

28). July 6-12—2 Kings 2-7 (8-11)

1). 2 Kgs 3:2, 13—Mother of Jehoram ~850 BC

Jehoram's mother was the infamous Queen Jezebel. Even without naming her, Elisha's biting rebuke against her idolatry, "get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother," refers to Jezebel's 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah (1 Kgs 18:19; 2 Kgs 3:13).

2). 2 Kgs 4:1-7—Widow with Two Young Sons ~850 BC

A widow with two sons came to the Prophet Elisha pleading for help. Elisha had known her deceased husband as one of the "sons of the prophets" (2 Kgs 4:1). These "sons" were disciples in a prophetic order, not familial relations. Elisha himself had been among them as Elijah's disciple (2 Kgs 2:3). The books of 1 and 2 Kings mention this group eleven times, always in connection with Elijah and Elisha. Whether her husband was among those Jezebel killed or Obadiah hid (1 Kgs 18:3, 13) remains unknown, but her faith in Elisha as God's prophet drew her to him in crisis.

Creditors threatened to enslave her two sons as payment for debt. In desperation, she sought Elisha, likely her husband's former mentor. The prophet's response was compassionate: "What shall I do for thee?" (2 Kgs 4:2). His solution required joint effort among the widow, her sons, and God.

Elisha began by assessing her resources: "What hast thou in the house?" (2 Kgs 4:2). She offered all she had—a flask of oil. The prophet then directed the family to borrow as many jars as possible from neighbors, specifying no number. Through this, God taught the law of the harvest: their effort in gathering vessels determined the abundance He would grant and magnify.

After closing her door, the widow poured from her flask into the borrowed jars. Miraculously, the oil flowed beyond the flask's capacity, filling each vessel completely until none remained empty. The miracle ceased only when no more jars could be found — limited solely by their diligence in preparation. The sons' obedience secured their freedom and their mother's provision.

Two principles emerge: first, God's blessings flow as disciples put forth effort; second, God can only fill what we prepare to receive.

3). 2 Kgs 4:8-37; 8:1-6—Shunammite Woman ~850 BC

The unnamed woman from Shunem is the only woman in scripture introduced as "a great woman" (2 Kgs 4:8). The text illustrates her greatness through faith, generosity, wealth, land, and tenacity. Interestingly, the narrator uses the same adjective for "a great man," Naaman, in the next story (2 Kgs 5:1). While Naaman held a great position as captain of the Syrian army, he lacked many of the spiritual qualities the Shunammite woman possessed.

Unlike most OT women introduced through father, husband, or son, the Shunammite woman stands uniquely independent — even her family members remain unnamed. Her husband respected her opinions and granted her autonomy in decisions, an extraordinary relationship for the era. She possessed considerable means and servants, and unusually, lived among her "own people" rather than her husband's extended family (2 Kgs 4:13). She was best known for repeatedly seeking personal audience with the prophet Elisha, demonstrating remarkable spiritual confidence.

The Shunammite woman shares traits with other great biblical women: remembered for deeds rather than name, filled with faith, hosting a holy man, and seeking ways to help others (2 Kgs 4:8–14). Like Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, who financed Jesus's ministry (Lk 8:2–3), she used her resources to support God's prophet. And like many biblical women (e.g., Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel), she was barren (2 Kgs 4:16).

The Shunammite Woman Hosts Elisha. Wanting to do more, she proposed to her husband: "Please let us make a small room upstairs" (2 Kgs 4:10, BSB). He agreed. Archaeologists have found hundreds of standard four-room homes from this era, measuring 33'–40' long by 26'–33' wide, with four enclosed rooms around a central courtyard and a flat roof. Nicer homes included an upstairs room accessible by ladder or stairs — likely what the Shunammite built. She lavishly furnished this private chamber with a bed, table, chair, and lamp stand (2 Kgs 4:10). The Hebrew word for "chair" describes a seat of honor or throne, and may demonstrate her sensitive attention to the prophet's dignity.

Elisha wanted to reciprocate, but she dismissed his offer, claiming complete contentment. His servant Gehazi identified her obvious deficit — children (2 Kgs 4:14). Perhaps barrenness was too painful to discuss. Some interpret her response as disinterest in children or lack of faith, yet her service to the prophet and later trust in his healing powers demonstrate great faith.

Israelite culture must be considered. Motherhood was a supreme honor, and bearing children was God's first commandment in Eden. Childlessness was among the worst fates for married women, commonly misinterpreted as divine punishment. Her response to Elisha was laden with fear of disappointment: "Do not lie unto thine handmaid" (2 Kgs 4:16). She begged him not to give her vain hope.

Though a "great woman," she called herself his "maidservant" (2 Kgs 4:8, 16, BSB), willingly serving. This phrase, common among biblical women, reflects spiritual greatness as servants of God. In scripture, service demonstrates profound faith, love, and awareness of others' needs, playing vital supporting roles in God's will. As she served God's servant, Jesus too acted as a servant of His Father (e.g., Mk 10:45; Lk 4:8; 22:42).

Her response reflects not faithlessness but painful transparency. We see her faith as she supports God's prophet and trusts Elisha's prophetic promise: "At this time next year, you will hold a son in your arms" (2 Kgs 4:16, BSB), and in her later hope in Elisha's healing powers. In her case, God's miracle came after the trial of her faith (9:23; Eth 12:12).

Her Son Dies and Is Restored to Life. As prophesied, she bore a son. Years later, while working in the field with his father and reapers, the boy suffered sudden trauma — possibly heatstroke or snakebite. He cried, "My head, my head," and a servant carried him to his mother (2 Kgs 4:19). She held him on her lap until he died at noon. Peculiarly, she laid his body on Elisha's bed without telling anyone — not even her husband. She simply requested a donkey and servant to visit Elisha. Her husband questioned the timing, as it was neither "new moon, nor sabbath" (2 Kgs 4:23). Ignoring his question, she quickly departed, her focused faith seeking complete healing from Elisha.

Elisha was near Mount Carmel, about forty miles away. Donkeys excel at endurance, not speed. Carrying an adult, they travel roughly twenty miles daily at three miles per hour. Leaving in the afternoon, the journey likely required two days with a night at a public inn, as night travel was dangerous.

Elisha recognized her from his hilltop view and sent Gehazi: "Look! There's the Shunammite! Run to meet her and ask her, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?'" (2 Kgs 4:25–26, NIV). She brushed past Gehazi and went straight to Elisha. Dismounting, she fell at his feet and clung to them (2 Kgs 4:27) — socially unacceptable behavior. Gehazi tried restraining her, but Elisha perceived her anguished soul and heard her cry: "'Did I ask you for a son, my lord?' . . . 'Didn't I tell you, 'Don't raise my hopes'?"' (2 Kgs 4:28, NIV). The prophet offered to send his staff with Gehazi, but the Shunammite demanded the prophet himself minister to her son. Her faith in God was absolute: "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you" (2 Kgs 4:30, NIV). Her tenacity sprang from maternal love and faith in God's prophet.

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Though Gehazi hurried ahead with Elisha's staff, God did not use that means for healing. The woman's faith required the prophet himself. Even Elisha's arrival did not produce immediate healing. He entered his room alone, where the body lay, and pleaded privately with God. Finally inspired, he lay "on the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands," restoring warmth. Repeating the process, the boy "sneezed seven times and opened his eyes" (2 Kgs 4:34–35, NIV). Her son was miraculously restored in answer to her faith in the living God.

The Shunammite Before the King. The next scene (2 Kgs 8:1–6, though its chronology is disputed) shows the Shunammite family following Elisha's warning to relocate from the Jezreel Valley to the Mediterranean coast during a seven-year famine. God sent famines to humble Israel during times of wickedness. Ahab's reign had ended, but his son Jehoram/Joram proved nearly as disobedient and reigned twelve years (2 Kgs 1:17; 3:2).

During the Shunammite's absence, squatters claimed her property (the text clearly gives her ownership, which is rare in the Bible). She traveled to Samaria and appealed to King Jehoram/Joram (2 Kgs 8:2–3). Her timing was miraculous; when she arrived, Gehazi was recounting Elisha's raising her son from death to the king (2 Kgs 8:4–5). Recognizing her, Gehazi made her a second witness to God's power. The astonished king accepted her appeal: "Give back everything that belonged to her, including all the income from her land from the day she left the country until now" (2 Kgs 8:6, NIV). The king assigned an officer to enforce his order. This was unprecedented treatment for a woman's property claim. The text suggests that it was the Lord who blessed her great faith and service first by restoring her son's life, and then by restoring her property.

4). 2 Kgs 5:1–4—**A Hebrew Servant of Naaman's Wife** ~850 BC

After Israel lost a battle against the Aram-Damascus army, the Syrians captured a young, unnamed Hebrew girl. Naaman, chief captain of the army, took her as a servant for his wife. She was old enough to have developed faith in the God of Israel and His prophet Elisha, yet young enough to quickly master her mistress' language, Aramaic (a West Semitic dialect related to Hebrew). She used her new language to testify of her God even while enslaved in a foreign country.

When she learned that Naaman had contracted leprosy, she seized the opportunity to testify of God's power: "If only my master would go to the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy" (2 Kgs 5:3, BSB). Naaman's wife relayed her maid's declaration, and Naaman requested the king's permission. The young woman must have been trustworthy and responsible, as both her mistress and master trusted her advice.

The King of Syria (probably Ben-Hadad I or II, or Hazael) agreed to send a letter of recommendation and presents to the King of Israel (probably Jehoram/Joram or Jehu). Unfortunately, the uninformed captain and king did not understand the difference between an Israelite prophet and king (2 Kgs 5:4–6). The young servant could have clarified their mistake before the political blunder, but no one consulted her. She was a catalyst for this miracle and its important political ramifications, yet she disappears from the story. She likely still served at Naaman's home when he returned healed and humbled (2 Kgs 5:15). (See *2 Kgs 5:2–4)

5). 2 Kgs 5:2–4—**Naaman's Wife** ~850 BC

Naaman's wife occupies a pivotal yet understated role in her husband's miraculous healing. When her young Hebrew servant testified that the prophet in Samaria could heal "leprosy" (2 Kgs 5:3), the wife could have dismissed the counsel of a foreign captive. Instead, she relayed the testimony to Naaman, demonstrating either desperate hope or genuine respect for her servant's faith. Her willingness to advocate for a Hebrew slave's religious counsel reveals openness to truth regardless of its source.

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Without her intervention as intermediary, the servant's testimony might never have reached Naaman, and the miracle would not have occurred.

6). 2 Kgs 5:26—**Maidservants** ~850 BC

The unnamed maidservants Gehazi envisioned purchasing represent the tragic commodification of women in the ancient world. When Elisha rebuked his servant for secretly pursuing Naaman's wealth, he asked Gehazi's of his imagined acquisitions: "Is this the time to take money or to accept clothes — or olive groves and vineyards, or flocks and herds, or male and female slaves?" (2 Kgs 5:26, NIV).

These women would have been bought and sold alongside livestock and property, their humanity reduced to economic value. The prophet's rebuke implicitly condemned this mercenary view of human beings. (See *Gen 12:16; *Ex 21:7-11)

7). 2 Kgs 6:26-32—**Two Mothers Who Agree to Eat Their Sons** ~850 BC

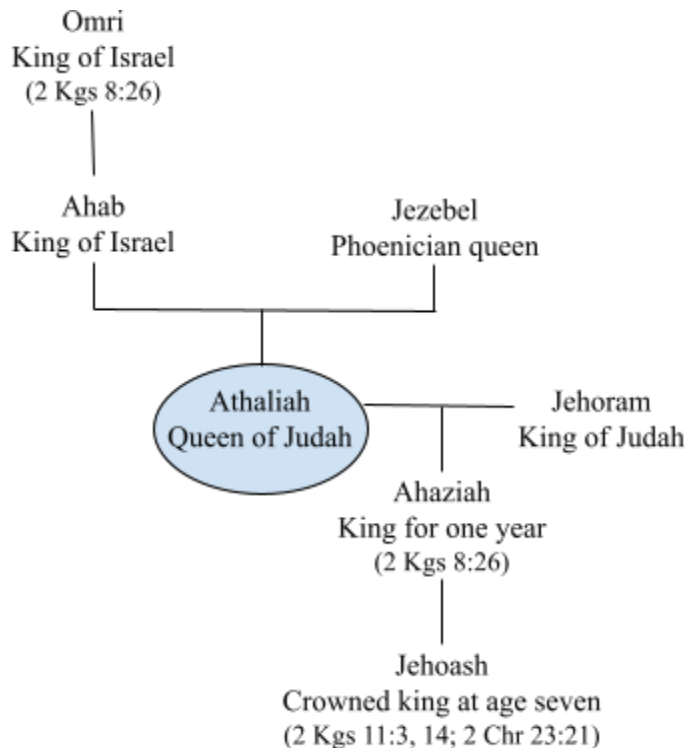
During the devastating siege of Samaria by the Arameans, two desperate mothers made an unspeakable covenant: they would eat their sons to survive the famine. When one mother cried out to King Jehoram on the city wall, she revealed the horrific agreement: "We boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son" (2 Kgs 6:28–29). The first mother's ghastly act of compliance demonstrates the absolute extremity of the famine's horror.

This narrative fulfills Moses's prophetic warning that covenant-breaking Israel would suffer such depravity as cannibalism (Deu 28:53). These mothers, driven beyond sanity by starvation, epitomize the complete moral collapse of Israel. The king responded—rending his clothes and wearing sackcloth—but he did not repent. These women become tragic symbols of a society so spiritually bankrupt that not even motherhood remained sacred.

8. 2 Kgs 8:18-26; 11:1-20; 2 Chr 21:6; 22-24—**Athaliah**, ~900 BC

Athaliah was either "the daughter of Omri, king of Israel" (2 Kgs 8:26 KJV) or his granddaughter (NIV) through Ahab, king of Israel, and his Phoenician wife Jezebel (Josephus, Ant. IX.7.1). Like her ancestors, she is known for her wickedness, and is the only biblical woman to reign as monarch in either the northern kingdom of Israel or southern Judah. Her political marriage connected the northern and southern tribes as she married the Judean king, Jehoram.

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Athaliah introduced Baal worship into the southern kingdom as her mother, Jezebel, had done in the northern kingdom, (2 Chr 24:7). She raised her son "to do wickedly" (1 Kgs 11:19; 2 Chr 22:3). He became king in Jerusalem at 22 years old and reigned as king in Jerusalem for one year (2 Kgs 8:26; note KJV 2 Chr 22:2 claims age 44, but the JST, NIV, ESV, BSB, and NASB all record 22).

Athaliah had political desires herself, which led her to plot many murders. Upon her son's death, she "destroyed all the seed royal" that she could find (2 Kgs 11:1). She is the only biblical female to commit familicide. But Athaliah's sister-in-law saved one heir of King Ahaziah, and he was hidden with his wet nurse in the temple for six years (2 Kgs 11:3).

In Athaliah's seventh year as queen in Jerusalem, she heard a crowd gathering at the temple and went to investigate. The priest, Jehoiada, had called all the leaders of the people to the temple to witness the crowning and anointing of the seven-year-old Jehoash as king of Judea. When Athaliah arrived, she saw her grandson standing "by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason" (2 Kgs 11:14). She fled back to the palace but was slain by a guard's sword (2 Kgs 11:17). The people "rejoiced" at the news, and "the city was quiet" (2 Kgs 11:20; 2 Chr 23:21).

9.) 2 Kgs 8:12; 15:16; Hos 13:16; Amo 1:13—**Pregnant Mothers Murdered in War** ~850 BC

The pregnant mothers slaughtered in ancient warfare represent the ultimate targets of calculated terror—victims chosen precisely because they carried the future generation within their bodies. The Prophet Elisha wept before Hazael because God revealed the atrocities he would commit, including ripping "up their women with child" (2 Kgs 8:12). These unnamed women and their unborn children faced destruction designed to kill and annihilate Israel's hope of continuation.

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This horror was not limited to foreign enemies. King Menahem of Israel inflicted the same atrocity upon his own people at Tiphshah: “all the women therein that were with child he ripped up” (2 Kgs 15:16). These pregnant mothers became instruments of political terror—their bodies transformed into battlegrounds, their unborn children murdered alongside them. The prophetic revelation of such atrocities underscores that God is aware and will inflict divine judgment.

10.) 2 Kgs 8:18; 2 Chr 21:6—**Daughter of Ahab Becomes Wife of Jehoram** ~850 BC

An unnamed daughter of the northern Israelite King Ahab, married King Jehoram, from the southern kingdom of Judah. This forged a political alliance, but spiritually it proved disastrous. Her influence mirrored her mother Jezebel’s idolatrous legacy. 2 Kings 8:18 records a causal relationship between Jehoram’s evil and her influence. Their marriage imported Baal worship into Judah’s Davidic line, demonstrating how dynastic alliances could corrupt covenants.

11.) 2 Kgs 10:13—**Queen Mother** ~850 BC

The “queen mother/*gebirah*,” an official court position, held more power than the king’s wives, making her and her family legitimate targets in Jehu’s purging of Ahab’s dynasty. She wielded significant political influence in the northern kingdom so that Ahaziah’s brothers traveled specifically to greet her and the king’s children.

12.) 2 Kgs 11:2-3; 2 Chr 22:11-12—**Nurse of Joash** ~850 BC

The unnamed nurse of the infant prince Joash became an unlikely guardian of the Davidic covenant when his sister Jehosheba rescued him from Queen Athaliah’s massacre of the royal family. This nurse hid with the child in the temple’s bedchamber for six years during the usurper Queen Athaliah’s murderous reign. The nurse’s loyalty and discretion preserved not only the future king’s life but also the messianic line itself—her faithful silence ensuring that God’s promise to David would not be extinguished. (*See *Athaliah; *Jehosheba*)

13.) **Jehosheba/Jehoshabeath**, ~800 BC—2 Kgs 11:2-3; 2Chr 22:11

Jehosheba was born with royal Davidic blood through birth and then married into Aaronic lineage when her marriage was arranged with the leading high priest at the temple. She was the only royal marriage with a high priest. She was a daughter of King Jehoram and half-sister of King Ahaziah. Jehosheba is best known as the courageous aunt who saved her nephew, the royal infant Joash, from the jealous and bloodthirsty Queen Athaliah, who murdered all other heirs of King Ahaziah (2 Chr 22:10-12). Jehosheba and her husband, the high priest, concealed and raised Jehoash for six years in the temple. She may be part of the reason that the young king initially followed the Lord, though he turned from his faith as he sought more power.

14.) **Zibiah**, ~850 BC—2 Kgs 12:1; 2 Chr 24:1

Zibiah’s husband, King Ahaziah, became the sixth king of Judah at age 22. Her marriage was most likely arranged as a political alliance. Zibiah’s parents are not named, but her sister’s father was King Jehoram, so we assume she was also a princess (2 Chr 22:11; 24:1). Zibiah was raised in Beersheba, near the southern border of Judah and Edom. It was a common practice to spread the royal posterity throughout the country when a king had many wives. Both sisters married young men of importance—the high priest and crown prince.

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In her culture, Zibiah did not have much choice in her arranged marriage with Ahaziah. He was known as a wicked king who was killed after only one year on the throne, along with most of his maternal relations who were related to the Israelite family of Kings Ahab and Omri (2 Chr 22:2-9). However, Zibiah's mother-in-law, Queen Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri, was not killed.

When Zibiah's mother-in-law heard of her son's death, she "proceeded to destroy the whole royal family of the house of Judah" and took control of the southern kingdom (2 Chr 22:10, NIV). However, Zibiah and her infant son, Joash/Jehoash, were saved through the help of Zibiah's sister, Jehosheba, and her husband, the High Priest Jehoiada (2 Chr 24:6). They hid the young prince in the temple for six years while his grandmother, Athaliah, ruled in wickedness (2 Chr 22:11-12).

At the end of the six years in hiding, Zibiah would have been very involved at her son's coronation in Jerusalem when he was seven years old. Under the direction of her brother-in-law, the high priest, Zibiah's seven-year-old son came out of the temple and stood beside the pillar of the temple: "All the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of musick, and such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason!" (2 Chr 23:13). The usurper Athaliah was killed, Joash was anointed king, and Zibiah became the Queen Mother. She would have held a powerful position during the forty-year righteous reign of her son (2 Kgs 12:1).