

Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 8: The Commander (5:13-15)

It had been three days since all of Israel had observed the Passover and not a word of instruction had come from the Lord. The people were growing anxious— the fighting men were healed, and the enemy was undoubtedly watching. The Lord had promised to fight this battle, but when? how? As they waited, countless scenarios played out in their minds. But as Joshua looked upon the great city walls, he knew only One had the answers and the ability to win this fight.

"O Lord, oppose those who oppose me. Fight those who fight against me. Put on Your armor, and take up Your shield. Prepare for battle, and come to my aid. Lift up Your spear and javelin... Let me hear You say, 'I will give you victory!'"(NLT). *"Let them be like chaff before the wind, and let the Angel of the Lord chase them"* (Psalm 35:1-3, 5).

And then at just the right time, He appeared as Joshua needed to see Him. Dressed for battle, with His sword drawn, Joshua knew that the Lord *wanted* to fight this battle; He came to fight *his* battle. All he must do is surrender it to Him.

Read Joshua 5:13-15.

1. How do you tend to approach battles, or confrontations?
2. Where was Joshua? Why was he alone? What was he doing? What thoughts might he have been entertaining?
3. Describe the man's appearance. Initially, what seemed to be His intention?
4. What does Joshua's question reveal about his physical stance?

5. What evidence confirms that this is the Lord? (Consider Acts 10:25-26, and Revelation 19:10.) Why might it have taken Joshua a moment to realize this? (Read Isaiah 53:2-3, John 1:14.)

6. Why was Jesus' sword drawn? What might this symbolize? (Consider the state of the Israelites.)

7. "*Are you for us or for our adversaries?*" (v.13) Why is this often the first question we ask God when engaging in a battle?

8. What description is given of the Lord in Exodus 15:3, Isaiah 55:4, and Hebrews 2:10?

9. What does Jesus' reply reveal about His ultimate purpose? (See John 3:16-17 and 1 Timothy 2:5-6.)

10. If He had replied differently, what would that mean for you and me?

11. What army was the Lord commanding? (Consider 2 Kings 6:8-17 and Matthew 26:53.)

12. What sort of battle was this? (See 2 Corinthians 10:4 and Ephesians 6:12.)

13. Return to Joshua. What is the Commander's responsibility in the upcoming battle? What is Joshua's?
14. What is revealed about Joshua's character and relationship with the Lord?
15. "*What does my Lord say to His servant?*" (Joshua 5:14) What was Joshua's earnest desire? Do you think Christ's response was what he was seeking? How would you have felt if He responded to your inquiry in this manner?
16. Read Psalm 27:1, 56:9, 118:5-8, Romans 8:31, and Hebrews 13:6. Why must this knowledge succeed detailed instructions?
- "It is enough to know that God continues to encourage His servant by demonstrating that His presence is not simply a matter of words."
17. Of what must the Commander's statement have reminded Joshua? Read Exodus 3:5.
18. Why was it important for the Lord to appear to Joshua at this moment, and as a Commander?
19. How does the Lord describe Himself according to Exodus 3:14? Also read John 8:58. What does this title mean to you?

20. Matthew Henry has said, "He here appeared as a soldier, with His sword drawn in His hand. To Abraham in his tent He appeared as a traveler; to Joshua in the field, as a man of war. Christ will be to His people what their faith expects and desires" (Matthew Henry).ⁱ Do you agree with his words? Why or why not?
21. Select a couple of the subsequent passages and meditate on the following: How does Christ manifest Himself to the individuals in Genesis 18:1-15, 16-33, 32:24-30, Judges 6:1-24, 13:1-23? Each time He appears, how does He relate to the individual? What is His overarching purpose?
22. How did these encounters change the individual?
23. Per Joshua 5:15, in what position do we find Joshua to receive the Lord's instructions? Why must all battles be approached in this manner?

ⁱ Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). (1909). *Joshua* (p. 92). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.