAND was great, only of the woman.*
- She was definitely the more spiritual of the two, yet she knew that a wife's proper place in the home was in submission to the husband. SHE ASKED HIM FIRST.

Her only concern for Elisha was for his comfort. She wanted to give him a private place to rest, study, and pray apart from the rest of the world. We need many more like this today. Again, there is little doubt as to why she is called "great".

11. And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there.

12. Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him.

13. And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?'" She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

14. So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi answered, "Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old."

15. So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway.

16. Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!"

17. But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her. NKJV

The Word tells us in **Luke 6:38** that if we give to God, He will give back to us, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. This woman sowed in the ministry of Elisha for the right reason...strictly for love. She was not looking for anything in return. She knew the principle of sowing and reaping, but in this case, she only wanted to see Elisha blessed.

This woman was so blessed in the natural that Elisha had to SEARCH for some way to bless her. He first offered to drop her name to the king or captain of the host of Israel.

In other words, see that she received favor of those in high places (**Proverbs 22:11**).

- She immediately told him that she did not want that kind of favor, and Elisha continued to probe into her needs until he found that she had never had a child, and her husband was too old to give her' any.
- He then told her she would have a son, and SHE DID NOT BELIEVE HIM. *In other words, her faith was not out at this time for a child.* She had resigned herself a long time ago that she would always be without children. So when Elisha said this, she could not comprehend it. This was exceedingly abundantly above all she could ask or think.

I know that God has done many things for you like that. He has blessed you far above what you were trusting Him for, simply because He loves you. The blessings in **Deuteronomy** are for those who trust in Him and follow the Word. But the Lord also states, that *all these blessings will come upon you and OVERTAKE you.* It's almost like they run up from behind you and JUMP on you (**Dent. 28:2**).

But we see the importance that God puts on His Word through Elisha in verse

17. But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

18. And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers.

19. And he said to his father, "My head, my head!" So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother."

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

Satan comes IMMEDIATELY to steal the Word which is sown (**Mark 4:15**) .
The child was not yet very old and satan came and stole his life.

**We are often guilty of reading over these verses too fast without feeling the emotion and agony that this woman must have felt when her son died in her arms. I'm sure when he first came in from the fields she thought that he must have just had a heat stroke. When he fell over in her arms, she probably thought that he had just fainted. Then she began to have fear sweep over her from her head to her feet as she realized that he was dead.

- I'm sure that she wanted to do the same thing that the other woman in Elijah's ministry did. She wanted to just scream out and blame God. She wanted to blame Elisha for playing a trick on her. Her emotions were running a mile a minute with her.

*****But it was in this minute of agony, that her greatness came through.***

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.

- She did not open her mouth. She took the child's body up to Elisha's room and laid him on the prophet's bed.

Q: WHY? Because this was the very place she received the prophecy of the child's birth. SHE RETURNED TO THE WORD. She knew nothing else TO do.

**My friend, when you do not know what to do, KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

Jesus said in **Matthew 6:31** , "*Take no thought, SAYING*". You cannot keep the thoughts from coming, but you do not have to let them come out of your mouth. If you know nothing else to do, GO BACK TO THE WORD.

**This woman went back to the place where Elisha gave the prophecy, and then put the body of her son on the very bed where Elisha spoke God's Word to her.

**She then shut the door on him, showing her trust in God that the next time it was opened, her son would return to her. By putting his body on the bed, it was almost like saying, "All right God, YOU spoke the Word, Now, it's up to you to make it good."

25. And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman!

26. Please run now to meet her, and say to her, ' Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?' And she answered, "It is well." NKJV

The facts said that things were NOT Well...her son was Dead but her testimony remained in tact as she uttered the words, *IT IS WELL!*** It is these words that inspired Horatio Spafford to write the hymn, *It Is Well With My Soul*.

The Story Behind the Song—

The lyrics to the song, "It Is Well With My Soul" was written by Horatio Spafford, a successful lawyer, a loving husband, the father of five precious children, and a strong Christian. This man faced more tragedy in a few short years than most do in a lifetime.

In 1871 his only son died of pneumonia at the tender age of 4. That same year, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed a large portion of his business that he'd worked so hard to build. Then in 1873, he sent his wife, Anna, and four daughters to Europe for the summer holiday, a business problem preventing him from going so he planned to join them later. On the fourth day of his family's voyage to Europe, their ship collided with a barge and his four daughters perished at sea along with almost all the passengers aboard. His wife was found in the sea, clinging to a board, and was rescued. She sends her husband a telegram which simply read, **"Saved alone. What shall I do?"**

Horatio boarded a ship to Europe to be with his wife. Four days into his voyage the captain of the ship called to him to tell him that they were passing over the place where his daughters were lost at sea. It was there that he wrote a song –

“Whatever my lot, You have taught me to say – It is well, it is well with my soul.”

I don't know what you might be facing but I do know that there is a grace given to those who choose a grateful heart. In their deepest pain, rather than blaming God they look up and take hold of an eternal truth that neither life nor death, angels or demons can take from them. God is faithful and eternity (the Kingdom of Heaven) is near.

May we, in moments of deep pain and loss, choose to look up to the One who gave his all and gain strength with a heart that puts its trust in God alone. May we too say, *“It is well, with my soul.”*

In this *Great Woman's* case she went after a miracle and her son was raised from the dead. God honored her faith and her persistence in not giving up and she learned that ***ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE TO THEM THAT BELIEVE!***

(You can find more information about Rev. Michael J. Burns at www.mjbministries.org. You can find Free Audios and links to our FREE Monthly E-Newsletter and Archives. We also have links to our YouTube Channel and our FREE Mobile App for both the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store. To invite Michael J. Burns to your ministry please fill out your request at www.mjbministries/invite).