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SHALOM

Elisha has the distinct title of pastor-prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Because of this distinct title, we have divided the study of Elisha's life into two studies: <u>pastor and people</u> and <u>prophet and politics</u>.

We are presently studying the <u>pastor and people</u> period of the life of Elisha from 2nd kings. (2 Kings Ch.4) has the following four outlines for study regarding the <u>pastor and people</u> ministry of Elisha.

- 2 Kg.4:1-7 A prophets' widow's peril.
- 2 Kg.4:8-37 Shunammite woman's peril
- 2 Kg.4:38-41 Sons of prophet food poisoning
- 2 Kg.4:42-44 Miraculous feeding

Today's lesson is a long story passage and I need to explain it further in the following three historical factors.

First, we need to understand the timing of the story in regard to reapers, New Moon, and Sabbath (2 Kg.4:18, 23). It is the 7th month of year and close to the Feast of Tabernacles (New Moon). This feast was held in thanksgiving for the grace harvest. It was at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the rainy season. It was the end of the cycle of the national holidays that began with Passover. The only two cessations from harvest were national holidays and the Sabbath (1 Sam.20:5; Ex.16:23).

Second, we need understand the two locations mentioned in our story on the **map**. Shunem was located in the north part of the northern kingdom near the Sea of Galilee, while Mt. Carmel was located in the northern part on the Mediterranean Sea (2 Kg.4:8, 25). 2 Kg.4:38 mentions that Elisha left Shunem and traveled to Gilgal near Jericho.

Third, we need to understand that this is a narrative with four main characters: Elisha, Gehazi (his servant), the Shunammite woman, and her son. Her son is identified by three different titles in this story:

- As a son (2 Kg.4:14, 16, 28, 36, 37)
- As a child (2 Kg.4:18, 26, 34)
- As a lad (2 Kg.4:29, 30, 31, 32, and 35).

This lesson will study five aspects of Shalom. Shalom was a key word used by the Shunammite woman in this story.

1. The title of our lesson comes from the Hebrew word shalom. Shalom can be translated peace, completeness, soundness, and welfare.

In the Hebrew Lexicon #3, shalom is translated in our passage regarding welfare (be it well with) (pg.1022).

It was used five times in this story by the Shunammite woman and Elisha.

- She used it once with her husband (2 Kg.4:23).
- Elisha used three times with his servant, Gehazi (2 Kg.4:26).
- She also used it once with Gehazi (2 Kg.4:26).

Notice that shalom is translated "It will be well" in these verses (NAS).

2. We will study our lesson text by the following two outlines.

The first outline is to divide it into two simple parts.

- 2 Kg.4:8-17 Prologue to the story
- 2 Kg.4:18-37 The story

The second outline is to divide <u>the story</u> into three parts (2 Kg.4:18-37)

- 2 Kg.4:18-25 The woman's unwillingness to accept the reality of the death of her only son.
- 2 Kg.4:26-31 Gehazi's willingness to accept the reality of the death of her only son.
- 2 Kg.4:32-37 Elisha's unwillingness to accept the reality of the death of her only son.

3. The Shunammite woman was unwilling to accept the reality of the death of her only son is seen in her use of the word shalom.

Let's take a closer look at the details that led her to declare shalom about the death of her son.

- 2 Kg.4:18-20 Son gets sick and dies at noon.
- 2 Kg.4:21 Son is placed in prophet's bed as if asleep.
- 2 Kg.4:22 She doesn't tell her husband the son is dead but wants to go to Elisha.
- 2 Kg.4:23 She tells her husband shalom (everything will be well).

For this mother, shalom means: "It is well with my faith until I'm told differently by the man of God." or "It isn't over until the prophet tells me it is over!" or "I will be at peace in my soul until I am told by the prophet that there is no longer any hope."

4. Elisha recognized that this woman was very upset.

He sent Gehazi to ask, "Is it well with you (shalom)? Is it well with your husband (shalom)? Is it well with your child (shalom)?" (2 Kg.4:25-26)

He saw that her soul (nephesh) was troubled (marar / kal pf) [experiencing bitter distress] (2 Kg.4:27).

Elisha also realized that the Lord had kept this from him: "And the Lord has hidden (alam / hiphil pf) it from me and has not told (nagad / hiphil pf) me." (2 Kg.4:27b)

She expressed what was holding her faith together: "Then she said (amar / kal impf), 'Did I ask (shaal / kal pf) [rhetorical for NO] for a son from my lord? Did I not say (amar / kal pf), 'do not deceive (shalah / hiphil impf) me?" (2 Kg.4:28)

She was of the opinion that her son was a grace gift from the Lord God of Israel. "He has made His wonders to be remembered; The Lord is gracious and compassionate." (Ps.11:4)

"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward." (Ps.127:3)

5. Elisha sent Gehazi ahead with his staff and instruction for restoring the dead son to life (2 Kg.4:29-31).

But it didn't work. "When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead (muth / kal ptc) and laid (shalkab / kal ptc) on his bed." (2 Kg.4:32)

- Private (2 Kg.4:33a) Intervention
- Prayed (2 Kg.4:33b) Intercession
- Posture (2 Kg.4:34-36) Interesting
- Praise (2 Kg.4:37) Inspiration (shachath) [bowed] (hishtaphel is Aramaic of hithpael impf)

"Now may the God of peace be with you all. Amen." (Rom.15:33) - SHALOM!