



[2 Kings 4:27-31](#)

(27) And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not 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 thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. (30) And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed 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 went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

King James Version

As the Shunammite woman clutches Elisha's feet, a posture of abject humility, grief, and supplication, Gehazi attempts to push her away from the prophet. Elisha sternly rebukes him for not noticing her distress and accommodating her in her sorrow (verse 27). The servant is not perceptive enough to see her heartfelt anguish—all he sees is another demanding supplicant to be dealt with, to be put in her rightful place before the great prophet.

Who is this Gehazi? The Bible describes him consistently and solely as Elisha's servant, shedding very little light on his background or position. In his *All the Men of the Bible*, Herbert Lockyer speculates that he "likely stood in the same relationship to Elisha as Elisha had done to Elijah" (p. 124). This would make him the prophet's probable successor as well as his assistant. If this is so, it makes him, as the type of a false minister, that much more significant and sinister.

Scripture records very little that is good about Gehazi. He heeds Elisha's commands well enough, but the sense of his basic unbelief and impure motives that hovers

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for 2 Kings 4:27-31 (<http://www.theberean.org>) between the lines is real. He appears in three scenes, and only in one of them does he do anything of even moderate merit ([II Kings 8:1-6](#)). The second scene in [II Kings 5:20-27](#) exposes his greed for money and the power it brings, and [God](#) through Elisha curses him and his descendants with leprosy, a hideous form of excommunication.

The third scene appears here in II Kings 4, bringing out his inconsiderate attitude and spiritual impotence. It shows him living intimately with the righteous example of Elisha but never instilling it into his own character. He is a servant who never learns how to care for those he serves. He is a man with great potential for growth in God's way and service who instead seeks material wealth and position in society. In the end he receives the "reward" of a false minister.

Gehazi's spiritual inadequacy comes out when Elisha sends him ahead to try to heal the dead child (verses 29-31). The text does not mention him praying for the child's healing, and even using the prophet's staff does him no good. The terse narrative suggests that, once Gehazi sees no change in the boy's condition, he says, "Oh, well!" and reports his unsuccessful attempt to Elisha and the grieving mother. "Try, try again" is not in his spiritual vocabulary (see [Luke 18:1-8](#))!

This should give us some general clues about false ministers, tares among the wheat in God's service. Many are avaricious; they see "serving" God's people as a means to a profitable end. Many are inconsiderate; their "ministry" is more about them and their desires than the true needs of the flock. Many are spiritually weak, "having a form of godliness but denying its power" ([II Timothy 3:5](#)); they merely go through the motions of godly works. The apostles Peter and Jude expound on other elements of false ministers in their books ([II Peter 2](#); [Jude 5-19](#)).

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[**Elisha and the Shunammite Woman, Part II: Serving God's Children**](#)

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