

A King Acts on a Widow's Behalf

Key Verse: “*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.*”—II Kings 8:6

Selected Scripture:
II Kings 8:1-6

OUR LESSON IS A CONTIN-

uation of the account found in II Kings 4:8-37, in which Elisha restored to life the son of the Shunamite woman. After doing this, Elisha informed the woman that there was going to be a famine in the land of Israel for seven years. He recommended that she take her household and go live in the land of the Philistines until the famine was over. She did so, leaving her home in Israel.—II Kings 8:1,2

At the end of the seven years, the woman returned to Israel, only to find that her house, land, and possessions had been taken over by others in her absence. “She went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.” (vs. 3) Although the king’s name is not stated, it was most likely King Jehoram of Israel. Providentially, at the same time that the woman approached the king, he was in conversation with Gehazi, the servant of Elisha. Gehazi was relating to King Jehoram all of the wonderful miracles Elisha had performed. He was telling the king about how Elisha had restored to life the son of a Shunemite woman

when she, along with her son, approached to plea for her house and land. Excitedly, Gehazi exclaimed, “My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.”—vs. 5

We can only imagine the amazement of all those present—the woman, her son, the servant of Elisha, and the king—as the events which had taken place over many years were unfolded before them all. It should be noted that Elisha was not even present at this meeting, yet it was he who had been involved in all of the experiences that had brought them together before the king. Our Key Verse says that upon hearing all that had happened, King Jehoram appointed a special officer who was to ensure that the woman’s house, land, and possessions were all restored. Even the money made from her crops while she was gone was to be repaid to her.

Our lesson is more than just a story with a happy ending. It fittingly pictures the blessings of Christ’s coming kingdom here on earth. The earlier restoring of the woman’s son to life points to when the resurrection of all mankind will take place. Jesus spoke of this time, when “all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth.” (John 5:28,29) The restoring to life of the woman’s son was only part of the picture. The famine in the land of Israel for seven years illustrates the fact that man has lived during a famine of truth and righteousness, by and large, since our first parents fell into sin. Just as the woman left Israel to dwell in the land of one of Israel’s enemies, so also man, cast off from the favor of God since sin entered the world, has been forced to dwell under the dominion of the “prince of this world,” Satan. The glorious conclusion to the story, in which the woman’s house, land, and possessions were restored, shows that once the famine of righteousness in this world comes to an end, man will have “that which was lost” restored to him during the time spoken of as the “restitution of all things.”—Luke 19:10; Acts 3:21 ■