

Quarter Four: Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Jill Morikone

Lesson 4—The Conflict Behind All Conflicts

Sunday: Commander of the Army of the Lord

October 19, 2025

- **Last Week:** “Memorials of Grace”
 - Joshua 3 & 4
 - Crossing the Jordan & spiritual reminders / significance
- **This Week:** “The Conflict Behind All Conflicts”
 - Joshua 5:13 – 15; Josh 6:15 – 20
 - Lesson 7: covenant renewal & circumcision of the 2nd generation (Josh 5:1 – 8)
 - Challenge in OT (esp. Joshua)
 - Who initiated the fighting, bloodshed, conquest of Canaan?
 - Lesson: “God claims to be the initiator of these violent conflicts.”
 - Josh 6:2 – “And the LORD said to Joshua, ‘See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.’”
 - Josh 8:1 – “Now the LORD said to Joshua: ‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.’”
 - Josh 10:11 – “And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.”
 - **Questions:**
 - How do we reconcile the character of a loving, gracious, merciful, longsuffering God – with a “warlike” God of bloodshed?
 - How do we understand that God’s chosen people carried out such practices in OT times?
 - How do we understand this without diluting the
 - Credibility
 - Authority
 - Historicity of the OT?
 - **Concepts:**
 - Iniquity of the Canaanites (probationary time given to them) – next week
 - God as Judge – next week
 - Context of free choice – next week
 - Dispossession or annihilation – next week

▪ **Concepts this week:**

- Context of war on earth as a larger part of Great Controversy battle
- The Lord as a Warrior – God’s desire to fight for His people
 - We need only be still & have faith in Him
 - They lacked faith
- When we lack that faith, Israel learned to trust God while fighting for Him
- Comparison between deliverance from Egyptian bondage
 - vs Conquest of Canaan

Memory Text: “There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel” (Joshua 10:14, ESV).

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** Commander of the Army of the Lord (Jill)
 - Josh 5:13 – 15 – theophany or Christophany – Christ appearing to Joshua b4 Jericho
- 2. **Monday:** War in Heaven (Ryan J)
 - Rev 12; Isa 14; Eze 28 – origin of sin in Heaven; battle between Christ & Satan as context of understanding divinely sanctioned wars in Israel; all have purpose of restoring God’s justice & love to a fallen world
- 3. **Tuesday:** The Lord Is a Warrior (James)
 - Various Exodus passages – plagues in Egypt was conflict between God & the Egyptian gods; conflict in Canaan between God & the exponents of evil; eradication of Canaanites = review of the final judgment
- 4. **Wednesday:** The Lord Will Fight for You (John L)
 - Ex 14 – concept of God being the initiator of the battle, God establishing the strategy, God conducting the campaign; their job was to stand still & see God work; if Israel had trusted God, they wouldn’t have needed to fight
- 5. **Thursday:** The Second-Best Option (John D)
 - Josh 6:15 – 20 – fall of Jericho; next option; learning to trust God while fighting for Him

Sunday: Commander of the Army of the Lord

Joshua 5:13 – 15; Josh 6:1; 2 Kings 6:8 – 17; Neh 9:6; Isa 37:16

- Joshua 1 – Commission to Joshua
- Joshua 2 – Spies at Jericho / Rahab’s faith
- Joshua 3 – Miraculous crossing of Jordan River
- Joshua 4 – Memorial Stones / reminders of God’s miracles
- Joshua 5 – circumcision of 2nd generation & celebration of Passover
- Joshua 6 – battle against Jericho
 - First, Christ appears to Joshua
 - Theophany / Christophany (appearance of pre-incarnate Christ in the OT)

- Joshua 5:13 – “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, ‘Are You for us or for our adversaries?’”
 - PP, p. 487 – Capturing Jericho “was seen by Joshua to be the first step in the conquest of Canaan. But first of all he sought an assurance of divine guidance, and it was granted him. Withdrawing from the encampment to meditate & to pray that the God of Israel would go before His people, he beheld an armed warrior, of lofty stature and commanding presence, with his sword drawn in his hand.”
 - Joshua, needing assurance that God was with him
 - Difficult task ahead
 - Josh 6:1 – “Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.”
 - High walls, impregnable city
 - **Takeaway #1: Seek divine guidance before anything**
 - Taking a city
 - Leading an army / a people
 - Moving forward under God’s command
 - Making decisions
 - **Takeaway #2: Know your opponent or friend**
 - Know who you do battle with
 - Know your friends: do they have your back?
 - Know who you’re up against
- Joshua 5:14 – “So He said, ‘No, but as **Commander** of the army of the LORD I have now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant?’”
 - Commander = Heb, *sar* = translated in Bible as captain, governor, commander, chief, leader, prince, officers
 - Used 3x’s of Christ
 - Josh 5:14 & 15 & Dan 8:11 (the Prince of the host)
 - Commander of the army of the Lord = The pre-incarnate Christ
 - The Lord refuses to step into the categories defined by Joshua
 - Answers “no” – to the Q: are you on our side or against us?
 - In other words, it’s not whether He is on Joshua’s side; rather, whether Joshua is on His side
 - In addition, the Lord is not just the commander of the armies of Israel
 - He’s commander of the hosts of Heaven
 - Neh 9:6 – “You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You.”
 - **Takeaway #3: Recognize Whom you serve**
 - Isaiah did – Isa 6
 - Abraham did -Gen 17 – Abraham fell on his face in God’s presence

- Jehoshaphat did – 2 Chron 20 – he & all Judah bowed with their faces to the ground before the Lord
 - John did – Rev 1:17 – fell on his face b4 God like one dead
 - Joshua did – Joshua worshipped
- Vs 15 – “Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so.”
 - Joshua recognized the presence of God
 - Bowed prostrate before God
 - Took sandals off his feet
 - **Takeaway #4: Walk in obedience**
 - “And Joshua did so”
 - Joshua was now ready to receive orders from the Commander of the heavenly army
 - This theophany convinced Joshua that the Lord Himself was at the head of the Israelite army, ready to conquer Canaan
 - We only obey when we recognize who we serve

“God in His mercy, as much as His justice, declared that there was nothing left to do but bring the Canaanite culture (religious & political) to an end, while sparing individuals within that culture who responded in faith (such as Rahab & her household).”

This connects justice for the system of idolatry, while exhibiting mercy for the individuals.

Lesson 5: God Fights for You