



THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD

**“No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
(Joshua 1:5)**

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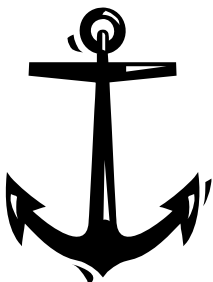
By Joshua



I once had a friend who thought it would be great to be a soldier, wear a uniform and march in parades. He joined the army to travel and have prestige, but before long he changed his mind. The training was hard and there was an enemy who was trying to kill him! Often God's people are just like that: they commit to follow God and live for Him, thinking of all the benefits this will have for them. Then they realize they are in a battle, and there is an enemy trying to destroy them. When you desert Satan's army and join God's army, you shouldn't be surprised that you are in the middle of a conflict. This is true of all God's people.

It was true of me, too. My name is Joshua. I was involved in much warfare in my time. All who desire to live for God are. In my day it was the Egyptians and the Canaanites we fought. In your day you are still battling God's enemies, but they are different. You battle Satan and his forces, the flesh (your sin nature, that natural tendency to be selfish, prideful and self-centered) and the world system with its ungodly system of priorities and values. The weapons that were used against us were swords, spears and arrows. Weapons used against you are greed, selfishness, fear, lust, anger and pride. What I went through physically is a picture of what you go through spiritually (1 Cor 10:11; Rom 15:4).

This battle is really between God and Satan. It just spilled over to this planet and is carried out here on earth. It started in Eden when Satan started attacking God's people because He couldn't defeat God Himself. He started with Adam and Eve, then attacked Cain. He hit everyone until God wiped out all but Noah in the flood, then Satan went after the people after the flood. He got them to build Babel. God then chose one man to make into a special nation to reveal Himself to the world. That man, Abraham, then was bruised. Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were all beaten by Satan. Eventually the new nation ended up captive in Egypt (a picture of the world) helpless slaves of Pharaoh (a picture of Satan). God intervened



and delivered us by the innocent blood of the Passover Lamb (a picture of Jesus' work on the cross). He defeated our enemies at the Red Sea (a picture of His resurrection power). From then on we were in a battle. In Egypt we weren't in any battle, we were helpless victims with no power to fight back. Before salvation you aren't in the same kind of battles you are in afterwards. With salvation you get many new things, but one of them is a new enemy. We all get that.

I was born a slave in Egypt. I remember the Passover and deliverance through the Red Sea. I saw all the miracles of God's deliverance. My name means "Jehovah is salvation," the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word "Jesus." I was a soldier in Pharaoh's army. That's why Moses chose me to lead the Jews in our battle with Amalek (a picture of the flesh) soon after we crossed the Red Sea.

God's enemies are our enemies when we are on His side, and they can seem formidable! The giants in the land caused most of the other spies as well as the people to run in fear, so we had to wander in the desert for 40 years. Then, when the older generation had died, God chose me to lead the new generation into the land (Joshua 1:1). Following such a well-known, successful leader like Joshua was not easy. I myself couldn't do it. It was only God's power that enabled me to lead our people to victory. I had to totally rely on God's promises in order to have victory. God promised He would give us the land (1:2), but we had to move out in faith and fight the battles to take it. "I will give you every place where you set your foot" (1:3,4; Deut 11:24; Gen 12:1-7). The land was ours – but we had to set our foot there. The Canaanites who were living there would do their best to prevent that!



Fortunately God promised He would fight our battle through us. He guaranteed victory for us (1:5). God promises you that you will never be alone, either (Gen 28:15; Rom 8:38-39; Ex 33:14). Because of this we didn't have to fear (1:6), and neither do you (Ps 118:6; 23:4; Isa 41:10; Dt 31:6; Mt 14:27). Of course God expected us to obey Him in everything (1:7-8) for if we were in disobedience we would be cut off from His power and protection.

He told me "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (1:9). That was what I rested my hope on. God has promised you, too, that he will meet all your needs (Ps 84:11; 23:1-3; Phil 4:19; Heb 13:5), that He will guide you (Ps 48:14; 32:8; Prov 3:5-6) and that He will be your strength for whatever comes (Phil 4:13; II Cor 12:9; Dt 33:25; Isa 40:29). He promises you victory in your battles, too (I Cor 10:13). You need only to trust His word and lean on His strength.

So when you have battles, and you will have them, learn from our battles. Ours were physical, yours are spiritual (Eph 6:12). Fight in God's strength, wear His armor (Eph 6:10-17)

and then, and only then, will you be able to have victory as we had victory. The book of Joshua is a book of warfare and victory, but it starts with God's promises. If we wouldn't have believed them and acted on them we would never have had victory. That is the start – believe what God says in His Word and trust Him, live in obedience to Him and face your enemies with the knowledge that He will give you victory. When fear or doubt, lust or greed, anger of selfishness, laziness or pride attack, quote God's promises of victory and move ahead in faith in His ability to overcome them. As the hymn says, make sure you are "Standing on the Promises."



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LIVING FOR JESUS

JOSHUA 1:10-18; 3:1 - 5:12

By the First Priest To Step Into the Jordan River Carrying the Ark



“Swing low, sweet chariot, coming fo’ to carry me home. Swing low, sweet chariot, coming fo’ to carry me home I looked over Jordan and what did I see? Coming for to carry me home? A band of angels coming after me, coming for to carry me home. If you get there before I do, coming for to carry me home, tell all my friends I’m comin’ to, comin’ for to carry me home.”

“Crossing over the Jordan” - what does that phrase mean to you? Often you get your theology from songs, and often your songs speak of Canaan as heaven and the Jordan as entering heaven. I’ll tell you, though, to us who crossed the Jordan River it was an obstacle, and Canaan was a battleground, not heavenly rest. God had promised us the land, but we had to enter and fight. He would give us every place our foot stepped, but fierce warriors were prepared to keep us from stepping anywhere in that land. To us the Promised Land was where God wanted us to be. We were in His will there. It was His choice for us to grow, mature, serve Him and bear fruit. But that wouldn’t happen without heavy opposition. It was possession through conflict – that is the only way to have victory. We were to fight behind the “Captain of our Salvation,” Joshua (a picture of Jesus, whose name in Greek is the same as Joshua in Hebrew – both meaning “Jehovah is our Salvation”). We fought behind Joshua, you fight behind Jesus (Heb 2:10-11; Rom 8:37; II Cor 1:10; 2:14).



God is sovereign but He expects us to do our part in the fight. Everyone: Daniel, Jeremiah, Moses, Paul, even Jesus Himself, had their battles against God’s enemies. Our battles were physical. Yours are spiritual (Eph 6:10-12). From our Physical battles you can learn how to fight your spiritual battles. Listen to my story as I tell you what is necessary to enter into the place God has for you, the place where your battles for victory can be fought and won.



When Moses died Joshua took over. We were camped by the Jordan River, ready to enter the land to fight for our promised blessings. God said we should cross over and enter the land (Joshua 1:10-11) but the Jordan was in flood stage! As such it was impossible for us to cross. Still, we committed ourselves to obey Him (1:16). Joshua even started making plans for when we were on the other side by sending two men to spy our Jericho (Joshua 2).

We moved to the River's edge (Joshua 3:1) and waited three days, wondering all the time how we could cross. The Jordan wasn't a large river, except in flood stage. They if overflowed its banks and went far up the valley walls on either side of it.

When it was time to cross God said the priests carrying the Ark were to go first. This was where God's presence was, between the angels on the ark. In effect God was going to go first and we would follow. That sounded right and acceptable. Everyone spent the evening getting ready by praying and removing any sin in their lives (3:5). In the morning we were all ready.

God told the priests to go first and all the rest would follow (3:6-7). Wouldn't you know that the lot fell to me to have the privilege of carrying one of the poles which transported the ark! Normally that was a once-in-a-lifetime privilege which we all dreamed about. However on this day it was a little different. What's more, I was to go in the front! Why was this so bad, well, let me tell you what it was like for us there. The banks down into the water were very steep and once one took a step down there was no turning back. It was slipping and sliding straight down to the bottom. That was VERY difficult carrying an ark under normal circumstances, but with the water raging far up the valley wall, there was no stopping until we hit the bottom of the valley and the river bed. But that would mean we would be under many feet of water which was rushing down with tremendous force and power. God hadn't said anything about stopping the water! I remembered how He opened the Red Sea BEFORE they stepped in 40 years ago, but now He was telling us to step into the water and trust Him! It would be like telling you to run full speed and jump off the side of the Grand Canyon, trusting God to put a bridge under your feet as soon as you started coming down! it was an act of faith!

You wouldn't believe what happened, though! My foot hit the water, and I know it went into the water, but it didn't get wet! The water parted and the land was dry (3:13). We were able to safely walk down the slope and into the middle of the water! Everyone crossed over on dry land (3:14-17). God had promised, and when we followed in obedience He delivered! As soon as the last one was across the waters rumbled back again. Now THAT was impressive!

God instructed us to leave a pile of stones on the shore as a memorial to remember this (Joshua 4:17). Instead of following up on this great psychological advantage and attacking Jericho, God had us camp. There was more preparation to do to be ready to battle. We needed to be 100% committed to God, so all the males were circumcised (5:1-9) and then we celebrated the Passover (5:10), something we hadn't done for almost 40 years. We were now in the land! The manna stopped (5:11-12).

God was teaching us something very important: the wet feet concept. You see, the water didn't part until after we made the first move and stepped in in faith. What step of faith must YOU take for the waters that separate you from being in God's perfect will to part? It is an attitude, a habitual sin, a relationship you put before God? Whatever it is, go ahead in faith, trusting God to remove it and open the way for you. He'll do it, but you must step out!



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AMAZING GRACE

JOSHUA 2:1-24

By One of the Spies Into Jericho, Who Later Married Rahab



It's interesting to ask people how they met their mate. Everyone has a different story. God brings people together in many different ways. Moses watered some camels and ended marrying the oldest daughter of the owner. Boaz paid off a distant relative's debt by buying their land and got Ruth with it. The Benjaminites grabbed women at a party and carried them off. Jacob worked seven years for Rachael and got her sister instead on his wedding night. Xerxes held a beauty contest and married the winner – Esther. Onana married his sister-in-law after his brother died. Hosea married whom god told him to and she later became a prostitute. I married a woman who was a prostitute when I met her.

My name is Salmon (Matthew 1:5). I was a descendant of Abraham, but my wife was not. She was a Gentile, outside God's promised provision. As a Canaanite she was under special condemnation (Deut 7:1-2). A Canaanite, a female Canaanite, a female prostitute Canaanite. Surely apart from God's grace there could be no hope of deliverance. Still, God's grace was very evident in her life as well as mine. But I'm getting ahead of my story here.

Moses led my parents out of Egypt. I was born while they were wandering because of their disobedience. Egypt, the Red Sea, Mt Sinai – all these were just stories to me. Now the crossing of the Jordan, that was a very real experience to me! When we arrived there Joshua sent me and a friend to spy out Jericho. What an event that was!

It was a privilege to be chosen. We were young, strong, intelligent, knew the culture and language of the people in Jericho, and we had no families. This was important because there was serious danger for us, the real possibility we wouldn't make it back.



Joshua knew the importance of knowing your enemy ahead of time, so he sent us to gather information (Joshua 2:1). If we failed that would demoralize the whole nation and army. We would have failed if it hadn't been for God's grace.

He led us to the home of a prostitute, Rahab (2:1). Eight times she is mentioned in the Bible and six she is called a prostitute (Josh 2:1,3; 6:17,23,25; Mt 1:5; Heb 11:31; Ja 2:25). Now those who ran what you would call an inn also were often prostitutes. An inn would be where visitors went, where we would be less likely to draw attention, and where we could listen to the talk to gather information. Despite our precautions, however, word soon spread that we were at Rahab's home (Josh 2:2-3).

Everyone assumed she would turn us in, for we were their enemies. Instead she hid us (2:4-11) because of her faith in our God. She had been searching, we knew she was different when we first met her. God always reaches out to every heart that seeks Him (Job, Melchizedek, Ruth, Ethiopian Eunuch, Luke, etc.). She asked question after question about Jehovah. We could watch her faith grow and grow as we talked to her. In her heart she became one of us, and therefore everyone else in Jericho became her enemy, too. Immediately she risked her own life, and her own family, to fight on the side of the God of Israel. No wonder she is used as an example of faith (James 2:25; Heb 11:31). In effect she joined our spy team. All she wanted was life for her and her family (Joshua 2:12-21), assuming they would be spared to be slaves for us instead of killed with everyone else.

How would all the soldiers know who to spare? She would hang a red cord in her window for us to see. Red. Like we marked our doors at Passover. Red stood for blood. Red meant safety. We had no way of knowing then that one of our very descendants (Matthew 1:1-6) would fulfill that picture by paying for the sins of the whole world with His very own red blood! Now that's grace at its greatest!



A few days later, when we destroyed the city of Jericho, the red cord was there and Rahab and her family were spared (Joshua 6:22-23). Since I didn't have a family I became part of their family, helping them settle in with us. Before long we were married, and, well, the rest is history. Still, there is much to learn from this bit of history.

Not only do we learn that God protects and provides for His own out of grace, as He took care of us, but we also learn that God chooses and uses the most unlikely people (I Cor 1:27-29)! Just as Jesus went out of His way to contact another immoral Gentile at Jacob's Well (John 4), so God went out of His way to reach and save Rahab. She had faith, and that faith was shown by her actions (as all faith must - James 2:17-25). Besides Sarah, she is the only woman in the famous faith chapter of Hebrews 11. James uses her to show that faith without works is dead. It wasn't her ability that was so great and impressed God, but her availability. God gave her a new life, as He gives all His people (Eph 2:1-10). Despite her sin, God's grace is greater than His wrath (Psalm 103).

God's grace means that our standing with Him does not depend on who we are and what we've done. It depends on who He is and what He's done. Salvation is by grace (Eph 2:4-9; Rom 3:23-24; Rom 11:6). All any of us ever have had or will have is by grace. Anything short of being in hell at this minute is grace. Grace – where would you be without it?



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VICTORY IN JESUS

JOSHUA 5:13 - 6:27

By An Officer in the Jewish Army



Everyone knows that we men have an innate genetic ability that most women don't have. It enables us to find our way from one place to another without having to ask for help. Occasionally we may choose to take a scenic route or travel in circles. That is always done by choice. We know where we are, as proven by the fact that we eventually get where we're going. That isn't true only in your day, it was true 3,500 years ago when I lived, too.

Some have said we wandered in the desert for 40 years because the men wouldn't stop and ask for directions, but that's not true! We DID ask for directions. Joshua asked for directions to defeat Jericho. I know. I was there. I was a soldier in Joshua's army, an officer. I had some experience during the last years fighting invaders to protect my family, so Joshua made me an officer in our totally inexperienced army. I was experienced to warfare.

I guess you've realized that life in a series of one battles after another, haven't you? Serving God isn't not smooth and easy. It seems there is always some opposition. Oh there may be lulls in the conflict, but then the fight starts back up again. If that's your experience, you're on the right track! If you never have struggles something is wrong! Paul himself experienced this same thing (II Tim 4:6-7).

In my day they were physical battles, but in yours they are spiritual battles (Eph 6:12). We fought with muscle and sword. Your battles rage in your heart and soul. Satan used the flesh and the world to defeat us. Still, God is the victor. We can have victory, too, if we follow Him and fight in His strength. That's what we did at Jericho.

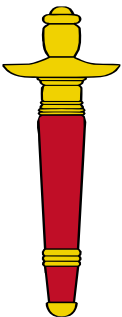


Jericho was formidable, inaccessible. We had to defeat it to go ahead. The flooding Jordan was behind us and mountains were on each side of us. Jericho

was a fortress for all living in the region. There was a double wall about 35' wide and 30' high with a dry moat outside. It looked impossible, especially to our army which had never fought a battle. We were totally untrained in warfare. Joshua did the right thing – he went to God for help.

I led a small group that went to protect him as he went nearer to Jericho, to think and plan. A siege would take many years. We had no equipment for a direct attack on such strong walls. What could we do? As we mulled over the options and eliminated each one, all of a sudden Someone appeared (Joshua 5:13). We didn't realize it right away, but we soon discovered it was God Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, before He came to earth to be known as Jesus. He said He wasn't on our side or on our enemies side – just His own side (5:14). It was up to us to fight on God's side, not to try and get God to fight on our side.

As we watched from a distance Joshua fell down in humble reverence (5:14-15). Later Joshua told us what this meant to him. He knew he wasn't alone, and that's important for a man and a leader to know (Heb 13:5). He realized he was second in command, taking orders from Someone greater, and that is very comforting for a man and a leader. Especially reassuring was the assertion that the battle was already won. Realizing that we don't fight for victory, but that we fight from victory, is great encouragement (John 16:33). We knew every place where we set foot was ours, but setting foot in Jericho wouldn't be easy! It was the PROMISED land, and we had to believe God's promises that He would provide the way.



Provide He did – but what a crazy plan He came up with, nothing that any of us would ever advised Joshua to do. March around the city once a day for six days, then on the seventh go around seven time, blow the trumpets and shout, and when the walls fall in enter and kill everyone (Joshua 6:1-5). God's ways are certainly different than man's ways (Isa 55:8; Prov 14:12). They seem strange at the start – but they work!

What can I say but that we obeyed (6:6-14). It was hard for a soldier to endure the taunts of the people in Jericho and not make a sound, but this was God's way of showing that He was doing it all and it wasn't our strength or skill that brought victory (Ex 14:14; Ps 46:10-11). We fought, but He brought the victory. God will do it all, but I must show up and do my part (Heb 11:30).

The seventh day was when we would either win all or lose all. It still seemed strange. By the time we walked around seven times it was late and we were tired, NOT the time for an attack! Sometimes obeying God seems hard and strange, contrary to common sense. But you never go wrong when you obey God, when you fight your battles His way (6:15-21). He tells us to forgive those who purposely hurt us and don't apologize. We are to love those who reject us. He says to turn to other cheek to those who use and take advantage of us. We are commanded to pray for those who plot us evil. In addition we are to share with the needy and not worry about the future. Forgive, love, serve, pray, they sound like strange directions to follow, but they, too work! They can't be done in one's own strength, but in God's they bring victory over impossible odds.

When we obeyed God we ended up with one of the most famous military victories in history. The walls fell outward into the moat so we could easily enter. Only the section at Rahab's house stood and they were rescued (6:22-27). God kept His promises to us, as He keeps His promises to you. God is full of grace and mercy. Obey Him. Don't follow your own innate male (or female) sense of direction (Prov 14:12). His grace will sustain you.



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CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

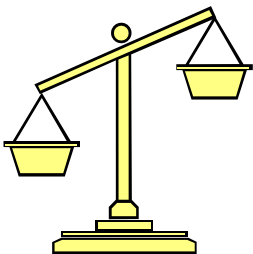
JOSHUA 7:1 - 8:29

By The Father of One of the Soldiers Killed At Ai



A little banyan seed said to a palm tree one day, "I am weary of being tossed about by the wind; let me lodge in your branches." "Remain as long as you like," was the reply. Soon the tree forgot all about its tiny guest, but the seed did not remain idle. Immediately it began to work its roots under the bark and into the heart of the trunk itself. Finally the tree cried out, "What are you doing?" "I'm only the little seed you allowed to rest among your boughs," came the reply. "Get out!" exclaimed the palm. "You've become too large and strong!" "I cannot leave you now," said the banyan. "We have grown together, and I would kill you if I tore myself away." The tree tried desperately to shake itself loose, but to no avail. Eventually its graceful leaves turned brown, and its trunk wasted away; but the banyan continued to thrive until its host could not longer be found. Yes, a little seed can develop into a parasitic plant and do great damage. In like manner, a tiny sin that is not confessed and forsaken can grow into an overpowering habit that chokes a Christian's spiritual vitality and ruins his life.

Little sins can grow: anger, fear, lust, cruelty, cheating, violence, lying, stealing, pride, selfishness, laziness, greed, etc. When they grow they bring destruction and death, not only to the one sinning but to others around them.



My life was totally changed by someone else's sin. My son, my only son, was killed because of the sin of another. His death was unnecessary, but if my loss can prevent another's loss that may bring me some solace. Let me tell you about it.

I lived in the days of Joshua. I came out of Egypt through the Red Sea after being protected under the Passover blood. I was a teenager and remember it quite clearly. Forty years later I walked through the Jordan,

finally entering God's Promised Land. That, and the victory over Jericho, showed us that God was well able to protect and provide what He promised. Then came Ai.

Ai was a small military outpost further up the valley from Jericho. It was nothing compared to Jericho, so Joshua just sent out a few thousand men to destroy it. But instead of coming back victorious, they came back in defeat. What's worse, 36 soldiers were killed (Joshua 7:2-5). One of them was my son, my only child. He was married and had a family of his own. He was our pride and joy. He was our only source of help and support in old age. Now his wife is a widow and his children are orphans. Thirty five other families are also shocked and grieving. Why did it happen?

For one thing, Joshua moved ahead too fast. He didn't go to God and ask God's help. He was overconfident, assumed he was doing God's will and would be blessed. We can never assume God will be on our side, we must always make sure we are on God's side. Joshua underestimated the strength of the enemy and overestimated our own strength. That is pride, and it brings destruction. There is nothing that is too 'little' to ask for God's help. There is nothing so small that we can handle it on our own without God's help.

Still, I don't hold it against Joshua, or God. All of our lives are in His hands. My son could have died in the desert or at Jericho, or have never been born in the first place. It could have been someone else's son who died at Ai. I wouldn't wish that loss on anyone!

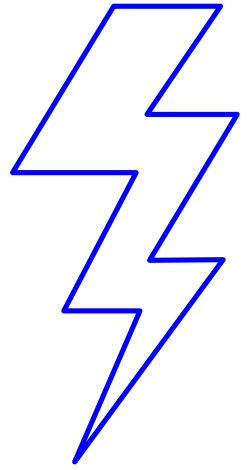
I took my grief to God. He understands. His Son was more of an innocent victim than mine was. I couldn't have saved my son, but He could have. He chose not to because His Son was paying for the sins of me and my son. Because He sent His Son to die, I will be able to live eternally in heaven with my son. I can't complain about a God who does that!

If Joshua would have gone to God he would have been told what he later found out when he went to God after the loss (Joshua 7:1, 6-14). In a very dramatic way God pointed out that one family had sinned. It caused us all to search our hearts. It could have been any one of us. We all knew we were guilty of sin before God. It was only His grace that kept all of us from being destroyed.

The guilty ones that were destroyed were a man named Achan and his family (7:1, 16-25). We never knew just who brought the gold, silver and robe home from Jericho instead of destroying it, but everyone who knew and didn't do anything were killed along with Achan for God considered them as guilty as he was. That is very solemn and convicting!

Achan's sin was greed. Materialism ruled his heart. He was also impatient, for if he'd have waited a few days he could have had free plunder from Ai (8:1-2). He wasn't content (Phil 4:11). Things became his idol. God clearly warns that sin brings death (Ezek 18:4; Rom 5:12; 6:23). Sin starts small, but then it grows until it brings death and destruction. That is always its pattern. There are no exceptions. God hates sin and punishes it.

God still hates sin in your day just as much and it still brings destruction (Rom 6:16; 7:11; I Cor 15:56; James 1:15). What's worse is that sin is never private. It always affects those around us. Please make sure there is no unconfessed sin in your life (Psalm 139:23-24). Admit your sin to God and ask for His mercy and grace in covering it with the blood of Jesus.





THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD

**“No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
(Joshua 1:5)**

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FAITH IS THE VICTORY

JOSHUA 9:1 - 10:29

By a Greek Scientist Come to Palestine to Investigate the Day The Sun Didn't Set

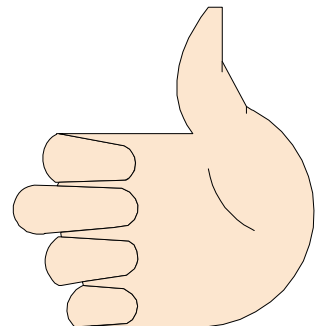


It was the strangest thing! You know how some days seem like they'll never end, they just go on and on and you figure it must be bedtime but it isn't? And then other days go so fast you can't believe they are over already? Time doesn't change, it's just our perception of time, of what is happening. Check a time-keeping instrument and you'll see that you were mistaken, that time always goes the same – or does it?

I always thought so until one day time did stand still! I am a Greek scientist (actually a Mycean, a predecessor to the Greeks) and I know it happened. I was there. Everyone who was alive at that time experienced it – the day the sun stopped and didn't go down. Those on the other side of the world experienced the opposite – the day the sun didn't rise! Stomachs got hungry, eyes became tired, animals went to sleep – but it was still midday! We kept watching our sundials and marking the shadows but for hours they never moved! It was a day like no other! Chickens got confused and didn't roost. Tides didn't move in or out. It was eerie, weird! Then all of a sudden things went back to normal again.

Most people shook it off and went about their business as usual. They weren't overly concerned now that everything was back to normal. It really shook me up, though. I was struck double strongly. As a scientist, I studied the sun, moon and stars. As a man I was seeking the power behind this universe. It's perfection and movement said it had to have a greater power behind it. Something was missing in my heart and somehow down inside I knew that that void would only be met when I met the God of the universe. When He exercised His power over His universe by suspending this one law for awhile, it really got my interest!

We didn't know much about the universe in 1400 BC, but we did know some things. My people, the Myceans, are best known by the story of Helen of Troy and the Trojan wars, which happened about 100 years after I lived.



The place that was most advanced in its knowledge of the heavens and the earth was Egypt. I'd always wanted to go there, and this gave me the perfect chance. I wanted to study what that ancient writers had written about the universe. I also wanted to see what their current scholars had discovered about this time when the sun stopped moving.

After traveling there I discovered I had come to the right place! They were struggling as a nation because of a slave people, the Hebrews, who had left causing lots of destruction. I heard about 10 plagues, ending with the death of the firstborn in every home that didn't have blood over the door. I was told about the opening of the Red Sea and the drowning of their army. Spies had brought back reports of something called manna, water coming from a rock, clothes that never wore out, and more recently of a river miraculously stopping flowing and a large city having its walls fall down from no seen force. Then I heard the story I was coming for. It told about a day when hail (which was most unusual) fell from heaven and only hit Canaanites who were fighting the Jews. Many were killed. It seems, as the story goes, their God stopped the sun from moving for that day so they could go kill all their enemies and not have any escape under cover of darkness.

I read about these events in the book of Jashar. My curiosity was so aroused, and my heart so drawn, that I had to travel there next. I knew they were killing everyone who wasn't one of them, but still I knew I would never be satisfied if I didn't fully pursue this new knowledge.

When I got there I found the people most open and receptive. They were very courteous, friendly and accommodating. They were honest, sincere people. That told me about that special day, and also about their God, Jehovah, the One who gave them the victory. As I listened my heart was warmed and my soul became excited for I knew inside that He was the One I had long been seeking! My head was filled with the answers about that long day and my heart was filled with peace and joy as I put my faith in this magnificent Jehovah Who was obviously the great Power behind the universe which I had been seeking!

I was told about how a powerful Canaanite coalition tricked them into making a treaty so they wouldn't be destroyed. Joshua himself, though, admitted it was his fault for not going to God for wisdom before acting. Then when these Gibeonites were attacked by neighbors for deserting their confederacy the Jews were obligated by their new treaty to protect them. Their God fought for them, using hail and then extended daylight to totally defeat their enemies. It turns out this wasn't the only time God changed the natural light and dark pattern on earth. He had made it dark in Egypt for 3 days before the Jews left – but it was still light in the area where the Jews lived (Exodus 10:21-23). There would in the future be a three-hour period of supernatural darkness over the whole earth when God Himself died on a cross (Mk 15:33) to pay for the sins of the world.

Oh what answers I found in this great Jehovah God – answers to questions I didn't even know to ask! I stayed and watched them defeat enemy after enemy, always giving credit to their wonderful Jehovah. I never wanted to leave what I found, so I stayed with them the rest of my life. I continued to grow in knowledge as I read how He created the universe and kept it all going by His might. I also continued to grow in spirit as I discovered how He loves me and wants to help me find His best in my life. I made it a point to spend the rest of my life learning about Him and living for Him. What better use could I make of my life?

I invite you to check out this same God I found. Read about Him and wall the great things He can do in His book, the Bible. You, too, can read what Joshua wrote. He did so many great things, and He continues to do great things for His people even to today. Actually His greatest miracles are still to come. Follow Him and you'll see them for yourself!



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ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

JOSHUA 10:29-22:34

By Caleb



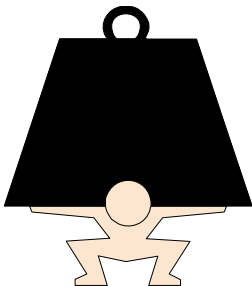
I remember as a young boy watching an Egyptian stonecutter hammering away at a rock, over and over, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing. Then, all of a sudden, a blow would split it in two. I knew it wasn't that hit that did it, but the cumulative effect of all that had gone before it.

God taught me that lesson in my life, too. I had to learn to persevere, to not quit but to keep faithfully serving God no matter what happened. It's not an easy lesson to learn, for patience doesn't come natural to human beings. Is God trying to teach you patience and perseverance? How are you coming with your progress? Maybe my story will help you.

I grew up in Egypt. For the first forty years of my life I was a slave patiently awaiting God's deliverance. Many grew bitter and doubted God would ever free us, but I kept faithfully believing and serving Him. Then when deliverance did come we ended up having to wait another 40 years to enter the land – more patience was required. Finally, five years after we crossed the Jordan River and began our conquest of the land, I got my chance to fight for my land. But I'm getting ahead of myself here. Let me go back and fill in some details.

It took us years to defeat the confederations of tribes in Canaan. God was teaching us patience and perseverance, the importance of sticking to something and how much more we appreciate that for which we have to work and wait. He was letting us have victory in one area, settle and hold it, and then move on to another area, just like He does in your lives today. To give it all to us as once would have been too hard for us. If all the Canaanites were destroyed before we could move in and replace them, wild animals would take over and make the places unsafe for us and our families (Exodus 23:20-30). Thus God's way has always been little by little, claim and assimilate one area and then move on to the next area to be conquered.

Even so, despite the fact that the major Canaanite armies had all been defeated, there were still pockets of resistance and a few cities of giants left. It



would take ongoing mop-up operations to remove them all, a lifelong task. Other new areas of defiance would raise up as well and have to be put down. Isn't that the way it is in your life, too? After salvation (Passover lamb and Red Sea deliverance) you must decide who you will live for: yourself or God. If you choose yourself you wander for years in aimlessness (as we wandered for 40 years in the desert). If you choose God and follow Him into the place of His perfect will for you, then you will find battles and opposition. The world, the flesh and the devil will fight you every step of the way to keep you from making that commitment to put Him before yourself. God will give you victory if you faithfully persevere and stay true to Him. The first major battles between the flesh and the spirit will have been won, but living in His will (in the land) will mean a lifetime of continual skirmishes, mop-up operations, taking new territory, and fighting giants that remain. Do you know what I mean?

The problem is that we didn't go ahead and keep battling. We got weary of it and decided that 90% victory was good enough when it isn't! the tribes of Reuben, gad and half of Manasseh were willing to settle for land on the east of the Jordan. It was right next to God's perfect land (will) for us, but not in it. It was close enough to have some of the benefits, but stopped short of being where the battles and conflicts were. They were the first to get attacked and defeated, though, because they weren't in God's perfect place for them.

Other tribes complained that their portion wasn't large enough for them. That was because they didn't keep fighting and drive all the enemies out of their territory. Instead of battling ahead they left them there, then battled that their land was insufficient. How many of God's people stop short of the victory and blessing God has for them because they become weary of persevering and patiently moving ahead. Then they wonder why God's will for them seems so unfulfilling and lacking.

When most of the land was conquered and divided, I finally got my turn to choose my selection. Usually land was given by lot to be fair to all, but because Joshua and I were the only 2 spies to trust God and encourage the nation to enter the land 45 years ago God had said we could have our choice of the land. For all these years I had believed His promise and was patiently awaiting the time when I could settle in the Hebron area. It was the richest part of the land, and therefore the strongest giants held it as their own. For me, though, it had special significance because that is where Abraham first settled. That land held the bones of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. That made it very special to me. You see, I was a Kenizzite by birth. My father, Jephunneh, had named me "Caleb," which means "dog" (more accurately a wild, wolf-like creature who was rejected and homeless). When I had no where else to go God's people took me in and nurtured me. I was so well accepted by them that the tribe of Judah made me their spokesman and leader. That's how I was one of the 12 spies.

When we had to wait 40 years to enter the land I was tempted to get bitter and hard, as so many others had. After all, it wasn't my fault we had to wander, but I had to suffer with the others for their sin. That made it harder for me to persevere. Still, I stayed faithful to the Lord. God passed over me and chose Joshua to be the next leader, so all my time could be invested in my family. My daughter married my nephew, Othniel, who was the next leader after Joshua (the first judge of Israel).

What a great God we serve! He had promised that every place we put our foot would be ours if we faithfully obeyed and followed Him (Joshua 1:3-5), and that is what happened (21:43-45). The same is true for you, too, if you follow your "Joshua" ("Jesus" in Greek is the same as "Joshua" in Hebrew). Are you following? Persevere, patiently obey Him. You won't regret it!





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WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

JOSHUA 23:1 - 24:33

By Joshua, Just Before He Died



Once there was this very wealthy young man. He lived in a great, elaborate house with dozens of rooms. One day he decided to invite the Lord to come and stay with him. When the Lord arrived, this young man offered him the very best room in the house. The room was upstairs and at the end of the hall. "This room is yours, Jesus! Stay as long as you like and you can do whatever you want to in this room, remember Jesus, its all yours." "Thank you" the Lord replied, and with that the man shut the door and went about his daily business.

That evening after he had retired for the night there came a loud knocking at the front door. The young man pulled on his robe and made his way downstairs. When he opened the door he found that the devil had sent three of his demons to attack the man. He quickly tried to close the door but one of the demons kept sticking his foot in the door. Sometime later, after a great struggle, he managed to slam the door shut and returned to his room totally exhausted. Can you believe that! The man thought. Jesus is upstairs in my very best room sleeping while I am down here battling demons. Oh well, maybe he just didn't hear. He slept fitfully that night.

The next day things went along as normal and being tired as he was, the young man retired early that evening. Along about midnight, there came such a terrible ruckus at the front door that the young man was sure that whatever it was would tear the door down. He stumbled down the stairs once again and opened the door to find that there were dozens of demons now trying to get into his beautiful home. For more than three hours he fought and struggled against the demons from hell and finally overtook them enough to shut the door against their attack. All energy seemed to fail him. I really don't understand this at all. Why won't the Lord come to my rescue? Why does he allow me to fight all by myself? I feel so alone. Troubled he found his way to the sofa and fell into a restless sleep.

The next morning he decided to inquire of the Lord about the happenings of the last two evenings. Quietly he made his way to the elegant bedroom where he had left Jesus. "Jesus," he called as he tapped at the door. "Lord,, I don't understand what is happening. For the last two



nights I have had to fight the demons away from my door while you laid up here sleeping. Don't you care about me? Did I not give you the very best room in house? He could see the tears building in Jesus' eyes but continued on, "I just don't understand. I really thought that once I invited you in to live with me that you would take care of me and I gave you the best room in my house and everything. What more can I do?"

"My precious child," Jesus spoke so softly. "I do love and care for you. I protect all that you have released into my care. But when you invited me to come here and stay, you brought me to this lovely room and you shut the door to the rest of your house. I am Lord of this room but I am not Master of this house I have protected this room and no demon may enter here."

"Oh, Lord, please forgive me. Take all of my house - it is yours - I am so sorry that I never offered you all to begin with. I want you to have control of everything." With this he flung open the bedroom door and knelt at Jesus' feet. "Please forgive me Lord for being so selfish." Jesus smiled and told him that He had already forgiven him and that He would take care of things from now on. That night the young man prepared for bed he thought to himself, "I wonder if those demons will return. I am so tired of fighting them each and every night." But he knew that Jesus said that he would take care of things from now on.....

Along about midnight the banging on the door was frightening. The young man slipped out of his room in time to see Jesus going down the stairs. He watched in awe as Jesus swung open the door, no need to be afraid. Satan stood at the door this time demanding to be let in. Jesus took on his attacks in short order and sent him away.

There is a moral to this tale. Jesus wants all of you, not just a part. He will take all that you give Him but nothing more. How much of your heart have you given to the Lord? Are you keeping a portion of it away from Him? Perhaps the attacks are coming more and more each day. Why not let the Lord fight the battles for you. He is always victorious. I have found that God made man simple. All of man's complexities are of his own devising.

This is the message of my life. My name is Joshua. I talked to you when I was 25 years younger. God had promised us Palestine if we followed and obeyed Him. He made promises to us and kept every one of them. My last function on earth was to gather all the Jews together and tell them this. It's recorded in Joshua 23-24.

Everything that had happened in our conquering the land was God's doing, He got the credit and not us (Joshua 23:1-5). My generation had been afraid to totally trust Him and our fear of the giants kept us out. We wandered for 40 years in the desert. However our children put their faith in God and He took care of them. It's like a young child coming to you for help, trusting you with his needs. Would you use that opportunity to do all you could to make his life miserable, or would you do your best to lovingly care for the child? Out heavenly Father is more loving and caring than we are.

I told the people that they had to stay faithful to God (v. 6-7) and keep trusting Him alone (v. 8-11) for it is often easier to trust during hard times than when everything is going all right. Now that there was relative peace I was concerned they'd stop depending on God moment by moment as they had in the past.

I reminded them, too, of what would happen if they turned from God (v. 12-16).

Just before I died I called all the people together to remind them again of these things (Joshua 24). I reviewed how God had taken care of us in the past (v. 1-13). It's important for you, too, to remember what God has done for you in the past. Paul, in Ephesians 2:1-10, reminds his readers of how they were lost in sin before God's grace rescued them. Remembering this keeps us trusting in Jesus and not our own strength.



Still, its a free will choice each one must make on his own (v. 14-15). Each individual Jew had to decide, and men had to decide for their families. I told them my choice: "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (John 24:15). The people said they would follow God 100% (Joshua 24:16-28).

Those were my last public words. Soon after I died (Joshua 24:29-33). What a privilege it was to be used by God for His work during my time on earth. I had to give up everything to serve Him. He's looking for people in your time, too, to give up everything in His service. He will bless you beyond anything you could imagine, but you have to put Him first.

The cheerful girl with bouncy golden curls was almost five. Waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, she saw them: a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box. "Oh please, Mommy. Can I have them? Please, Mommy, please!" Quickly the mother checked the back of the little foil box and then looked back into the pleading blue eyes of her little girl's upturned face. "A dollar ninety-five. That's almost \$2.00 If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you and in no time you can save enough money to buy them for yourself. Your birthday's only a week away and you might get another crisp dollar bill from Grandma." As soon as Jenny got home, she emptied her penny bank and counted out 17 pennies. After dinner, she did more than her share of chores and she went to the neighbor and asked Mrs. McJames if she could pick dandelions for ten cents. On her birthday, Grandma did give her another new dollar bill and at last she had enough money to buy the necklace. Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel dressed up and grown up. She wore them everywhere--Sunday school, kindergarten, even to bed. The only time she took them off was when she went swimming or had a bubble bath. Mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green. Jenny had a very loving daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night when he finished the story, he asked Jenny, "Do you love me?" "Oh yes, Daddy. You know that I love you." "Then give me your pearls." "Oh, Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have Princess--the white horse from my collection. The one with the pink tail. Remember, Daddy? The one you gave me. She's my favorite." "That's okay, Honey. Daddy loves you. Good night." And he brushed her cheek with a kiss. About a week later, after the story time, Jenny's daddy asked again, "Do you love me?" "Daddy, you know I love you." "Then give me your pearls." "Oh Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is so beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper. " "That's okay. Sleep well. God bless you, little one. Daddy loves you." And as always, he brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss. A few nights later when her daddy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed Indian-style. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek. "What is it, Jenny? What's the matter?" Jenny didn't say anything but lifted her little hand up to her daddy. And when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. With a little quiver, she finally said, "Here, Daddy. It's for you." With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny's kind daddy reached out with one hand to take the dime-store necklace, and with the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls and gave them to Jenny. He had had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up the dime-store stuff so he could give her genuine treasure. So like our heavenly Father. What are you hanging onto?



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STANDING ON THE PROMISES





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BIBLE VERSES ABOUT BATTLE BELONGING TO GOD

1 Sam 17:47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

Isa 54:17 no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD.

Rev 7:12 Saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

2 Chr 20:15-17 15 He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: `Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you."

Ps 46:11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Zech 4:6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: `Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

Rom 8:31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Rom 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

JOSHUA VERESES ABOUT BATTLE BELONGING TO GOD

Josh 1:5 No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Josh 1:8-9 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Josh 6:2 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.

Josh 24:15 But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

