

A Servant Sees A Fiery Army

2 Kings 6:8-23

MEMORY VERSE

2 KINGS 6:17

“Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Construction paper, enough copies of the “Coat of Arms” template for each child in your class, scissors and markers.

A paper plate for each child, popcorn (popped before class) and three buckets or large bowls.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Who Am I?

In today’s lesson we will see an army of angels sent by God and ready to defend His children, Israel. Angels are ministers from the Lord who have helped God’s people in many different ways in the Bible. This game of “Who Am I” is a game where we can try to guess who the angel helped and where it is in the Bible.

See if the children can guess where the event is in the Bible and how the angel was used. The following are some examples:

I am a guard.

My weapon is a flaming sword.

Watching over a tree,

Who am I?

Answer: Genesis 3:24, the angel standing guard over the tree of life.

We came to a city.
To rescue a family.
Lost one to salt.
Who am I?

Answer: Genesis 19:15, the story of Lot and his family.

We had a parade.
Going up and down a ladder.
It was like a dream.
Who are we?

Answer: Genesis 28:12, Jacob and the ladder.

We came at night to a prison.
Picked a few locks.
Set a great man free.
Who am I?

Answer: Acts 5:19, Peter in prison is set free

Think of some additional examples to read. Use this to introduce the story for today that God is always at work in our lives and protects us!

LESSON TIME!

Israel is at war again! They had not obeyed God fully when Joshua brought the people of Israel to the Promised Land. God told them to destroy all of the other nations, but they didn't. So it ended up that they were constantly at war with the different peoples that still lived in the land. They also began to worship the idols and false gods of all the other nations, so sometimes God would judge them by having the other nations declare war upon them.

In today's story the Syrians are coming to destroy Israel. But we are going to see that despite Israel's disobedience that God still loves them and helps them. We'll see an example of God working

through an obedient servant to rescue His people once again from their enemies. We will also see today that the One True God who is in control of everything seen and unseen will help His people when they are in danger.

2 KINGS 6:8-12

Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp will be in such and such a place."

And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there."

Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice.

Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?"

And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."

"Now the king of Syria was at war with Israel." He was in constant consultation with his captains and commanders, making plans to capture the armies of Israel, and do damage to the nation of Israel. The Syrians were descendants of Noah's son Shem. These are the people who gave us the Aramaic language, which is what was spoken in Jesus' day (Genesis 10).

It was the man of God, Elisha, who warned the king of Israel many times, about where the king of Syria was going to strike next. It is to the king's credit that he listened to Elisha. But the king of Syria was enraged. Rage is more than an intense feeling. This king was having a fit of violent wrath. He would have instantly killed anyone he may have found betraying him; telling secrets of his to the enemy. He thought for sure a spy was working in his camp, because it seemed like everywhere they went the king of Israel knew about it. He wanted to know who it was!

His men knew it wasn't any of them. They were completely loyal to their king! They knew who to blame though, the man of God! They knew something fishy was going on. "The prophet tells the king of Israel the very words spoken in your bedroom." Only God knows the words we speak in our bedrooms, the most private things of our hearts. They knew there were unseen things that were working. They just didn't know yet that it was God who was sharing these secrets with His prophet so that the king of Israel could be warned.

There is nothing done in secret that God doesn't know about. He even knows our thoughts and the plans of our hearts. If the king of Syria was planning to hurt God's people, God knew about it and would let His people know. God knows everything about us, even how many hairs are on our heads. And, God protects those whom He loves--us! **God protects His children.**

2 KINGS 6:13-18

So he said, "Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him." And it was told him, saying, "Surely he is in Dothan."

Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city.

And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

The king of Syria thought he knew what to do next though. He would place a trap for Elisha! He figured that he would surround Elisha's hometown with a great force of soldiers and capture Elisha! Once Elisha was gone then he could start sneaking around again and destroy Israel's army. But it seems like Elisha knew they were coming. And he was at peace because He served God. He knew about the plans that the king had, and he still didn't leave Dothan.

But Elisha's servant sure was nervous! He saw himself surrounded with no way out! He must have thought, "We've had it now Elisha!" Well Elisha begins to pray, as usual. He saw the army of horses and chariots of fire that belonged to God. He knew by faith that God was going to take care of him. He had so much faith that he was able to see the "unseen" army that God had sent. He saw God's protection. **God protects His children.**

We don't know for sure if this army was an army of angels, but it was definitely God's army. The Bible has a lot to say about angels; what they're like; and what their purposes are in God's plan. Here are some things from the Bible that we know about angels:

- Angels are created beings (Colossians 1:16) who can speak audibly (Job 4) and can appear as men (Hebrews 13:2).
- They worship God (Revelation 5); and they are ministers of God (Psalm 103).
- They are ready and willing to do His bidding (Matthew 26:53).
- They execute God's judgment (1 Chronicles 21 & 1 Kings 19).
- They protect God's children (this passage, Psalm 91:1-2; Psalm 34:7).

Elisha prayed so the faith of his servant would be strengthened. Then he prayed again for blindness to fall of the enemies of Israel. What wisdom God gave to Elisha that he would choose to capture the enemies, not kill them. He knew God was in charge of everything and was doing a work in their lives.

God always protects those who are His. Even if we can't see with our own eyes how He might do it, He is still watching over us and protecting us. God loves you and me! **God protects His children.**

Coat of Arms

A coat of arms was kind of like a shield or crest that was used by families to show others a little bit about their families. Since we are in the family of God there are many ways that God has shown His faithfulness in our lives. He provides for us, protects us, loves us and has given us eternal life through Jesus. These are just to name a few.

We are going to make a coat of arms which can show different ways that God has been faithful in your life. You will need construction paper, copies of the enclosed template (enough for each child in your class), scissors and markers. Take one sheet of construction paper and cut into a shape of a shield, or crest. Next, divide the shield into four sections. In one section have the child write their name. In the other three sections have the children choose from the template three things that represent God's faithfulness in their lives, or they can make up their own.

The heart for example can represent God's love, the dove can represent the Holy Spirit, the cross represents Jesus dying for us to give us eternal life, the Bible represents how God speaks to us today. Encourage the children to come up with their own ideas and perhaps share together how the Lord has protected them.

2 KINGS 6:19-23

Now Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, nor is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria.

So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria!

Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?"

But he answered, "You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master."

Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.

Those men must have been awfully nervous at being on their way to capture the spy and then being struck themselves with blindness! They were separated from the main force and they had no backup. They followed willingly when the man of God said, "I'll lead you to the man you are looking for." They knew they were vulnerable. Elisha continued to rely on God.

As Elisha prayed yet again and the men could now see – did they ever have a surprise waiting for them! Inside Samaria, a walled city surrounded by forces of the enemy Israelites! Again the King of Israel looked to Elisha for wisdom in the situation. He knew only God could have brought this about! It would have been easy for him to put those prisoners to death; after all, it was wartime. But again, it was the man of God that had God's wisdom at hand.

Elisha knew that portion of God's law where God declares, "It is mine to avenge. I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near, and their doom rushes upon them" (Deuteronomy 32:35). He knew that killing them would only make matters worse.

His counsel was to give a great feast! How would you feel if you were set down at a feast; fed as a guest of honor; given back your weapon and sent back to your commander?! You sure would have quite a story to tell, wouldn't you?

What does this part of the story remind you of? It reminds us of Jesus who loved His enemies. He helped those who cursed Him and loved those who were against Him. What story could these soldiers tell about what happened?

'I was blind, but now I see.'

'I was hungry, they fed me. I was thirsty, they gave me water.'

'I was a prisoner, they freed me. I was sent back to you.'

The Bible does not say they sent the soldiers back with a message. But they had a "big" one! Those men came back with quite a story: a meeting with the Lord and His people. This is an example of how we need to represent Jesus. We should help those who are hurting and love those who don't know Jesus and are even enemies to Jesus. It is the love of God that leads to repentance.

They faced death and were spared. They were shown compassion and mercy by their enemies, the Israelites. He sure worked in their lives, didn't He? Verse 23 is proof that the king of Syria was affected deeply by these experiences. "So the bands from Syria stopped raiding Israel's territory." How the truth of the gospel of Jesus will affect us when we see how much He loves us.

What a mighty God we serve. The New Testament is full of experiences with the unseen world, like Elisha's servant had. Most of the work the Holy Spirit does in us is unseen. And there is a very powerful reminder from Paul in Ephesians 6:12-18 about the forces in the unseen world. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

We can remember this when we are afraid. When we are faced with a bully on the playground, when we are tempted to fight with our brother or sister, our Heavenly Father is in charge of everything and wants to protect us. Hallelujah! **God protects His children.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving that the Lord always protects them. Also they can commit to always trust in the Lord no matter what. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

Template - Coat of Arms

