

TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY



The Shunammite Woman

This woman manages to exude an aura of grace. She is well thought of in her community. A woman of means, she is generous with what she has, first inviting Elisha for meals when he is in town, and then adding a guest room for him to have his own private accommodation. She is in tune with God's spirit enough to recognize it in Elisha. She seems to be content, even in her barrenness. She is respectful to her husband, yet clearly the one who initiated hospitality to Elisha and his servant Gehazi. Even in her grief she displays a calm faith and efficiency. She was persistent and tenacious. No wonder she is highly regarded, even thousands of years later. I can imagine God greeting her with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

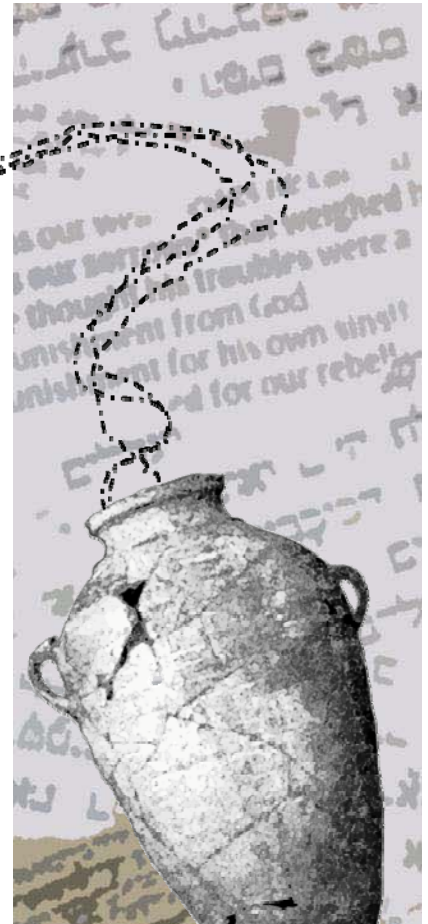
All of this while living in a culture that had moved so far away from God that He was soon to bring a terrible calamity on them from which these northern tribes would never recover. God noticed this faithful woman, and gave her the opportunity to be a part of Elisha's ministry. What was the key to the faithfulness of this woman?

What can we conclude that she and her husband made a practice of from 2 Kings 4:22-23? _____

What was her husband's attitude when she asked to go see the prophet on her own? _____

How involved did she seem to have been in seeking God's Words through the prophets? _____

Do you take this sort of initiative? _____



"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

2 Corinthians 4:7

READ:

- 2 Kings 4:8-17

Hospitality

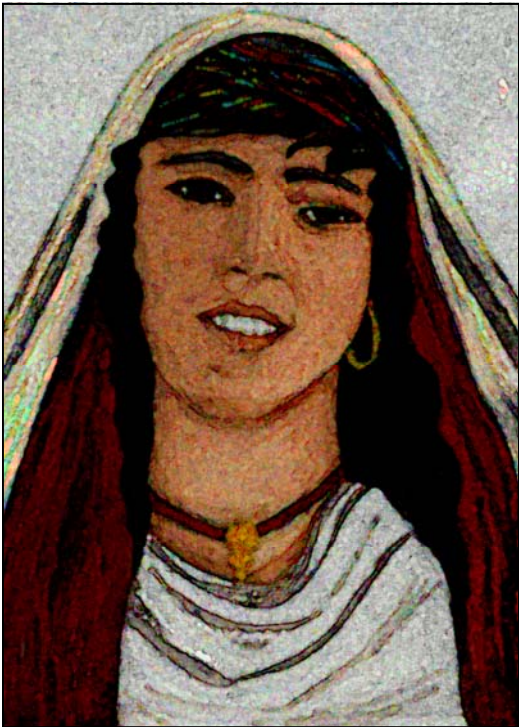
What resources did the Shunammite woman have at her disposal? _____

What does 1 Peter 4:9,10 say we should do with the gifts we have received?

According to 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, what enables us to be generous? _____

Whose needs were being supplied? _____

Why did the Shunammite woman show hospitality to Elisha in particular?



Who does Galatians 6:10 instruct us to share with? _____

Take an inventory of what God has blessed you with. It may be riches, time, talents, or even a set of experiences. Do you have an extra bedroom now that your child has left home? Do you have an expertise with computers? Whatever it may be, jot down some practical ideas how you could use those to be “hospitable” to a brother or sister in Christ.

When blessings are painful...

What signs of contentment, even in barrenness, did this woman show? _____

How did she respond to Elisha’s prophecy that she would have a child?

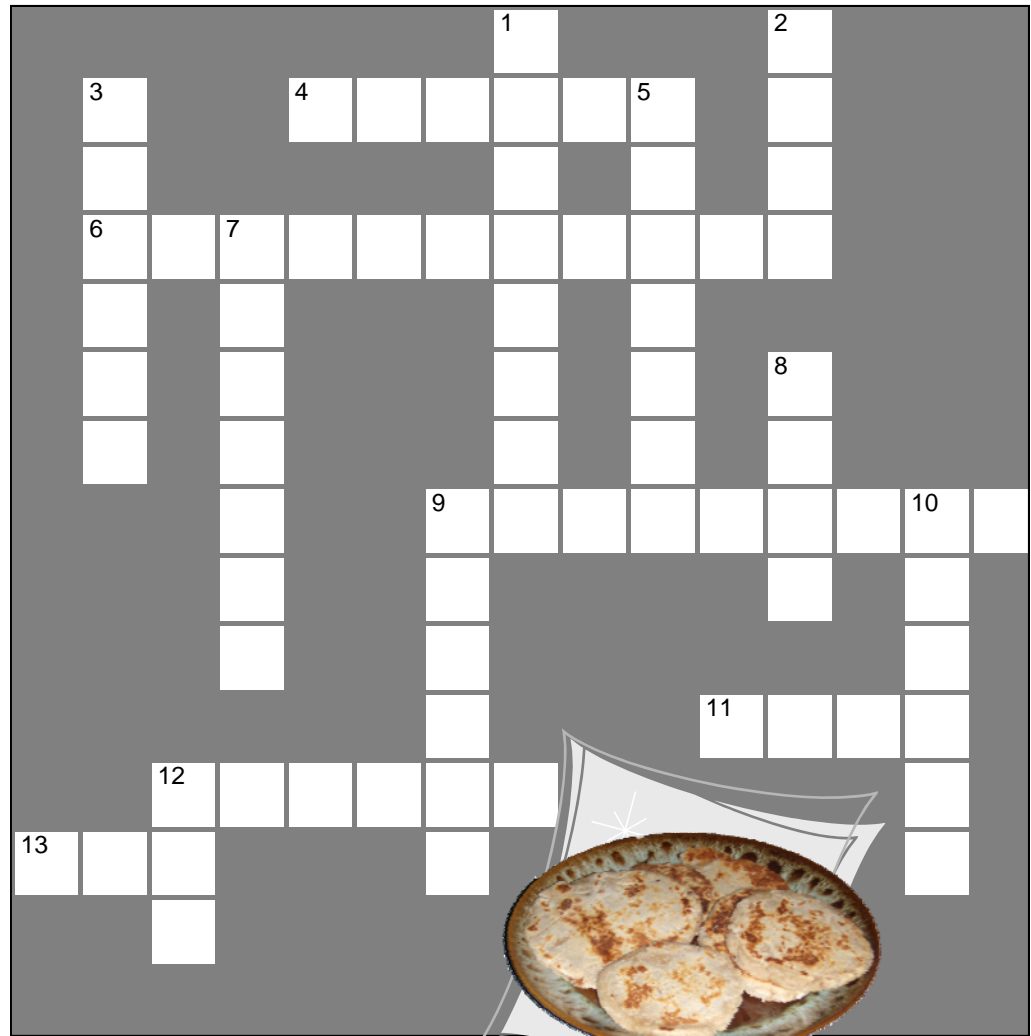
Why do you think she didn’t share news of the child’s death with anyone but Elisha? _____

What were her words to Elisha? _____

How should we deal with blessings that also hold anguish? _____



PUZZLE PAGE



Clues

Across

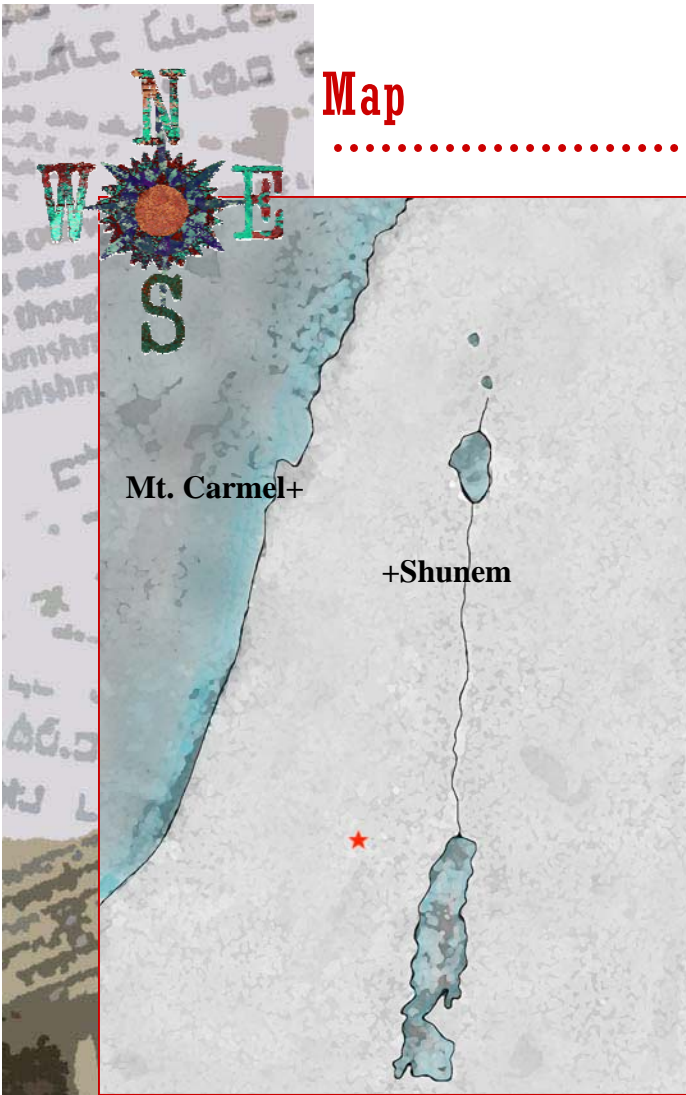
- 4 the only person she told of her son's death (6)
- 6 she practiced this (11)
- 9 the result of Elisha's request on her behalf (9)
- 11 she provided this for Elisha (4)
- 12 where she lived (6)
- 13 number of times Elisha lay on the boy (3)

Down

- 1 tribe whose territory her hometown was in Josh.19:17,18 (8)
- 2 she knew Elisha was this sort of man (4)
- 3 was unable to revive her son (6)
- 5 another woman from Shunem in 1 Kings 1:3 (7)
- 7 the boy did this seven times (7)
- 8 she invited Elisha to this (4)
- 9 Elisha did this in private for the boy (6)
- 10 she found Elisha on this mount (6)

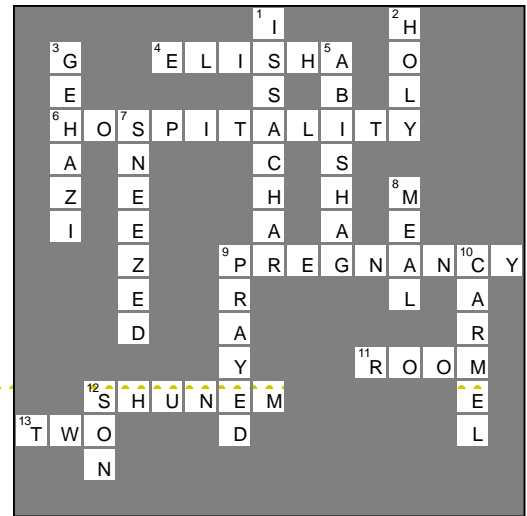


Map



Scholars are actually not positive where the location of Shunem is today, but many think it is the present day Sulam, about 20 miles from Mt. Carmel, which is actually a range of mountains. It doesn't seem like this would have been an especially easy trip for a woman to make in these violent days, yet her husband grants her the means to make the trip. The route must have been familiar to her and the servant, because they seemed to waste no time in finding Elisha. Nevertheless, it seems it would take a bit of time to make the 40 mile round trip, even if she had the luxury of riding a donkey!

Puzzle answers:



Suggested reading:

I read **Open Heart, Open Home**, by Karen Burton Mains as a young wife and was greatly influenced by its teachings on hospitality. It became a model for our home that, after nearly 30 years, has come to feel "natural" to us. It has led to many interesting guests both inside and outside our home. Copyright is 1976 by the David C. Cook Publishing Co., in Elgin, IL. Later editions include Bible studies for women.

Down Victory Road
www.downvictoryrd.com

