

Welcome/ Introduction/ Bibles/ Guatemala team

Joshua 5:13-15

Background/context:

This is a major transitional time for the people of Israel. Moses and Aaron have died. The entire generation that left Egypt has died due to their lack of faith & blatant disobedience. Everyone that is, but Caleb and Joshua. Joshua has been commissioned by God, and he has assumed command of the people of Israel. He has been repeatedly told by God to be strong and courageous and that he will be with him as he was with Moses.

And now the Israelites are on the edge of the Promised Land. This is it. Here we go. Finally. This is what they have been waiting for—certainly for 40 yrs., but even much longer based on the promise made to Abraham some 600+ yrs. previously.

You will see in the first few chapters of Joshua that he prepares the people for this historic time: He send two spies into Jericho to scout things out—the first city they encounter and a fortified city, after which God parts the Jordan River just like he did with the Red Sea. Joshua then has the new generation circumcised. And in doing so, God removes their shame, and reestablishes the covenant with his people. And then they observe Passover for the first time in the new land. After which the manna disappears, and they get to eat the fruit of the land—the land flowing of milk and honey—and land of abundance and blessing.

And then these three “little” verses show up.

¹³ **When Joshua was by Jericho,** (Maybe Joshua is once again considering his options and how he is going to take this fortified city) **he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?”** ¹⁴ **And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.”** (I am with you Joshua like I said I would be) **And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?”** ¹⁵ **And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.**

See Jesus as he is (13-14a)

- **Present in the Old Testament** ¹³ **When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand.**

We tend to think of Jesus only showing up on scene at Christmas time. Little baby Jesus, swaddling clothes—*silent night, holy night*. I would beg to differ. *In the beginning was Jesus and Jesus was with God and Jesus was God*. In the beginning of time, at the beginning of creation there was Jesus. And then keep going back and he has always been just like the Father and the Holy Spirit.

And that makes him present all throughout the OT. Like here in this passage. This is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.

A theophany—is a visible display to human beings that reveals the presence and character of God. This is a divine encounter with the second person of the Trinity. And in this instance he appeared as a temporal man with a sword and talked to Joshua.

And he reveals himself as the commander of the armies of the Lord. He is General Jesus. He is the general of the army that surrounds his people.

In **2 Kings** is one of the most amazing stories, I think, in all of the Bible. Elisha the Prophet, is being hunted by the Syrian army. And when Elisha's servant wakes up to see the vast army outside surrounding them, he freaks out.

2 Kings 6:¹⁵ When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” ¹⁶ **He (Elisha) said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”** ¹⁷ **Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” So, the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.**

Jesus is the general of that army. He commands the armies in the unseen realm. They answer to him. This is no metaphoric statement by Jesus. He is literally General Jesus.

Now just to be clear, his name isn't “yet” Jesus. That name was given to him at his human birth when as fully God he became *permanently* fully man. For our sake, I call him Jesus because that's how we know him. The name Jesus actually being the Greek translation of the Hebrew name Joshua.

Making Joshua a foreshadowing of the future Messiah—Joshua is an imperfect deliverer, conqueror, and commander, that points to the perfect deliverer, conqueror and commander. Who happens to be standing face to face with Joshua.

Maybe you are like me, and you ask the question when you read a narrative like this: *Why doesn't Jesus do this now?* We have someday to look forward to when we see face to face. But I believe he is. maybe not physically, but he IS still appearing.

First off, I believe a lot of the accounts being put forth of Jesus appearing to people in dreams across the world. Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims, just to name a few, are being visited by Jesus in their dreams. Jesus is revealing himself in order to draw men and women unto himself.

But a dream doesn't *save*. So, it doesn't negate the responsibility of the church to go. We need to go, so those that Jesus visits are provided the Word of God in their language in order to be saved. Many times, Jesus even instructing people where to go to find his Word.

But as incredible as that is, he IS present right now. I believe he is revealing himself to us even now as I speak.

Our sight right now is by faith. Someday our faith will be sight.

But he is present. 1. He is the very Word of God.

2. As the church gathers he is among us. If we gather to worship him, why wouldn't he be here? Which is just another reason for you to be present here with the church.
3. But he is also present right now within you, *IF* you are his. He indwells you. Which makes him always present which why he says he will never leave you nor forsake you.

In the middle of the night—he is *present*. Alone and frustrated with the kids during the day—he is *present*. Single and lonely—he is *present*. We just need eyes to see and hearts to believe it to be true.

See Jesus as he is—he is present and see him as...

- **In Charge**

And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?”

(“who goes there, friend or foe?” he’s a bit worried especially considering the guy has his sword drawn) ¹⁴ And he said, “No;(this isn’t a yes or no question) **but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.**”

I think Jesus is very quickly revealing to Joshua that he is someone more than who Joshua thinks he is. And he quickly puts Joshua in his place. I am in charge, not you. And I answer to no man. I only answer to the God of the Universe. Which by the way I am.

Jesus is in charge. That’s what we mean by Lord. We answer to him, not the other way around. We need to see him clearly and not get confused that he somehow exists to be at our beckoned call. He is Lord. And he alone is in charge. And we need to submit to him.

But that doesn’t mean he isn’t for us. We need to see Jesus...

- **Fighting for us**—The battle is the Lord’s revealed by the fact the

Jesus is standing there with a drawn sword.

We had our three grandkids last week over the 4th of July and I was sharing with the two oldest(6&3) what Papa was preaching about and 6yr old Cyrus asked, “does Jesus always have a sword?” What a good insightful question. To be honest, I struggled to answer it! I was stumped by the theological question of a 6-yr old!

So, it sent me on a mission to discover what the Bible said about God/ Jesus fighting for us. First off, in the OT Jesus is appearing in various guises to his people. *He comes to his people as they need him*. To Abraham as a friendly traveler that sat and ate lunch with him. To Hagar he came as a comforter to the outcast. To Jacob he came as a wrestler to pin the rebel into submission. To the boy Samuel the Word of God came and stood and spoke to him. To Shadrach, Meshach and Abendigo, he came as their deliverer in the fiery furnace. To us he came as a perfect and suffering Messiah. Jesus shows up on scene as we need him.

But, nonetheless, the Bible is clear that he also fights for us. The battle is the Lord’s.

Exodus 14:13-14

And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

Deuteronomy 20:4

for the Lord your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.’

Psalm 35:1

Contend, O Lord, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me!

Romans 8:31

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Not to mention Eph. 6 where we are told to “**be strong in the Lord and the strength of his might...as we put on the whole armor of the Lord.**”

He still fights for us—he is still defeating sin and setting us free. He fights for us and protects us against the schemes and attacks of the evil one.

He is the fierce warrior who protects and defends his people.

Our Jesus is no weak effeminate hippy. No, he is the warrior who commands the armies of the Lord. It would do us good to better realize that and have our eyes opened to the greater reality around us.

He is present, in charge and fighting for us. See Jesus as he is and ...

Worship Jesus how he deserves (14b), And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped

- **Immediately**

Once Joshua realized who he was speaking to, he immediately responds in worship. *Encountering Jesus should always elicit worship. Always.* He deserves nothing short of immediate worship from those who know him.

Is that true of your life? Let’s just take here and now...is your worship immediate when you walk in here?

When you encounter the praise to and the exaltation of Jesus, does it elicit immediate worship?

You don’t need to see Jesus physically in order to worship him properly.

He deserves it right now, and tomorrow and every day and everywhere.

- **Wholly** And Joshua fell on his face to the earth—is there any other response than immediate and whole-body worship? I’m not saying throw yourself on the floor, but I am saying your worship should include all of you.

Men, let me speak to you specifically. Many of you have heard this from me before, but it bears repeating: Men worshipping unashamedly is an absolute need within the church. The church needs men worshipping without reservation for the glory of God. Real, godly men worship their King. (Joshua)

It’s our obligation to sing and to lead in worship. It’s not the quality of your voice, but the purity of your heart that matters. So, make that right and then open your mouth, raise your hands and get at it.

If you are married. If you have a family, one of the best ways to lead them is to openly worship in front of them.

If you are a single man, the best way to lead the church, those around you, is to openly worship in front of them.

We need to get over ourselves, get our hands out of the pockets, open our mouth and engage our mind in who has appeared in front of us.

Just to be clear, that is Christ our King,...not Calvin or Shane or any other man or women, but God himself. That is who is being lifted up for the purpose of praise from us.

Worship him how he deserves and...

Give Jesus what he requires (5:15) and the first thing he requires is

- **Holiness**

¹⁵ And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy."

This is Joshua's burning bush. And that is nearly exactly what he said to Moses from a burning bush. Jesus shows up again and the very ground that he stands on is set apart by him and for him. That's what holiness is--being set apart *by* God and *for* God. And God's presence is what makes something holy.

The appropriate request to Joshua is to remove his sandals. Sandals were considered universally unclean. Joshua, along with Moses is told to get barefoot. Taking the sandals off was not only a symbolic gesture of respect and honor but it was the idea of acknowledging one's uncleanness in light of the sacredness and holiness of God. Acknowledging the need if you will to be cleaned by Jesus. Think Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

God alone is holy. And yet we are told to be holy as he is holy. So, any holiness we have is a gift from God through Jesus imparted by the HS. Though the power and penalty of sin has been removed from our life, the presence of sin still very much exists.

So, the command to Joshua is still the call to every believer today: take off your uncleanness. The Holy Spirit now indwells you, so remove the impurity from your life. Repent. Turn from sin and love righteousness.

"Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing in God's judgment, hating what He hates, loving what He loves, and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word." — J.C. Ryle, [Holiness](#)

In fact, J.C. Ryle goes on to say that even though we have been blessed with a divine peace we still war against our flesh. We *fight* against our sin. We make the Holy Spirit a reality in our flesh.

Give Jesus what he requires—he demands holiness and certainly closely related...give Jesus your...

- **Obedience** (expects) **And Joshua did so.**

Jesus spoke. As the commander, he commanded. And Joshua knew well enough that there was only one response. Obedience. **Joshua did so.**

Not to mention **6:1-6**—which is a continuation of this visit. Jesus lays out the specific instructions to take Jericho. Crazy instructions. Jesus basically telling Joshua the battle is the Lord's! And Joshua was to simply obey. If he did what he was being told to do, things would go well him and the people.

Which Joshua really had no choice because they weren't taken this city on their own.

End of v14--**"What does my lord say to his servant?"** Not my will be done Lord, but your will be done. Not just a good thing to ask for Joshua, or Jesus to pray while in the garden, but a prayer for every believer, every day. Tell me what your will is for me to do.

Jesus very clearly says in **John 14:15**

¹⁵ **"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.**

The greatest expression of your love for him, is doing what he says to do. The best way to show your love for him is *not* doing what he says not to do. And the best way to know both of those things is by knowing the Word.

Jesus requires, demands holiness and obedience.

Because Jesus is commander. He is Lord. And he is present right here and right now. So, let's see him as he is. Give him what he wants and worship him how he deserves.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 1 Thessalonians 4:3

There's a great place to start when it comes to obedience. Abstaining from sexual immorality. Fleeing from any sexual activity outside the confines of marriage. No hesitation. No questioning. No compromise. No feigning ignorance. Just obedience.