

THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S ARMY

We are using the phrase, "Now it came about," to divide chapter 5 into the following three studies (Josh.5:1, 8, and 13).

- Josh.5:1-7 Circumcision of the men of war
- Josh.5:8-12 Celebration of Passover in Land
- Josh.5:13-15 Captain of the Lord's army

We will examine our lesson text by the following three homiletical points.

- Josh.5:13 Sword challenge
- Josh.5:14 Servants captains of two armies
- Josh.5:15 Sandals command (nashal / kal impv) and commissioning

This lesson will study six aspects of the Captain of the Lord's Army meeting with Joshua at Gilgal.

1. The captain of the Lord's army had been sent from heaven to the front line for a military strategy with Joshua regarding the first battle of the Conquest of the land – "Now it came about." (Josh.5:13)

Joshua was pre-occupied with military reconnaissance of Jericho when he encountered the Captain of the Lord's Army: "that he lifted (nasa/ kal impf) his eyes and looked (raah / kal impf) and behold (hinneh / suddenly / someone broke perimeter security), a man was standing (amad / kal ptc) opposite (in front of / confronted Joshua) him with his SWORD drawn (shalaph / kal pass ptc) in his hand" (Josh.5:13).

Joshua immediately challenged him as friend or foe – "Are you for us or for our adversaries." (Josh.5:13)

Lesson for Joshua to learn: Joshua's biggest challenge is the **faith cycle** of the truth of the word of God – "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you nor forsake you." (Josh.1:5)

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you whatever you go." (Josh.1:9)

2. God sent the Captain of the Lord's Army to reassure success in the initial battle of the Conquest of the Land. It was important that it be conducted according to the plan of God.

It was also important for spiritual propaganda throughout the land of Canaan (Josh.2:9-11, 24; 5:1; 6:2, 27) "And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." (Josh.2:11)

The captain of the Lord's army will lead the military strategy in the battle of Jericho (Josh.6:1-5). It means that God has committed the heavenly army to the success of the campaign against Jericho.

They are there to support Israel's army like with King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:32-36) and like with Jesus Christ (Matt.27:53-54).

3. The Captain of the Lord's army is also there to commission Joshua as leader of the priest-nation like Moses: "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy." (Josh.5:15)

Burning bush at Mt. Horeb: "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." (Ex.3:5)

Why is it a place holy? Is it because Mt. Horeb and Gilgal are holy? Or is it because of the presence of the angel of the Lord? (Acts 7:30-37) Do you know where the holy place is in the church age?

Body temple of the Holy Spirit: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been brought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor.6:19-20)

4. The Captain of the Lord's army is called a theophany in theology. The English word theophany consists of two Greek words (theos / God) and (phaneros / visible appearance).

Theophany is a theological word and a biblical concept. "Theophany is the manifestation of God to man by actual appearance." (Westminster Dictionary, pg.600)

"Theophany is the manifestation of the second member of the Godhead in visible and bodily form before His incarnation." (Chafer, vol.5, pg.31)

"Behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand." (Josh.5:13/ theophany)

5. Under Old Covenant, a theophany could be revealed by several forms of divine revelation.

- Dreams (Gen.20:3; Job 33:14-15)
- Trances (Acts 10:10-13, 17; 11:5)
- Visions (Gen.15:1-2; Matt.17:2, 9)
- Angels (Gen.18:1-2; Luke 2:9-13)
- Inanimate objects (Ex3:2-5; 13:21-22; Acts 7:30-33)
- Angel of the Lord (Gen.16:7-13; 22:11-18; 31:11-13; 32:24-32)

The angel of the Lord is believed to be the pre-incarnate Christ: "And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ." (1 Cor.10:4)

"I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35, 31-35, 41, 50-5, 58)

6. Theophany was proof of the pre-existence of Christ. The incarnation was proof of the existence of Jesus as the Christ. Christophany will be proof of the post-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (John 5:58) (John 1:1-5, 10-18; 3:13, 31; 6:38-41; 1 Cor.8:6; Col.1:15-17; 1 Tim.6:15-16; 2 Tim.1:8-10; Heb.1:1-3).

"For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you." (1 Pet.1:20)

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'" (Rev.1:8; 21:6-7; 22:13)

"And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." (1 John 5:20)