

## 2 Kings 4: Elijah Reprised and Surpassed

### 1-7: Elisha and the cruse of oil

X

#### מלכים ב ד'

(1) Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying: 'Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two children to be bondmen.' (2) And Elisha said unto her: 'What shall I do for thee? tell me; what hast thou in the house?' And she said: 'Thy handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.' (3) Then he said: 'Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. (4) And thou shalt go in, and shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and pour out into all those vessels; and thou shalt set aside that which is full.' (5) So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons; they brought the vessels to her, and she poured out. (6) And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son: 'Bring me yet a vessel.' And he said unto her: 'There is not a vessel more.' And the

(א) וְאִשָּׁה אַחַת מִנְּשֵׂי בְנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים צָעָקָה אֶל אֱלִישָׁע לֵאמֹר עֲבָדְךָ אִישִׁי מֵת וְאַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ כִּי עֲבָדְךָ הָיָה יְרֵא אֶת יְיָ וְהַנֶּשֶׁה בָּא לְקַחַת אֶת שְׁנֵי יְלָדָי לֹו לְעֲבָדִים. (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אֱלִישָׁע מָה אַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ הַגִּידִי לִי מָה יֵשׁ [לְךָ] (לְכִי) בְּבַיִת וְתֹאמְרִי אֵין לְשִׁפְחָתְךָ כֹּל בְּבַיִת כִּי אִם אֶסוּד שְׁמֹן. (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי שְׂאֲלִי לְךָ כְּלִים מִן הַחוּץ מֵאֵת כָּל [שְׂכָנֶיךָ] (שְׂכֻנְכִי) כְּלִים רַקִּים אֶל תִּמְעָטִי. (ד) וּבֵאת וּסְגַרְתָּ הַדֶּלֶת בְּעַדְךָ וּבְעַד בְּנֵיךָ וַיִּצְקֶתָ עַל כָּל הַכְּלִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהִמְלֵא תִּסְיָעִי. (ה) וְתִלְךָ מֵאֵתוֹ וְתִסְגְּרִי הַדֶּלֶת בְּעַדָּהּ וּבְעַד בְּנֵיהָ הֵם מִגִּישִׁים אֵלֶיהָ וְהִיא [מוֹצֶקֶת] (מִיִּצְקֶת). (ו) וַיְהִי כַּמְּלֵאת הַכְּלִים וְתֹאמְרִי אֶל בְּנֵיהָ הַגִּישָׁה אֵלַי עוֹד כְּלִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אֵין עוֹד כְּלִי וַיַּעֲמֵד הַשְּׁמֹן. (ז) וְתָבֵא וְתִגַּד לְאִישׁ הָאֵלֶּהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי מְכָרִי אֶת הַשְּׁמֹן וְשִׁלְמִי אֶת [נְשִׂיךָ] (נְשִׁיכִי) וְאַתָּה [וּבְנֵיךָ] (בְּנֵיכִי) תַּחֲזִי בְּנוֹתָהּ. (ח) וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיַּעֲבֵר

### 8-10: Elisha at the home of the Shunamite

and thy sons of the rest.' (8) And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. (9) And she said unto her husband: 'Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, that passeth by us continually. (10) Let us make, I pray thee, a little chamber on the

(בְּנֵיכִי) תַּחֲזִי בְּנוֹתָהּ. (ח) וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיַּעֲבֵר אֱלִישָׁע אֶל שׁוּנֵם וְשָׁם אִשָּׁה גְּדוֹלָה וְתַחֲזֹק בּוֹ לְאַכֹּל לֶחֶם וַיְהִי מְדִי עָבְרוּ יָסֵר שָׁמָּה לְאַכֹּל לֶחֶם. (ט) וְתֹאמְרִי אֶל אִשָּׁה הִנֵּה נָא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים קָדוֹשׁ הוּא עָבֵר עָלֵינוּ תָּמִיד. (י) נַעֲשֶׂה נָא עֲלֵיתָ קִיר קִטְנָה וְנִשְׂמִים לֹו שֵׁם מְטָה וְשִׁלְחָן וְכִסֵּא וּמְנוּרָה וְהָיָה בָּבֵאוֹ אֵלֵינוּ יָסוּר שָׁמָּה. (יא)

בראשית יח: וְאָקַחָה פֶת לֶחֶם וְסָעְדוּ לְבָבְכֶם אַחַר תַּעֲבְרוּ... כִּי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל עֲבָדְכֶם...

11-17: Elisha promises the Shunamite a child

(11) And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the upper chamber and lay there. (12) And he said to Gehazi his servant: 'Call this Shunammite.' And when he had called her, she stood before him. (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 son, 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: 'At this season,

ויהי היום ויבא שמה ויסר אל העליה וישכב שמה. (יב) ויאמר אל גיחזי נערו קרא לשונמית הזאת ויקרא לה ותעמד לפניו. (יג) ויאמר לו אמר נא אליה הנה חרדת אלינו את כל החרדה הזאת מה לעשות לך היש לדבר לך אל המלך או אל שר הצבא ותאמר בתוך עמי אנכי ישבת. (יד) ויאמר ומה לעשות לה ויאמר גיחזי אבל בן אין לה ואישה זקן. (טו) ויאמר קרא לה ויקרא לה ותעמד בפתח. (טז) ויאמר למועד הזה כעת חיה [את] (אתי) חבקת בן ותאמר אל אדני איש האלהים אל תכזב בשפחתך. (יז) ותהר האשה ותלד בן למועד הזה כעת חיה אשר דבר אליה אלישע. (יח) ויגדל הילד

בר' יח: ויאמר שוב אשוב אליך כעת חיה והנה בן לשרה אשתך

בר' יח:יב: ותצחק שרה בקרבה לאמר אחרי בלתי היתה לי עדנה ואדני זקן:

בר' כא:ב: ותהר ותלד שרה לאברהם בן לזקניו למועד אשר דבר אתו אלהים:

Sarah	Isaac
Rachel	Joseph/Benjamin
Jochebed	Moses
Hannah	Samuel
Mrs. Mano'ach	Samson
The Shunamite	(a son)
The "young woman" (Isa. 7:14)	Emanuel

\*My high priestess mother conceived me; in secret she bore me. She set me in a basket of rushes, with bitumen she sealed my lid. She cast me into the river which rose over me. The river bore me up and carried me to Akki, the drawer of water. Akki, the drawer of water, took me as his son and reared me.

18-20: the child dies

Elisha had said unto her. (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 his servant: 'Carry him to his mother.' (20) And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he said unto her:

אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר אֵלֶיהָ אֱלִישָׁע. (יח) וַיִּגְדַּל הַיָּלֶד וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיֵּצֵא אֶל אָבִיו אֶל הַקְּצָרִים. (יט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל אָבִיו רֵאשִׁי רֵאשִׁי וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל הַנַּעַר שָׂאֵהוּ אֶל אִמּוֹ. (כ) וַיִּשְׂאֵהוּ וַיְבִיֵאֵהוּ אֶל אִמּוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל בְּרִכְיָה עַד הַצְּהָרִים וַיָּמָת. (כא) וַתַּעַל וַתִּשְׁכְּבֵהוּ עַל

21-27: the Shunamite rushes to the prophet

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 servants, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come back.' (23) And he said: 'Wherefore wilt thou go to him today? 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; slacken me not the riding, 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, I pray thee, now 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 hold of his feet. And

הַצְּהָרִים וַיָּמָת. (כא) וַתַּעַל וַתִּשְׁכְּבֵהוּ עַל מִטַּת אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וַתִּסְגֹּר בְּעַדוֹ וַתֵּצֵא. (כב) וַתִּקְרָא אֶל אִישָׁהּ וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחָה נָא לִי אֶחָד מִן הַנְּעָרִים וְאַחַת הָאֲתָנוֹת וְאֶרְוֹצָה עַד אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וְאָשׁוּבָה. (כג) וַיֹּאמֶר מִדּוּעַ [אֵת] [אֵתִי] [הַלֶּכֶת] (הַלְכָתִי) אֵלָיו הַיּוֹם לֹא תִדָּשׁ וְלֹא שַׁבָּת וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁלוֹם. (כד) וַתַּחְבֹּשׁ הָאֲתָנוֹן וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל נַעֲרָהּ נְהַג וְלֶךְ אֶל תַּעֲצֹר לִי לְרִכָּב כִּי אִם אִמְרָתִי לֶךְ. (כה) וַתִּלְךְ וַתָּבֵא אֶל אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל הַר הַכַּרְמֶל וַיְהִי כִּי רָאָה אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה מִנְּגֹד וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל גִּיחִזִּי נַעֲרוֹ הִנֵּה הַשּׁוֹנֵמִית הַלֹּז. (כו) עֲתָה רוּץ נָא לִקְרֹאתָהּ וְאָמַר לָהּ הַשְׁלוֹם לֶךְ הַשְׁלוֹם לְאִישׁךָ הַשְׁלוֹם לְיָלֶד וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁלוֹם. (כז) וַתָּבֵא אֶל אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל הָהָר וַתַּחֲזֹק בְּרַגְלָיו וַיִּגַּשׁ גִּיחִזִּי לְהִדָּפָה וַיֹּאמֶר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים הֲרִפָּה לָּהּ כִּי נִפְשָׁה מָרָה לָּהּ וַיֵּי הָעֲלִים מִמֶּנִּי וְלֹא הִגִּיד לִי.

ישעיהו סו (כג) והיה מדי חדש בחדשו ומדי שבת בשבתו יבוא כל בשר להשתחוות לפני אמר ה':  
בראשית יח (יז) וה' אמר המכסה אני מאברהם אשר אני עשה:

## 28-30: Elisha intervenes personally

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 thy hand, and go thy way; if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not; and lay my staff upon the face of the child.' (30) And the mother of the child said: 'As the Lord

(כח) וַתֹּאמֶר הַשְּׂאֵלְתִי בֶן מֵאֵת אֲדֹנָי הֲלֹא אָמַרְתִּי לֹא תִשְׁלַח אֹתִי. (כט) וַיֹּאמֶר לְגִיחִזִּי חַגֵּר מִתְנַיִד וְקַח מִשְׁעֲנֹתַי בְּיָדְךָ וְלֹדֵךְ כִּי תִמְצָא אִישׁ לֹא תִבְרַכְנֹו וְכִי יִבְרַכְךָ אִישׁ לֹא תִעֲנֶנּוּ וְשִׁמְתָּ מִשְׁעֲנֹתַי עַל פְּנֵי הַנְּעָר. (ל) וַתֹּאמֶר אִם הַנְּעָר חַי יְיָ וְחַי נַפְשְׁךָ אִם אֶעֱזָבְךָ וַיִּקֶּם וַיִּלְדֵּךְ אַחֲרֶיהָ. (לא)

## 31-37: Elisha revives the child

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 returned 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 him; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. (35) Then he returned, and walked in the house once to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his

וְגִיחִזִּי עָבַר לִפְנֵיהֶם וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת הַמִּשְׁעֲנֹת עַל פְּנֵי הַנְּעָר וְאִזַּן קוֹל וְאִזַּן קֶשֶׁב וַיֵּשֶׁב לְקִרְאָתוֹ וַיִּגַּד לוֹ לֵאמֹר לֹא הָקִיץ הַנְּעָר. (לב) וַיָּבֵא אֱלִישָׁע הַבַּיִתָּה וְהִנֵּה הַנְּעָר מֵת מִשְׁכָּב עַל מִטָּתוֹ. (לג) וַיָּבֵא וַיִּסְגֵּר הַדֶּלֶת בְּעַד שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל יְיָ. (לד) וַיַּעַל וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל הַיְלֵד וַיִּשֶׂם פִּיו עַל פִּיו וְעֵינָיו עַל עֵינָיו וְכַפָּיו עַל כַּפּוֹ וַיִּגְהַר עָלָיו וַיִּחֶם בְּשַׁר הַיְלֵד. (לה) וַיֵּשֶׁב וַיִּלְדֵּךְ בַּבַּיִת אַחַת הַנָּה וְאַחַת הַנָּה וַיַּעַל וַיִּגְהַר עָלָיו וַיִּזְוֶר הַנְּעָר עַד שִׁבְעַ פְּעָמִים וַיִּפְקַח הַנְּעָר אֶת עֵינָיו. (לו) וַיִּקְרָא אֶל גִּיחִזִּי וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָא אֶל הַשְּׂנַמִּית הַזֹּאת וַיִּקְרָאָהּ וַתָּבֵא אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאִי בְנֵךְ. (לז) וַתָּבֵא וַתִּפֹּל עַל רַגְלָיו וַתִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת בְּנָהּ וַתִּצְעַא. (לח) וַאֲלִישָׁע שָׁב הַגְּלֻגָּלָה וְהִרְעֵב

## Elijah Reprised and Surpassed (2 Kings 4)

When Elijah was about to part company from Elisha, he granted his disciple a wish: ““Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?” Elisha replied: “Let a double portion of your spirit pass on to me” (2 Kings 2:9). If we are not inclined to view this as an act of hubris, it most likely signified that Elisha regarded himself as being only half the man of God that Elijah was; therefore, he would need twice his master’s spirit in order to accomplish just as much. In our chapter, we find Elisha reprising some of Elijah’s activities.

In the chapter in which we were first introduced to Elijah, he performed a miracle to provide food for a woman of Tzarfat. In the words of his prophetic message, “The jar of flour shall not give out and the jug of oil shall not fail until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the ground” (1 Kings 17:14). In our chapter (v. 3 ff.), we find Elisha miraculously providing sustenance for the widow of a prophet-in-training.

Even more striking, perhaps, was Elisha’s duplication of his master’s successful resuscitation of an apparently dead child. Elijah brought back to life the son of the woman of Tzarfat after “he had no breath left in him” (1 Kings 17:17), and, in our chapter, Elisha breathed life back into the son of the Shunamite woman with whom he was boarding “and the boy opened his eyes” (v.35).

It is significant that in each of the two cases cited here the prophet first uttered a prayer to God before actually performing artificial respiration. Indeed, the failure of Gehazi, Elisha’s manservant, to succeed in his attempt to revive the child would argue that more was involved here than just the exercise of CPR.

In addition, towards the end of the chapter, Elisha rescued a stew from poisonous gourds by mixing in flour (reminiscent of Moses saving the water at Marah by tossing in a branch, cf. Exodus 15:25) and then replicated his earlier miracle by enabling a small amount of food to feed one hundred people “and when they had eaten, they [even] had some left over” (v.43), arguably a clear manifestation of “a double portion” of Elijah’s spirit.