

ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

The commander of the Lord's army met with Joshua prior to the battle of Jericho with instruction on warfare (Josh.5:13-15). It was at this meeting that Joshua was given the Cherem war ban: "But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban (cherem), lest you covet them and take some of the things under the ban, so you would make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it." (Josh.6:18)

Achan, of the tribe of Judah violated the cherem war ban at the battle of Jericho and God placed Israel under the discipline of accursed at the battle of Ai (Josh.7:16-26).

The commander of the Lord's army met again with Joshua prior to the second campaign against Ai (Josh.8:1-2). Once again, the commander of the Lord's army outlined victory to Joshua: "I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land." (Josh.8:1)

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of what it means to be a Soldier in the Lord's Army.

1. This commander of the Lord's army was the pre-incarnate Christ ministering to the priest-nation of Israel, the Divine Agency of the Jewish age (Ex.19:6).

You will recall that in the first meeting with Joshua, the commander of the Lord's army drew his sword on him (Josh.5:13-14). This is serious business.

Moses described Him in Ex.15:3 – "The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is His name."

There were other occasions when the commander of the Lord's army drew the sword on others. He drew it on Balaam in Num.22:31-33 and on Israel in Ezek.21:1-5.

You do not want the Lord to draw his sword against you. He drew it against Israel in the first campaign against Ai because of Achan's sin (Josh.7:11-15) [sin unto death / 1 John 5:16].

2. The incarnate resurrected Lord Jesus Christ is the commander of the Lord's army in the church age.

When Peter drew the sword against the Plan of God, Jesus rebuked him with these words: "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?" (Matt.26:52-54)

Christians are instructed to put on the **full armor of God** as soldiers in the Lord's army in order "to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." (Eph.6:10-17) [Sword of Spirit, the word of God] (1Pet.5:8).

In the church age, the church fights a spiritual war, not a flesh and blood war. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, **but** against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph.6:12)

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses." (2 Cor.10:3-4)

3. The Lord Jesus Christ always fights for those under His command. We learn this in both the OT and NT (Rom.8:37-39).

When Pharaoh's army trapped Israel at the Red Sea, Moses gave these words of encouragement to Israel: "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent." (Ex.14:13-14)

Moses: "When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you." (Deut.20:1)

"For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you." (Deut.20:4)

This will be true of our commander-in-chief mounted on the white horse whose name is King of Kings and Lord of Lords coming to wage war in the Tribulation (Rev.19:11-16).

4. The commander of the Lord's army told Joshua that victory was already promised.

"Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it in your hands.'" (Josh.8:18)

This victory is called positional truth (PT) based on a promise from the Word of God. Their victory was already in the heart of the Lord. It is now only a matter of experiencing the victory by faith in the hearts of the Israelites (2 Cor.5:7; 1 Tim.6:12; 2 Tim.4:7).

"Through God we shall do valiantly, and it is He who will tread down our adversaries." (Ps.60:12; 1 Pet.5:8)

"And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith." (1 John 5:4)

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ." (2 Cor.2:14; Col.2:15)

5. Every Christian must decide to make soldiering in the angelic conflict a career.

"Suffer hardship (sugkakopatheo) [under combat conditions] with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." (2 Tim.2:3)

As soldiers of Jesus Christ, we must always be on active duty. "But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and **fellow soldier**, who is also your messenger and minister to my needs." (Phil.2:25)

"And to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus **our fellow soldier**, and to the church in your house." (Philemon 2)

As soldiers of Jesus Christ, we must never go AWOL. "I am amazed that you are so quickly **deserting** (deserting in the face of the enemy) Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel." (Gal.1:6)

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