

## 21.05 Two Food Miracles and a Floating Axe Head (2 Kings 4:38–44; 6:1–7)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] Brackets indicate a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. They also indicate answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- (Optional) Flannelgraph from CEF’s “Elisha” with an outside background that includes a river or lake
- A “wild vine” or squash vine; fresh gourds, if possible, or a squash [a picture of gourds is found at the end of this lesson]
- A large pot; a food shredder or knife
- A handful of cornmeal; pearl barley
- Enough bread “rolls” to feed about 1/5 of your class (should be flat, round, and about 5” in diameter if representing a Bible times “loaf”)
- For safety reasons, rather than have an actual axe or axe head, use the picture found at the end of this lesson.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *famine*: a time in which there is very little food
- *first fruits*: the first harvested grain, vegetables, *etc.*, offered to God
- *axe*: a tool used to chop wood. It has a handle and a metal axe head. [Discuss: “Would it be heavy? Will it sink in water?” “Could an axe float on top of the water?” (Optional: Demonstrate a stick floating, a cork floating, and a piece of metal sinking in a glass of water.)]

### Scripture: (ESV)

2 Kings 4:38 And Elisha came again to Gilgal when there was a famine in the land. And as the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, “Set on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.” 39 One of them went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and cut them up into the pot of stew, not knowing what they were. 40 And they poured out some for the men to eat. But while they were eating of the stew, they cried out, “O man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it. 41 He said, “Then bring flour.” And he threw it into the pot and said, “Pour some out for the men, that they may eat.” And there was no harm in the pot.

42 A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, “Give to the men, that they may eat.” 43 But his servant said, “How can I set this before a hundred men?” So he repeated, “Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, ‘They shall eat and have some left.’” 44 So he set it before them. And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.

6:1 Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “See, the place where we dwell under your charge is too small for us. 2 Let us go to the Jordan and each of us get there a log, and let us make a place for us to dwell there.” And he answered, “Go.” 3 Then one of them said, “Be pleased to go with your servants.” And he answered, “I will go.” 4 So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. 5 But as one was felling a log, his axe head fell into the water, and he cried out, “Alas, my master! It was borrowed.” 6 Then the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there and made the iron float. 7 And he said, “Take it up.” So he reached out his hand and took it.

8:1 Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, “Arise, and depart with your household, and sojourn wherever you can, for the Lord has called for a famine, and it will come upon the land for seven years.” 2 So the woman arose and did according to the word of the man of God. She went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Elijah had trained some men to become new prophets. He had schools of the prophets in Bethel and Jericho. [Locate all places in this lesson.] Elisha continued these schools and ✓perhaps started new ones.

How had God cared for Elijah during the three-year famine in Israel? [By ravens’ bringing him food, by water from the Brook Cherith, by the widow in Zarephath whose meal and oil never ran out.] What happened to that widow’s son? [He died.] How did he live again? [God raised him up through Elijah.]

How was Elisha cared for as he traveled from place to place? [By the Shunammite woman, who fed him and built him a room.] What happened to the woman’s son? [He died.] How did he live again? [God raised him up through Elisha.]

It looks to me as if some of the same things that happened to Elijah also happened to Elisha.

**Story:** [Teacher, do the actions as they are mentioned in this story: Get a big pot and gourds (preferably squash); shred “gourds” into the pot in which you have put vegetable soup or broth; ladle the soup out in bowls; put the soup back in the pot; put meal in the pot; again ladle out soup into the bowls.]

### ***Soup***

The school of the prophets continued to meet at Gilgal even though a famine ravaged the land. Elisha taught the men as they sat before him.

One day Elisha said to his servant, “Get a big pot of soup going so that we can feed these gentlemen.”

The servant did so, and one of the men went into a field to gather herbs for flavor. This man also found a wild vine [show vine] with some gourds on it. ✓“Hmmm!” he said. “This looks like a good vegetable for our soup. I’ll gather a bunch. . . . There. That’s a lapful.” He shredded or cut these gourds into the soup, not knowing what they were.

When the soup was cooked, the servant poured it out for the men to eat, and the men began to eat the soup. But while they were eating the soup, the men cried out, “O man of God, there is death in the pot!” What did they mean? That meant poison was in the soup. They could not eat it, or they would die!

Elisha commanded, “Bring me some meal.” [Let students examine some cornmeal.] Elisha threw the meal into the pot and said, “Now ladle it out to the men so that they may eat.” There was no more harm in the soup. God used Elisha to perform the miracle of making poison soup safe to eat.

### ***Bread and grain***

Another meal the one hundred sons of the prophets enjoyed during this famine became the opportunity for another miracle. A man had brought some food to them. It was the first fruits of his harvest of barley grain. He brought twenty loaves that probably looked something like this [show your “loaf”] and some grain like this [show pearl barley]. The problem was there was not enough for everyone to have a satisfying dinner. It was like giving each man only one-fifth of a roll. [Demonstrate.] Twenty rolls for all one hundred sons of the prophets would hardly be enough for any nourishment at all.

“Give to the men so that they may eat,” Elisha said to his servant.

“How can I set this ✓little bit before one hundred men?” asked the servant. “There isn’t enough.”

So Elisha repeated his orders: “Give the loaves to the men so that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, ‘They shall eat and have some left.’”

The servant put those few loaves before the men, the men ate, the men were full, and some of the loaves were left, just as the Lord had said through Elisha.

### ***Axe head***

Today we'll tell you about one more miracle. This time it's not about eating but about the construction business. Those sons of the prophets had to live in some kind of building while they were at Elisha's school. They said to Elisha, "See how small this building is for us to live in? It's just too small! Let's go to the Jordan River ✓ where there are lots of trees. Each one of us will get a log, and with those logs we'll put up a building so that we can live there by the Jordan."

"Go ahead," answered Elisha.

"Would you please come with us?" asked one of the men.

"I will go," Elisha answered.

There they were—one hundred men cutting down trees, using axes to fell the trees and to cut off branches so that they could make a nice building. I will pretend I am one of the men cutting down trees.

"Here we are. ✓ This looks like a nice straight tree right by the Jordan River. I'm sure glad my friend let me borrow his axe today because I don't have one. Let's get started." [Swing arms as if holding an axe as you speak, and "grunt" with each stroke.] I'll start right at the base of this tree. [Swing/grunt several times.] There. Now I've got a notch so that I can chop deeper into the tree. [Swing/grunt once or twice.] What happened?! Where's the axe head? Oh, no! It flew off the end of the handle and landed in the river!! What shall I do? Alas! my master, Elisha! It was borrowed!"

Elisha asked, "Where did it fall?"

"Right over there."

Elisha went over to the man's tree, pulled a stick off a branch, and threw it into the water where the axe head had sunk. Suddenly, something appeared on the water. What was it? Why, it was the axe head, and it was floating like a cork!

"Go get it," said Elisha. The man ✓ maybe got a limb, reached out, and ✓ dragged that axe head to shore. Elisha, by God's power, had performed another miracle!

### **Lessons from This Lesson:**

- We see Jesus:

The miracle of multiplying the bread to feed one hundred men reminds me of a miracle Jesus did. Jesus, however, started with fewer loaves than twenty and fed many, many more people. Five thousand men plus women and children had followed Jesus to hear Him preach and to see him heal people. No body but one boy had brought any lunch, and his lunch consisted of only two small fish and five rolls. (Think how many rolls it would take to fill a grown man if it took five to fill a young boy.) That was all the food there was in the whole big multitude of people—only five small loaves and two small fish!

Jesus organized the people into smaller groups and had His disciples hand out the bread and the fish. More than five thousand men, women, and children were filled up with the lunch that came from five small loaves and two small fish. They had food left over too. The Bible states there were twelve full baskets left over (Matthew 14:10–21).

At another time Jesus fed another four thousand men, and baskets of bread were left over.

Elisha's miracle, though on a much smaller scale than Jesus' miracle, was certainly still a miracle. Isn't our God awesome?!

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: gourds; pot; bread rolls; axe head and handle
- Snack: Have a “famine” snack—very small portions and very little water. If feasible, have a broth kind of soup and/or “loaves” of bread as described in the “Visuals and Tools” section above.
- Review Questions: (Game: Print the tree with four boxes and a line at the base found at the end of this lesson. Prepare the back of the picture for flannelgraph by gluing paper towel or flocked paper to the back. Cut on the lines to make four boxes, and cut the line across the base of the tree. Assemble the tree parts on a flannel board. Each student who answers a question correctly may remove one box from the tree. The last person to answer a question correctly may remove (“chop”) the trunk of the tree to make a log for a son of the prophets to use in making a house.)
  1. Name one thing Elijah did that Elisha also did. [Raised a dead boy to life; lived during a famine.]
  2. Why was there “death in the pot” of soup? [It had wild gourds that were poison.]
  3. How did Elisha make the soup good to eat? [By throwing in some meal.]
  4. How many small loaves of bread fed one hundred men? [Twenty.]
  5. How did the man get his borrowed axe head out of the water when it sank? [Elisha threw in a stick where the axe head sank, and the axe head floated to the top of the water.]

### Memory Verse[s]:

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. 6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. 7 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. 10 “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” 11 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

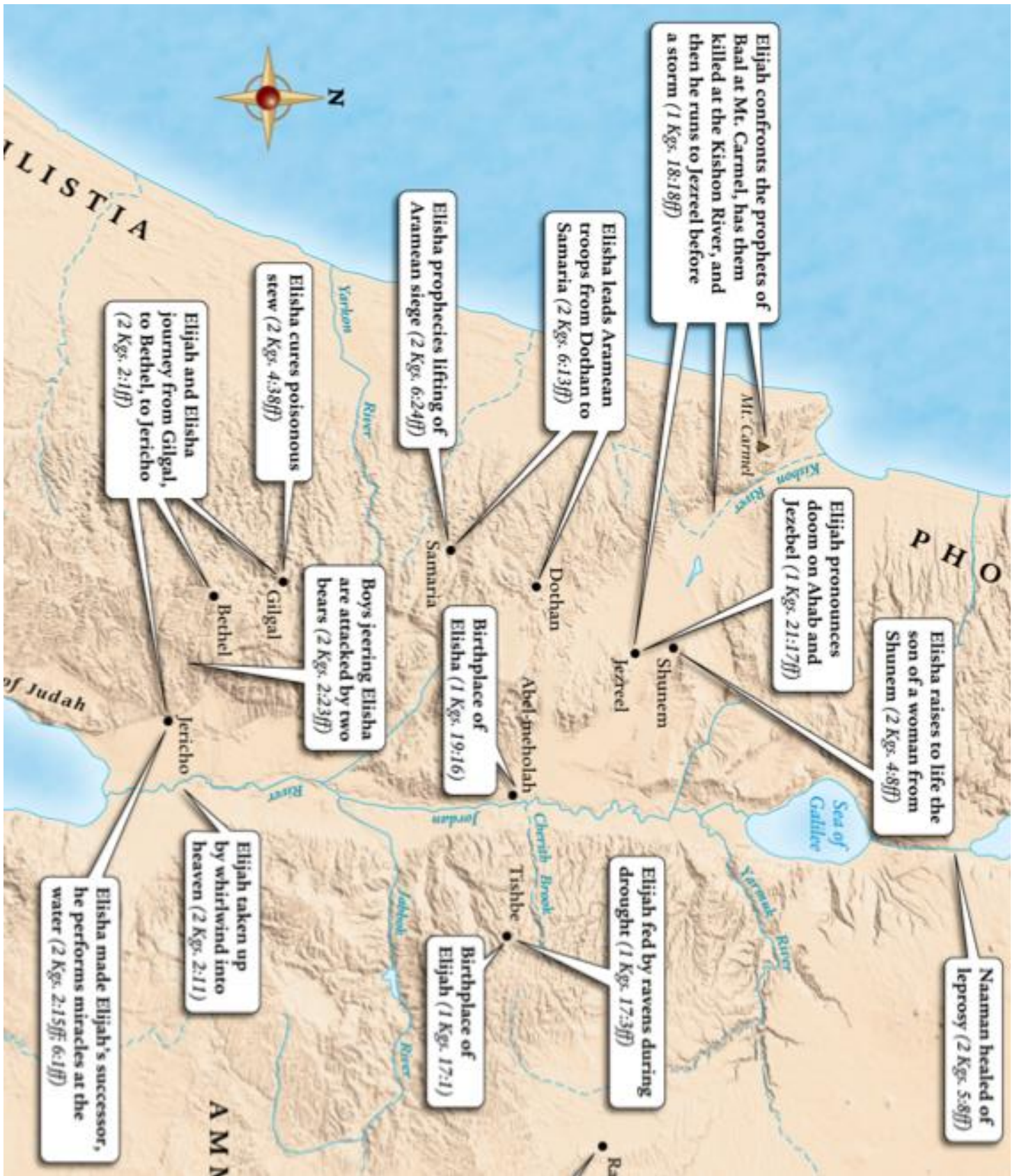
### Handwork:

- Print the picture found at [\(835\) Pinterest](#) and have the students color it.

**famine**

**first fruits**

**axe**



2 kings - What is the purpose of Elijah's travels? - Biblical Hermeneutics Stack Exchange





[Buffalo Gourd | Etsy](#)





[It Was Food Poisoning! | ThePreachersWord](#)





[Casting In The Meal | Dealing With The Death In The Pot \(newtestamentpattern.net\)](http://newtestamentpattern.net)



[Elisha Feeds 100 Men: A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twen... | Egészséges, Egészséges táplálkozás, Táplálkozás \(pinterest.ch\)](#)









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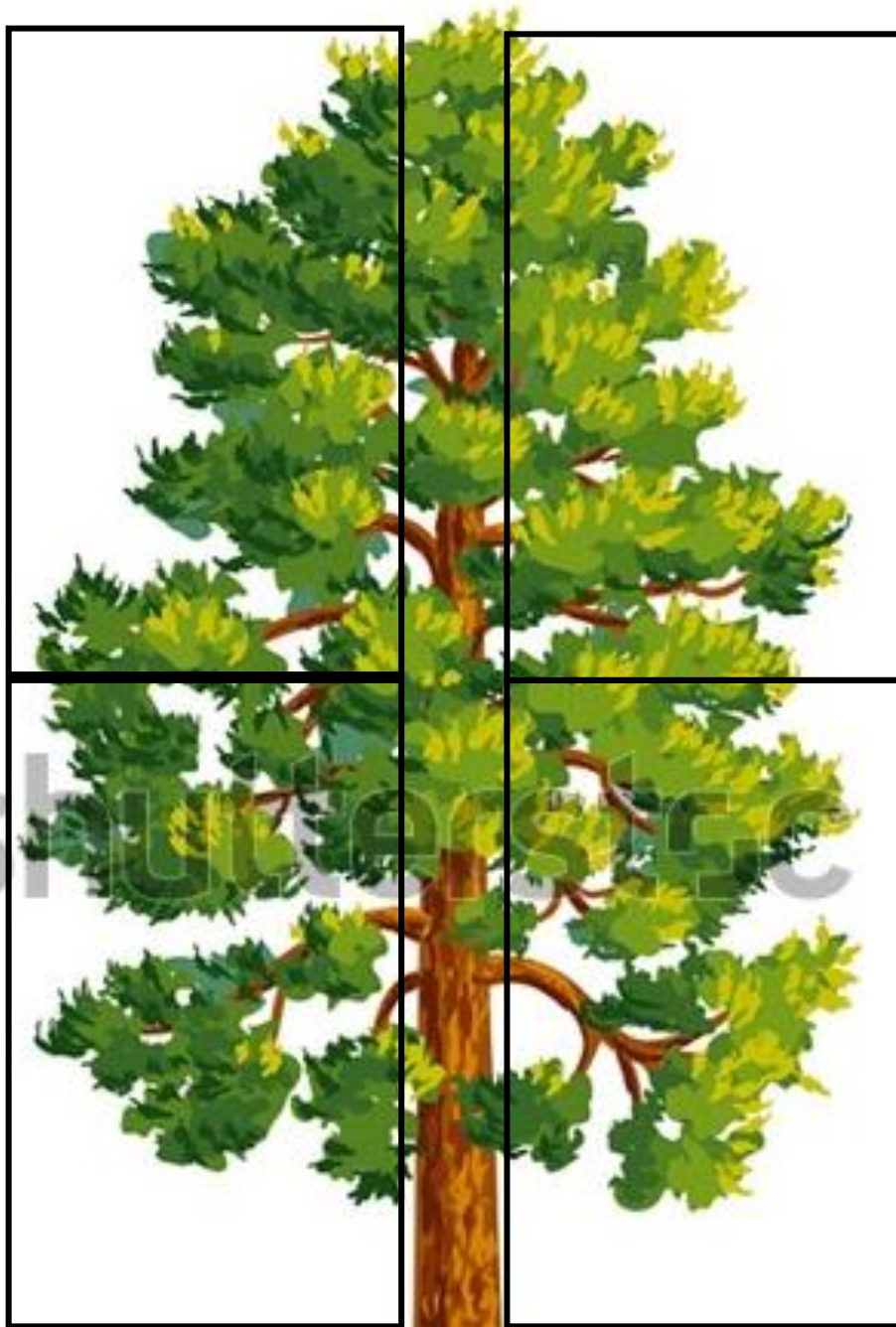
[The Miracle of the Floating Axhead – The Next Step Community \(findmynextstep.org\)](http://findmynextstep.org)





[The Miracle of the Lord Jesus Feeding 5,000 People: What Is His Will? \(hearthymn.com\)](http://hearthymn.com)





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