

Commander –in- Chief

Scripture: [Joshua 5: 13-15](#)

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?

And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?

And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.



Introduction:

The Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the United States is the President. All branches of the military ultimately answer back to him. Because of the structure of our government he is also responsible for the decisions concerning the protection of the people and properties of the United States of America. If things go wrong, he is burdened with the consequences of those decisions as well. Being Commander-in-Chief is a serious job. Sometimes the Commander-in-Chief makes decisions that some soldiers do not agree with, but their jobs are to carry out the orders handed down to them, nonetheless.

Just as our Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces is the President; we also have a Commander and Chief that we answer to as born-again Christians, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians are in an active warfare the Bible tells us.

Ephesians 6:12-16 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

And; your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking; the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God...

One of the biggest mistakes people of ALL ages make is that they do not believe this passage of scripture.

Somehow it is perceived as being poetical or symbolic because of the illustration the Lord chose to use, that is, of the Roman soldier's battle attire. But make no mistake, this is not put into the scripture to be read over quickly, or dismissed. No, the Lord has everything in the scripture for a purpose.

God wants you prepared and ready; not caught off-guard and vulnerable. He wants you prepared to carry out His orders, but most importantly, He wants you willing to do whatever He commands.

Joshua's Situation:

Joshua had already crossed the Jordan River in a miraculous way. The children of Israel had set up an altar in the camp at Gilgal on the Canaan side of the river in the Promised Land. God had already promised that He would give them the land; but they had some work to do.

Canaanites occupied the land that God had promised. These people were idol worshippers often sacrificing their babies and young children to their false gods. Excavations in the early 20th century found evidence that they would kill their first born and bury the child in the walls of the house for good luck. These were evil people unwilling to repent and turn to the Living God.

Joshua took a trip to Jericho, a great walled city to see if he could plan how to conquer it. Joshua's people, the children of Israel, were not trained warriors. They had been born in the wilderness, grown up as nomads in the wilderness, and the children of people who had been slaves in Egypt. They didn't know the first thing about warfare. It was impossible for them to devise a battle plan to defeat a great walled city.

Joshua has a very serious situation, now they were about to go take one of the best defended cities in the Promised Land. However, Joshua was not discouraged. God had promised victory and Joshua believed God.

Joshua's Strategy:

Joshua did not know how; but he did know WHO would conquer Jericho.

As Joshua approached the outskirts of Jericho he is planning and praying about what to do. Every plan that comes to his mind stops at those great walls: He doesn't know what to do. He needs God's direction. As he looks up ahead he sees a man in front of him with his sword drawn.

[Here I draw out a full sized two-edged Excalibur sword from its sheath].

Joshua is alone; what should he do? With great confidence, he approaches this man, disregarding the sword, and asks him a question: "Whose side are you on?"

WOW, the fellow had a sword drawn! I wonder if I would have had the nerve to approach him at all, much less ask him straight out, WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON, ANYWAY?

This man with the sword replies: "You are asking the wrong question; I am the Captain of the Lord of Hosts. I want to know if you want to be on MY side. I am the Captain that brought you out of Egypt and fought for you in the wilderness. If you want victory now in the Promised Land, you need to pay attention and serve under my command."

This man with the sword was GOD in the form of a mighty Captain in an army. Angels would never accept worship, but this "man" demanded it. He says that Joshua was on Holy Ground because he was in the presence of God. [\[verse15\]](#).

Joshua's strategy session was prayer and a walk down to the city to look it over. He was seeking direction from God and he got it; directly from GOD.

Sometimes in the Old Testament we see a "pre-incarnation" of Jesus. Remember that Jesus was present at creation; He always was and always will be. He is not a created being; He is as much God as God the Father. So for Him to show up occasionally in a human like form when He wanted to directly communicate with humans is not surprising. These recorded "happenings" are mostly in the Old Testament before Jesus came to earth as Savior and took on human flesh and before His ascension back to Heaven. After Jesus went back to Heaven 40 days after His resurrection we see the Holy Spirit given to the born-again believer. Now He, God, dwells inside the born-again believer in His form as the Holy Spirit. But in the Old Testament times the Holy Spirit did not come to live inside of every believer.

Joshua's Success:

Joshua had a situation: He had taken the children of Israel across the Jordan into Canaan. There was no going back now. He trusted God to part the Jordan River. Now he must trust God to deliver the land to them.

Joshua had a strategy: Pray and seek God's direction. God literally showed up to reassure him and give him a battle plan.

Now Joshua's success depended on one thing: Obeying his Commander-in-Chief, the Captain of the Host of Heaven, the Lord God Himself.

God did not leave Joshua guessing on what to do next; by the way, God won't leave you guessing either. When it is time, He will make the path clear as day. Trusting and seeking Him is the key. Instead of telling God **your plan** and asking for Him to bless it; ask God for **His plan** that He is already blessing.

God's plan may not always seem rational especially to others that have not been seeking His will. What God asked Joshua to do next sounds silly and irrational for a battle plan. But God was sending a message to the Canaanites about who He is. He is the True and Living God.

The Captain of the Host directly tells Joshua to march around the outside of the walls of Jericho once every day for six days. Then on the seventh day to march around the walls seven times and have the priests blow seven trumpets. Then have everyone shout and then the wall of the city will fall down flat.

Can you imagine this parade around the outside of this walled city? For seven days people must have gathered up on the wall of Jericho just watching this march of thousands and thousands of people. It must have been an amazing sight. I am sure that some of the Canaanites were making fun of the religious "kooks" outside of the wall. Others were probably scared and wondering what was going to happen.

But on Day Seven there was no more speculation as they marched around a full seven times instead of one; then the trumpets sounded; the people shouted; the walls went down flat or "in place" as the original Hebrew suggests.

The children of Israel easily walked into Jericho and destroyed the city as the Lord had instructed.

Conclusion:

Joshua had a situation.

Joshua sought the Lord for the strategy to solve the situation.

Joshua had success because he followed the Lord's instructions.

Same formula works today; God does not change; He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

(Present salvation here.)

As a side note the story of Rahab is interesting to note as a separate lesson: she and her household escape the judgment of the Lord and are saved out alive because of her trust in the Lord early on when the first spies came to check out Jericho. She ends up married to one of Caleb's sons and is in the direct line of King David and eventually the birth of Jesus. What a redemption story! [*Rahab married Salmon – Matthew 1:5. Caleb's son, Salmon, is mentioned in I Chronicles 2:51 so if this is the same Salmon, then she is the mother of Boaz who marries Ruth. From their union comes Obed then Jesse then King David*]