



# HORSES & CHARIOTS OF FIRE

2 KINGS 6:8-21

## GOAL

▶ **To teach children that God is everywhere, knows everything, and is all powerful.** In this story, a great army came up against the prophet Elisha and his servants, but Elisha was not afraid because he had experienced God's faithfulness. God had been showing Elisha the secrets of the enemy so that he could warn the king of Israel. No doubt, Elisha saw the Syrian army coming against him as well. When his servant came to him stricken in fear, Elisha answered in confidence, "Don't be afraid, for our side outnumbers them." Elisha saw what God saw, and he prayed for the servant to see the same. God opened the eyes of the servant to see the heavenly army of horses and chariots of fire.

## CHARACTERS

▶ **King of Syria:** He had been leading raids against Israel, but was frustrated when every surprise attack was no surprise to Israel. He found out Elisha was the one warning the Israelites so he sent an army to capture Elisha. Little did the king know, God and his heavenly host were on Elisha's side.

**Prophet Elisha:** A great prophet of God who served the king of Israel. God gave him the miraculous ability to hear the king's battle plans against Syria so that he knows every move of the enemy. He shares this information with the King of Israel and time and time again the Israelites are spared from falling into the Syrians' traps.

**Elisha's Servant:** He was a close servant to Elisha and was the first up in the morning to see the enemy surrounding the camp. He was in great fear when he came to Elisha and told him the frightening news that they were outnumbered and completely surrounded. But Elisha prayed that his eyes would be opened, and the Lord opened his eyes to see the mighty hosts of heaven surrounding the enemy.



## MEMORY VERSE

- ▶ **1 John 4:4:** Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

## OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read 2 Kings 6:8-21:** The story opens with the King of Syria at war with Israel. The king planned a series of attacks, but each tactic mysteriously failed, as if the Israelites had been alerted to every detail of his plans. Naturally, he suspected someone was leaking top secret information and he even questioned his own trusted servants. The king discovered that the prophet Elisha was the one who had been informing the Israelites, so he took swift action to stop him. The king could not see that God and the hosts of heaven were against him, so he attempted to overcome Elisha with chariots and armed men. But Elisha saw what others could not, that the heavenly army of horses and chariots of fire were surrounding the scene, so he was not afraid. Elisha prayed that God would blind the Syrians, so God blinded them. Then Elisha physically led the blinded enemy right into the hands of the king of Israel.

## SUGGESTIONS

- ▶ **Elisha the prophet was confident in God because his eyes and ears were opened to the reality of God's power and His kingdom.**

**Elisha remembered what God had done:** Elisha remembered the mighty deeds of God, so he was confident in the Lord's ability to deliver him. He remembered the miraculous things God had accomplished through the great prophet Elijah; he remembered the "chariots and horsemen of Israel," the mighty hosts of God who took Elijah upon a windstorm; he remembered when he laid down the tunic of Elijah and the waters of the Jordan river parted; he remembered when the poisoned stew turned into something edible; he remembered the feeding of a hundred men with 20 loaves and some grain; he remembered the healing of the Syrian general from leprosy; and he remembered the heavy axe miraculously floating in water.

**Elisha's eyes were opened to what God was doing:** God gave Elisha the miraculous ability to hear the top secret plans of the king of Syria so that he could use the information to warn the Israelites. He saw the hosts of God that were surrounding the enemies of Israel with his own eyes, and he prayed for his servant to see the same. Whenever Israel believed the words of God through the prophet and did what he said, they were successful. When they did not believe the words of the prophet, they failed.



## PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

### ▶ **Heads Up, Seven Up**

This activity works best with desks in a classroom. Ask for seven volunteers and have the volunteers go to the front of the room. Have the rest of the children in the room close their eyes, put their heads down on the desk, and put their hands on top of the desk with one thumb sticking up. Once everyone's heads are down, have each volunteer secretly touch one person's thumb and move back to the front of the room. Once every volunteer is back to the front of the room, say, "Heads up, seven up!" Ask the seven children whose thumbs were touched to stand up. Each child must guess the person who touched their thumb. If the person is correct, he or she gets to take the place of the volunteer for the next round. If the person is incorrect, the volunteer remains in the front to continue the game. No peeking!

.....

## MEMORY VERSE MEANING

▶ **1 John 4:4:** Our greatest problem has been solved. The result of sin is death, but Jesus died for our sins so that we can live forever. We are forgiven and we are free from the curse of sin and death. When we put trust in Jesus as our Savior, the enemy of our souls has no more power over us because the Spirit of the living God that lives in us is greater than any other power in the world.

.....

## POST-LESSON ACTIVITY

▶ **God's Hidden Army | Supplies:** one blindfold; orange, red, and yellow tissue paper separated into individual sheets.

Take two students and separate them from the others; tell the class that one student is Elisha, and one student is the servant of Elisha. Blindfold the student who is playing the servant. Have the servant and Elisha stand in the middle of the room. Hand out the tissue paper to the remaining students. Tell them to form a circle around the pair in the middle. Have the two students act out the scene between Elisha and his servant; when Elisha prays "Lord, open his eyes," take off the servant student's blindfold and have the other students wave the tissue paper wildly around to simulate fire. Repeat this as many times as you want with different students playing Elisha and his servant.



TAKE  
HOME



Power over the enemy and confidence to overcome comes from knowing who God is and what he has done. Elisha knew the secret plans of the enemy, and it gave Israel a distinct advantage over them. He saw the power of God in the heavenly army of horses and chariots of fire, and it gave him courage. How can we gain confidence like Elisha?

**1. Remember what God has done:** God has performed many miracles to provide and protect for His people, such as providing manna for the Israelites as they wandered through the wilderness, and bringing down the walls of Jericho; but the best provision He has ever given us was Jesus. We needed a Savior, and God gave us His Son.

**2. Ask God to help you see the unseen:** If Elisha did not see the warriors of God surrounding his enemy, he might have been afraid. Seeking God through prayer and reading the Bible gives us eyes to see what can't ordinarily be seen. We might feel alone, but spiritual eyes show us that we are not alone; we may feel worried, but spiritual eyes show us that if we seek God He will take care of all our needs; and we may feel powerless, but spiritual eyes will focus on the power of God and His ability to give us strength.





## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 1



**Q1a:** What nation was an enemy of Israel?

**A1:** Syria

**Q1b:** Have you ever accidentally overheard a conversation about someone you know?

**TN:** When we overhear conversations, we often end up with information we weren't meant to have. But in the case of this story, God was letting Elisha listen in on the Syrian king's conversations about when and where they were going to attack Israel. God allowed this so Elisha could warn the king of Israel so they could avoid or be prepared for these attacks.

### SLIDE 2



**Q2a:** What did the king command his servants to do?

**A2:** The king commanded his servants to find out where Elisha was.

**Q2b:** Have you ever told someone a secret and the person didn't keep it?

**TN:** Students who have experienced this will understand the king's anger and disappointment. It was easy to assume that one of his trusted servants was giving Israel information about when and where they were planning to attack. But, as was the case in this story, the easy conclusion may not always be the truth. We should ask before we accuse.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 3



**Q3a:** When did the soldiers surround the city where Elisha was?

**A3:** In the middle of the night

**Q3b:** Why do you think the army came in the middle of the night?

**TN:** We don't really know the answer to this question, but it's likely they came in the middle of the night so they wouldn't be seen as they approached the city. Let's think about this plan for a bit. The Syrian army was ordered to capture a man who was able to hear every word of their military planning. It seems pretty likely that Elisha heard their plans to capture him, meaning it really didn't matter when they surrounded the city; they weren't going to have the element of surprise on their side!

### SLIDE 4



**Q4a:** Who was the first to see that the enemy soldiers had surrounded the city?

**A4:** Elisha's servant

**Q4b:** Have you ever played Hide and Go Seek?

**TN:** When the seeker is about to open the door to the closet where you're hiding, the only thing you can do is try to dodge him or her and run, but you know there isn't much chance that you won't get tagged. Elisha wasn't hiding from the enemy, and he probably wasn't surprised that the enemy was on their way to capture him. But Elisha's servant didn't have the knowledge that Elisha had, and seeing the enemy surrounding the city scared him.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 5



**Q5a:** What did Elisha pray?

**A5:** Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes would be open so he could see.

**Q5b:** Have you ever used a microscope?

**TN:** This question will help students to understand that things we cannot see do exist. We can't see microorganisms with the naked eye, and we can't literally see God's hand at work; but that doesn't mean they don't exist and God isn't at work. A microscope helps us to see microscopic bits of life, and Elisha's prayer helped his servant see that they were not alone to face the Syrian army.

### SLIDE 6



**Q6a:** What did Elisha's servant see?

**A6:** A heavenly army of horses and chariots of fire.

**Q6b:** Why did Elisha pray for his servant to see the heavenly army?

**TN:** Elisha knew God was there to protect him. He could have ended his efforts to encourage his servant when Elisha told him, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Words of encouragement from a knowledgeable leader are comforting, but seeing with his own eyes that a mighty army stood in his defense gave confidence and courage. It's easy to imagine that if Elisha ever comforted his servant again with the words, "Do not fear," his words carried a bit more weight.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 7



**Q7a:** What did Elisha pray God would do to the Syrians?

**A7:** He prayed God would blind them.

**Q7b:** Why did Elisha pray for his enemies to be blinded when a heavenly army was there to defend him?

**TN:** Asking for a way to stop the Syrian soldiers from entering into a battle with the heavenly army was an act of mercy, because, without a doubt, the Syrian soldiers would have been defeated.

### SLIDE 8



**Q8a:** What did Elisha advise the king of Israel to do with the Syrian prisoners?

**A8:** He advised the king to show the prisoners mercy.

**Q8b:** Why didn't Elisha just escape instead of leading the blinded Syrian prisoners to the king of Israel?

**TN:** Elisha prayed that the Syrian soldiers would be blinded rather than having them engage in a battle with the heavenly army of horses and chariots of fire. Instead of running away once his enemies were blinded and confused, he spoke to them and led them to the king of Israel. Once there, the king could have had them all killed, but Elisha advised the king to be merciful. So instead of killing them, the king had a feast in their honor and then let them go. Because of Elisha's continual acts of mercy toward those sent to capture and hurt him, the Syrians stopped attacking Israel. Seeing past his immediate concerns about his safety ultimately made life safer for Israel.





**MEMORY  
VERSE**

- ▶ **1 John 4:4:** Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

.....

**BIG IDEA**

- ▶ If God is for us, who can be against us?!

.....

**CLOSING  
PRAYER**

- ▶ Lord Jesus, please open our spiritual eyes. Help us to see the deceitful plans of the enemy so we can avoid his traps. Help us to see Your mighty power so that we can walk in strength and with confidence. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.





## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 1



The Syrians were enemies of Israel, and they were determined to destroy God's people. But God knew the secret plans of the enemy, and He gave the prophet Elisha the miraculous ability to hear every part of their wicked plan. Every time the Syrians made a move, the Israelites were able to avoid the king's traps.

### SLIDE 2



Every time the Israelites escaped, the king's frustration grew. He questioned even his own trusted servants, demanding: "Which one of you is a spy?" "None of us," replied one of the servants. "It is Elisha, that prophet in Israel. He tells the king of Israel everything—even the exact words that you speak in your bedroom!" The king was furious, "Go find out where he is so that I can capture him!"

### SLIDE 3



When the king of Syria found out where Elisha was staying, he sent a large number of armed men, chariots, and horses after him. In the middle of the night, the soldiers surrounded the city.

### SLIDE 4



When Elisha's servant stumbled out of his tent early the next morning, he couldn't believe his eyes! "I must be dreaming," he thought anxiously to himself. Everywhere he looked there were enemy soldiers and horses. They were completely surrounded! His heart sank in fear.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 5



“Elisha!” he cried, running back inside. “The enemy is upon us. What are we going to do?” Elisha could see the fear written on his servant’s face. “Don’t worry,” Elisha said calmly. “There are more mighty warriors fighting with us than all of those against us.” The servant saw nothing but the enemy, so Elisha prayed to God, “Please open my servant’s eyes so that he can see.”

### SLIDE 6



The Lord opened the eyes of his servant, and all at once, he saw a heavenly army of horses and chariots of fire. They were not alone after all! The armies of God were there to protect them. But the Syrians could not see that God was fighting against them, and they charged toward the prophet and his men.

### SLIDE 7



Elisha continued to pray, “Please, LORD, blind the enemy.” So God blinded the Syrians as Elisha had asked, and they stumbled around in confusion.

### SLIDE 8



Elisha said to them, “Let me lead you to the man you are looking for.” Then he led them to the king of Israel in Samaria, where they became his prisoners. At the advice of Elisha, the king of Israel showed them mercy and prepared a feast for them where they ate and drank, then he let them go free. After this, the Syrians gave up their attacks on Israel.