

(Angel of the Lord) 03 - Joshua

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores the appearances of the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament as a foreshadowing of Jesus' role in rescuing and providing for His people.

Duration: 1:00:45

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:10-12, Joshua 5:15, Joshua 6:2, Joshua 6:13-15, John 6:45

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a passage from the book of Joshua where Joshua encounters a man with a drawn sword. Joshua asks if the man is on their side or the enemy's side, but the man responds that he is the captain of the host of the Lord. Joshua falls on his face and asks what the Lord has to say to him. The preacher emphasizes that only Jesus can lead us to Jesus and highlights two principles that Joshua learned that day: surrendering everything to God and being transparent and true to oneself.

Transcript

I ask you to open your Bibles, please, to Joshua chapter 5, if you would. As we come to the study of God's Word, there's a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable, a principle that we must not forget, we must not take for granted, and that is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. The Bible, like our Lord Jesus, has two sides.

It has a human side and it has a divine side. We need both sides. You can't neglect scholarship.

And so for a while when you study the Bible, you'll have to sit at the feet of Gamaliel, but you're also going to have to sit at the feet of God. The Bible uses the expression, taught of God. John chapter 6, taught of God.

It's written in the prophets that they shall all be taught of God. And how do you know if you're taught of God? The verse continues, everyone who is taught of God comes to me. That's how you know if it leads to Jesus.

And if it leads to Christ, then it's from the Lord. And he's promised that he would reveal these things to babes and he would unseal our eyes. He's the one that's worthy to open the seals, not only in the future, but now.

And he has promised to do it. If we could only begin to know how anxious God is to teach us, we don't have to beg for his life. He's not a reluctant giver.

He's infinitely willing to give and to pour out if he has someone to receive it. So brothers, this is the place, this is the time. Let's come before the Lord and ask him to make us receivers.

And just a trench, just a hole in the ground and watch him fill it. So let's pray. Our Father, we do thank you so much that you have invited us to come.

You've challenged us to come with our mouths wide open. You've promised that the things that you've hidden for children, that you've hidden in Christ Jesus, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, you would be pleased to unfold to us. And so we come now and we just trust your Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts in the language of living life that we might have a revelation of our Lord Jesus that will rescue us and set us free.

We thank you in advance that you're going to accomplish your word. We remember it's not because we deserve it, but we're bold to come because he deserves it and we claim it in his name. For some of the brothers that have come in since we have looked at some of these things, let me just give a very brief review.

Our thoughts are focusing around Psalm 34 and verse 7, the angel of the Lord encamps around about those that fear him and rescues them. We've been looking at some of the appearances of the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. If any of you did not get one of the sheets I handed out, I don't really know where they are, but look around.

Yeah, well, we don't need it now. Get one. And just for your own reference, because it gives the overview of all the angel of the Lord appearances.

And then on your own time and before the Lord, you can meditate in a living way on those things. But every time the angel of the Lord appears, every time that title appears in the Old Testament, it's Jesus. It's the Son of God.

It's God Himself. And every time he appeared in the Old Testament in some way, 20 or 25 times, and maybe more than that, if you look at the sheet, there are some where he's not called the angel of the Lord, like in the fiery furnace and in the lion's den. But we're quite sure it's the same one.

It's the same person. It just doesn't have the title. And so every time he appeared, he appeared to rescue his people in some way.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those that fear him and rescues them. Sometimes from fear, sometimes from thirst, sometimes from discouragement, sometimes from defeat, sometimes from despair or something else. He's always rescuing and always setting free.

And we've been meditating on that. I think it would be fun if we had the time to go through each one, because I think we'd have a pretty good view in picture form of all the different ways God wants to set us free by the revelation of His Son. And I know I've been going through those in my own, and it's been an exciting time.

In our introduction lesson, I shared the fact that the first time the Lord Jesus ever appeared on the earth as the angel of the Lord, he appeared to Hagar. Not Abraham or Moses or Daniel or one of the big names, but Hagar, a Gentile slave woman in desperate need in order to set her free from thirst. And he illustrated in that first appearance that he'll always appear to those who are thirsty in order to set them free.

And then you remember we looked at the second part of that story. After 17 years, Hagar, her faith began to tremble, and she began to doubt the promise, and she lost the well. And so he showed up again to open her eyes and to show her the well that was always at her feet.

And what a precious visitation that first one was, the angel of the Lord rescuing from thirst, coming to the needy, coming to the helpless, coming to those who had ache and pain and desire in order to rescue them. And then I told you that we were going to, in our other sessions, look at three that had something in common. And the thing I found in common with three of them was three times the angel of the Lord appears in the Old Testament with a sword drawn in his hand.

One time, and we looked at that last evening, he appeared to Balaam with a sword drawn in his hand. The angel of the Lord encamps round about those that fear him to rescue them, and in that case to rescue from the curse and to rescue from condemnation. And I won't go into all of that, but you remember how God turned the curse into a blessing.

They wanted, Balak wanted to see. Curse them, they deserve it, they're weak. And when Balaam looked out, he said, I don't see a scattered people, a detached people, weak and vulnerable.

I see a body united and separated from the world. And so they go up on another mountain and look off Pisgah and say, now look, look at them, they're sinful. And Balak looks out and he says, I see no iniquity in Jacob.

It's all under the blood, I don't see one stain. They're as holy as God is holy. They're as clean as clean can be.

And then he took them to another hill and he looked out and he saw nothing but sand and desert and waste. And Balak looks out and he said, all I see is a garden, a beautiful garden, blooming and blossoming, and oaks by the side of the river and all, marvelous. And then God gave them that long view down the quarter of history to the end of time, with nations rising and falling and wars and victory and defeat and a whole mess of nations and politics.

And in the middle of it all, he saw Christ. He saw the star of Jacob, the scepter coming out of Israel. He saw the glory in the star and the majesty in the scepter, the glory and the majesty of Christ.

Brothers, it's with great joy I announce to you today, when God looks at you, He does not see your weakness. He does not see your sin. He does not see your fruitlessness.

He does not see your vacillation. He sees the glory and the majesty of Jesus Christ in you. He comes to set us free from condemnation.

Well, that brings us this afternoon to the second picture of our Lord Jesus with the sword in His hand as He appeared to Joshua in order to rescue us. Now let me state for you what I think is the great principle, and then we'll develop it. And then, Lord willing, tomorrow we'll look at the Lord Jesus appearing with a sword in His hand to David when He numbered the people in order to rescue you from the evil

consequences of our own sin.

We'll touch on that tomorrow, God helping us. But for now, He appears to Joshua, the angel of the Lord Jesus, with a sword in His hand, and if I'm understanding it right, in order to rescue from the total responsibility of living the Christian life in our own strength. It's everything that Dana's been sharing from the epistles in fully developed form.

We now have it in picture form in the Old Testament. I'll let Dana take all of the theology and develop it and put it all together in triangles and stuff. I don't know.

Turn please to Joshua chapter 5. Joshua chapter 5, 13 to 15. I need a story. That helps me.

Some of these Old Testament stories. The truth in history and God's redemptive history. It just, for me, once upon a time, that just helps to get into it.

We're going to read, actually we're going to read this passage twice, but let me read it now, follow along. Beginning at verse 13, It came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with a sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went out to him and said to him, Are you for us or for our adversary? And he said, No, rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord.

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and bowed down and said to him, What has my Lord to say to his servant? The captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you're standing is holy. And Joshua did so. Now if we're going to get the thrill of what was happening here, again, I need to do a little donkey work with you and a little background, and if you can be patient with that, I think then when we come to the text, God can dawn His truth upon it and the Lord Jesus can rise from it.

The truth is this, that God loves to picture Jesus, and almost every chance He gets in the Bible, it is full of the Lord Jesus. On that sheet that I gave you, I suggested the five different ways that Jesus appears in the Old Testament. And one of the many ways He appears is in the history of Israel and the history of redemption.

And I think of the many pictures of Christ in the Old Testament, and the many pictures of our union with Christ, and the many pictures of that which we would call the Christian life. I think there's one that you can't rate them and say that's number one, that's number two, that's number three, but, oh, this one is way up there. This one is a shining picture of our Lord Jesus.

And I'm talking to life in Jesus pictured by life in Palestine. Canaan, the promised land, was one of God's glorious pictures of Christ. The land flowing with milk and honey and wheat and pomegranates and abundance of all kinds.

It's a picture. It's called a good land. It's called the promised land.

It's called the land of rest. The land that flows with milk and honey. We hear a lot about the Christian life, and I'm suggesting to you everything you read in the Old Testament about the land, rich, flowing with milk and honey, that's God's intention for you.

That's God's intention for me. Brothers, the first seven years of my Christian life, I came to the Lord with understanding in 1958. And from 1958 to 65, I never even heard of the right triangle.

I only heard about the wrong one. And I was getting beat up on every corner of that wrong triangle for seven years. What a bondage I lived.

You couldn't look at my Christian life and say, now there's a life flowing with milk and honey. There's a man that's enjoying the Lord. In 1965, when I crashed, I didn't only crash and burn, I crashed, burned, and quit.

I did. I told the Lord it's over. And that's when God brought a brother into my life and said it doesn't need to be over.

And turned my eyes to Jesus. I praise God for that brother. Praise the Lord for those He brings into your life and points you to Jesus.

Oh, I remember that so well. But the point is this, that the land, the Christian life, I don't know what you're experiencing, but it doesn't need to be a barrenness and it doesn't need to be a wilderness. They were to enter the land.

They were to dispossess the enemy. They were to possess the land, settle down in the land, live in the land, live off the land. That's all picture of being in Christ Jesus.

At first I was a little bothered by that picture and I thought, Jesus is too wonderful to be pictured by real estate. I just thought that, you know, something else but not a piece of land. As far as this earth is concerned, I've never owned a grain of sand.

I don't expect I'll ever own property on this earth. I don't know if I will or not. But I saw my children when they were starting to move into property and get a house, the excitement in their heart.

Maybe this is not a good illustration, maybe it is, but in the case of my family, it was joy. I don't know how it is. Do you remember that first piece of property you looked for when you went out and you're looking for an acre or two acres or five acres and you got a family or you're anticipating a family? Where are you going to settle down and is there a brook and so on? And you find this piece of land and then you and the bank get together and co-own this thing.

A lot of work to do. You need to paint and paper and shingle perhaps and some landscaping to do, but it's your property. It's your land and I own it and let me show you my land and there's the garden and there's the orchard and there's the shed and whatever.

Well, try to enter into this. This is not some guy engaged to this girl and they're trying to get a piece of property and build a house or a shack. We're talking about a nation.

We're talking about a people. We're talking about tribes. Thousands and thousands and thousands of people not going in to enter two acres or five acres or ten acres.

God said, I have a country for you. A whole country for you. Prime real estate already developed.

See, we just sort of read this la la la. These guys are coming out of slavery and they've just been walking through desert for forty years through a barren land and then God sets before them this enormous grant,

this marvelous provision, tax-free property that they can just enter into and it's a glorious picture of Jesus. Now, before we get to Joshua, I want to give you three descriptions of the land from Deuteronomy.

These are God's descriptions and I'm going to read about real estate. I'm going to read about the land, but you put on your spiritual whatever. You hear, when I read this, I'm describing the Lord.

The first is Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 10 to 12. It shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give you great and splendid cities which you did not build. Houses full of all good things which you did not fill.

Hewn cisterns which you did not dig. Vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant. And you are satisfied, then watch yourself, that you do not forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery.

And so he sets before Joshua the land. Joshua is not in there yet. God said, I want you to enter into that.

I want you to have it. I want you to live there. I want you to live off of it.

I want you to enjoy it. It's all before you. This marvelous land.

Splendid cities you didn't build. Houses filled already with good things you didn't fill it. Cisterns you didn't dig.

Orchards are already planted. Gardens all done. You don't have to pull stumps.

You don't have to do anything. Go in and enjoy. It's a finished land.

It's done, over, through. Just enter in. What a picture.

And then, chapter 8, Deuteronomy, he gives another description of the land, beginning in verse 7. Christian life is a good land, brothers, because the land of milk and honey is a picture of Christ, the life of milk and honey. Full of brooks, and fountains, and springs, and valleys, and hills, wheat, barley, and pomegranates, and grapes, and figs, and olive, and iron, and copper. You will not lack anything.

That's the land. That's your Christian life. It's finished.

It's abundant. And then he gives one more description of it. In Deuteronomy, chapter 11, verse 10.

Ten to twelve. The land into which you are entering to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden. But the land into which you're about to cross, to possess, is a land of hills and valleys, and it drinks water from the rain of heaven.

A land for which the Lord your God cares, and the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it from the beginning, even to the end of the year. What a land. Don't just think Palestine.

Don't just think Canaan. When you read about that land, that's all done, and you didn't have to do anything. That land is so rich, and God wants you to have it.

A land that twenty-four hours of every day. Well, let me tell you, brothers, twenty-four seven. His eyes are upon this land, and it's drinking from the rain of heaven.

This is the good land. And we just sort of come to Joshua, and he's just living it. It's just history for him, but God's writing a Bible.

Joshua doesn't know he's a pencil. He doesn't know that his life is God, the Holy Spirit's history, and he's writing, and his name is Jesus, and Jesus is taking him in. This is a marvelous picture.

To him, it's all before him, like when you got saved, when you trusted Jesus. He said, the land is before you. What I want to show you now is, why did the angel of the Lord come right then, in order to rescue him at the door, before he got in? Rescue him from the full responsibility of that whole land, of claiming it in his own strength and so on.

God wants him to go in and take it. The reality, of course, is Christ. Certainly the picture breaks down.

No doubt the soil in the land would eventually be depleted, and the trees cut down, and all the ore and mine and everything explored, and so on. But our Lord Jesus Christ, the land, infinitely full, infinitely rich, never exhausted, and it's all before us. I go back to Joshua 5, please.

Keep this in your mind's eye. The wandering is over. The day has arrived.

The land is before them. Redeemed people, redeemed by power and blood out of Egypt, brought through the wilderness and their unbelief, and finally standing on the edge now of the land, flowing with milk and honey. You got to see Joshua standing there with that whole land in front of him, which God intended to picture Christ, knowing Christ, abiding in Christ, living off of Christ, and so on.

I picture myself sometime like Joshua, what must have gone through his mind. There's the land. Take it.

You're right, with all those walls and all those enemies. Where do you start in the Christian life? Where do you begin? You know, different brothers, oh, you've got to come here. I've had this experience, and I've tasted this, and what you need is this, and you've got to know Greek, and you've got to know Hebrew, and you've got to go here and come to the Bible school, memorize this scripture, join this group and that group, and on and on.

I went through so many of those things. Back to chapter 5, 13. It came about when Joshua was by Jericho.

He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with a sword drawn in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, Are you for us or for our adversaries? The whole land before him, and before Joshua took one step to possess that land, he's met by this one who's called the Prince of the Lord's Host, the Captain of the Lord's Host, the Angel of the Lord. In my view, these verses in chapter 5 of Joshua are the most important single passage in the entire book of Joshua.

I say that because I think these verses contain the key to entering in and possessing the land in all of its wonder. Before Joshua entered the land, he was met by this wonderful person. Just for review, who was this wonderful person? Look at chapter 5, verse 15.

Remove your shoes, for the place you're standing is holy ground. Was that verse ever in the Bible before this? Oh, indeed it was, at the burning bush, the one who said, I am that I am. Take off your shoes.

That's who this is. The same one that appeared to Moses at the burning bush now stands before Joshua and says, Take off your shoes. This is holy ground.

It's unfortunate that there's so many chapter breaks where they are. And I feel sad that this chapter, chapter 6, didn't run into this. It broke in a bad place.

Because there's a conversation going on. And the one who's speaking at the end of 5 continues to speak in chapter 6. And in chapter 6, verse 2, it says, The Lord, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, Jehovah said to Joshua. That's the angel of the Lord.

That's the I am. It's Jehovah. That's who has the sword in his hand.

It's our Lord Jesus Christ. The place where this happened was about five miles from where they crossed the Jordan River, a little place called Gilgal. The word Gilgal means rolled away.

Rolled away, rolled away, rolled away. Every burden of my heart rolled away. And it's not surprising that God said, When you get into the land, make this your strategic camp.

I want you to camp in a place called rolled away, because I'm about to roll away some things. The angel of the Lord encamped around about those that feared to rescue them and to roll things away. And he said, I'm going to roll away the reproach of Egypt.

And that's why it was named Gilgal. I told you every time the angel of the Lord appeared, he appeared to set people free. And he's about to set Joshua free from the complete responsibility of taking that land in his own strength.

Let me give you the simple key in its simplest form, and then develop it a little by breaking it down, and then we'll wrap it up. The simple key is this. As I suggested, there are many pictures in the Old Testament of Jesus, and every now and then you read a story, and there's more than one picture of Christ in the same story.

And sometimes they overlap. You know, Abraham's walking up with Isaac on Mount Moriah. You say, Isaac pictures Christ.

Oh, indeed he does. And then all of a sudden there's a ram in the thicket, a thorn-crowned ram. You say, oh, the ram, the thorn-crowned ram, that pictures Christ.

Indeed he does. And then there's a voice from heaven, and it's called the angel of the Lord. You say, oh wait, that's Christ.

And indeed it is. And he's just in all these different pictures. And we have something like that here.

In front of Joshua is the land. That's Christ. And we have Joshua.

His name is Jesus. And he's a picture of Christ. And standing before him with a sword drawn in his hand is Christ.

It's the angel of the Lord. And why I say it's the simplest principle of all, and the key to everything, because Joshua is Christ, and the angel of the Lord is Christ, and the land in front of him is Christ. And the principle is this.

Only Christ can take me into Christ. Only Jesus can lead me into Jesus. And only Jesus can lead you into Jesus.

We're going to enter into the fullness which is Christ. Jesus has to take us in. A thousand and one problems will be solved if you believe that with all your heart.

Ask God to help you pull out all the stops and believe that. Only Christ can take you into Christ. You don't need to run to all these other places.

I need seminary, and I need Bible school, and I need a big library, and the local church is going to take me in, and this is going to take me in, and that, and Black Rock. Black Rock's not taking you into Christ. Christ takes you into Christ.

Jesus takes you into Christ. It takes God to reveal God. Look again, chapter 5. Let's break it down a little bit.

That wonderful principle, only Jesus can take me into Jesus. Remember, as Joshua meets the captain of the Lord's host, this is a total surprise to him. Jesus loves to just show up, you know.

I like Jacob's story, you know, where Jesus showed up and ambushed him. He's all alone, it's dark, it's at night, and all of a sudden he jumps out of the bushes. Ah! He starts wrestling.

You ever meet the Lord that way? Joshua wasn't praying, Lord, I'm about to enter into the land, and I know the land pictures Christ, and fullness of Christ, and union with Christ, and someday the whole world are going to look at that and try to find principles. So, right now, before I go in, teach me, he wasn't praying that. You've got to understand it from Joshua's point.

At this point, in Joshua's mind, he thought that that land was before him, and the total responsibility of entering in and taking that land was on him. He thought it was his responsibility. So, he's trying to figure out a strategy.

How in the world is he going to muster up the troops, and get enough committees, and what kind of programs is he going to have, and how is he going to raise the finances, and how is he going to deal with all of this? Verse 13, it came about when Joshua was by Jericho. What's he doing by Jericho? Well, you know, that was the first battle, and that's central Palestine, and that's where they're going in. And he was on a reconnaissance mission.

He was looking it over, because he has a responsibility. And God told him in chapter 1 and verse 9 to be brave, and to be strong, and courageous, and that God would be with him, and that's what he's trying to do. And he's out spying the land.

He's in enemy territory. He's probably hiding behind a bush, and he's looking up at this wall, Jericho. I don't know if you've ever read what they think about those walls of Jericho.

It's some amazing thing. I read that the walls, of course, it's only a guess, but they say that these walls were about 30 feet high, and about 12 feet thick, and they were double walls, and there was about 15 feet in between the double walls. And I can see Joshua looking at these walls, saying, how in the world am I ever going to get in there and take Jericho? How in the world are we going to do this? When the spies had returned, remember, 40 years earlier, they said the people are strong, and the cities are fortified, and they're all walled, and the walls are high, and there's giants in the land.

They had just had a victory on the east of the Jordan. And the Bible says those cities were fortified with high walls, large gates, and bars. And I can picture Joshua doing what I did as a young Christian, and what many Christians do.

They got the whole Christian life in front of them, and they scratch their heads, and this one's talking about surrender, and this one's talking about missions, and this one's talking about discipleship, and this one's talking about being a godly husband and a godly father, and this one's talking about this, and they're going, oh, the whole Christian life's before me, how in the world am I going to do it? So many temptations, so many enemies, so many giants, so much ground to be possessed, so many enemies to be dispossessed. And so he's out wondering if he's supposed to go over the wall, or through the wall, or around the wall, or under the wall, or starve him up, trying to figure it all out. And suddenly, don't just read this la-la-la, suddenly, the angel of the Lord shows up.

A man shows up, not an ordinary man. He's armed, and his sword's not in his sheath either. It's drawn.

I don't know about you brothers, but if I was out hiding behind the bushes, and taking notes, and on a reconnaissance mission trying to figure this out, I think we can do this, we go around here, starve him out, surround him, and take battering ram and hit the wall, or however you're doing it, and all of a sudden this guy shows up, and he's got a sword drawn, I'd have been scared out of my wits. The truth that only Jesus can lead me to Jesus. Let me break it down into two principles that Joshua learned that day.

The first was suggested from his question in verse 13. Joshua went to him and said, are you for us, or for our enemy? Now, it's unfortunate that we don't have a tone of voice when we read the Bible. We don't know what tone of voice they use.

Things change depending on the tone of voice that you use. John Calvin thinks that this particular passage was a challenge, and that Joshua was brave. He said, whose side are you on? You for us or for them? Make yourself known.

Who are you? Who goes there? I don't know if that's the way it was. Maybe he had a lump in his throat. It doesn't tell us how he appeared.

I don't know if he had a shining face and a flaming sword. That might make a difference, however he approached him. I don't know.

It just says a man with a sword in his hand. But maybe he said it with a lump in his throat. Maybe this was a big guy like Paul Greenlee or Charles.

He comes up here and he's got this sword in his hand. And maybe he said, whose side are you on? Are you on our side or on their side? He might have said it like that. I asked my son Dan, how do you think he said that? What tone of voice? And Dan said, just crossed his fingers like that.

I said, well, what do you mean? He said, whose side are you on? I hope you're on our side. I hope you're on our side. Maybe it was something like that.

I love to study this with my family. I study this with Stephen as well. And he says, you know, you keep saying that when the angel of the Lord appeared, it's Jesus.

I don't always see that. I'm not sure if you're right that it's always Jesus when he appeared. But he said, I tell you what, I'm sure it's Jesus here.

And I said, what makes you so sure? He said, he didn't give a straight answer. Jesus never gives a straight answer. You on our side? No.

You on their side? No. You on anybody's side? He didn't give a straight answer. Verse 14, No, rather indeed, now I've come as the captain of the host of the Lord.

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, bowed down and said to him, what is my Lord to say to his servant? Let me, the big principle, only Jesus can lead me to Jesus. Let's break it down. Joshua learned two things that day, and here's the first.

The angel of the Lord was teaching him and said it in so many words, the Christian life is my business. I'm not on your side, and I'm not on their side. I'm on God's side.

That's whose side I'm on. He has a purpose, and he has a will, and he has a plan. And if you line up with that will and that purpose and that plan, you might find me on your side.

But if you dare to go against it, you won't find me on your side. I'm on God's side, and it's my business. It's his business, it's his name, it's his reputation, and so on.

It's his glory. He learned a second truth as well. Verse 14, No, rather indeed, now I've come as the captain of the host of the Lord.

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, he bowed down and said to him, what has my Lord to say to his servant? Christian life before him. And all of a sudden, the angel of the Lord shows up with a sword, and he said, before you go in there, I want you to know that that's my business in there. And the second thing he learned was, and what the angel was saying is this, that's my business.

It's your business to let me do my business. General Joshua, relinquish your command. That's what he was saying.

Relinquish your command. Surrender the fighting forces to me right now. Surrender everything.

You're no longer in charge. The Christian life is my business. I'm going to do it.

You can't do it. You're not going to do it. How glad Joshua was that day to hear that that burden was rolled away.

And when he fell on his face and he said, what has my Lord to say to his servant? He was surrendering the Israeli troops. This was the commander in chief laying it all down at the feet of the angel of the Lord, and if he could have spelled it out, he would have said, hallelujah, hallelujah, glory. When I started surveying that, I didn't want to do it.

I didn't want to go in. I knew I couldn't get enough volunteers out of these tribes to do anything, and I couldn't raise enough money, and there's not enough committees in the world. You want it? You got it.

Take it. That's what happened before he went into the land. The angel of the Lord appeared with a sword in his hand, and he said, that whole thing, I promise you, that's my business.

Stay out of the Godhead. Stay out of my business. It's not your business.

I've got all that for you. Surrender your troops. Joshua falls down and he says, you got it.

You want the host? You got it. I was dreading it. I didn't know how to do it.

I saw those mountains and the valleys and easy to defend and hard to take, and I didn't want to do it. I can picture Joshua when he hears, I'm the Lord, the captain of the host of the law, and he says, you want a host? There's a host. Look at those tribes over there.

Those 20,000 from the two and a half tribes, they don't even want to cross over. We had a big problem with them. You can have them.

You can have the other 100,000 troops. They're yours. Joshua doesn't have a clue.

When he says, Lord of hosts, he's not referring to that motley crew. He's the Lord of the armies of heaven and earth. Hosts include the angels of God.

He said, you know who I am. It's my business to give you that land. It's not your business.

It's your business to let me do my business. Joshua falls down. He says, you got the host? And he said, I've got the armies of heaven and earth, and I'm in charge, and you're no longer in charge.

Marvelous day for Joshua. And then he not only had to surrender. You go through the book of Joshua.

Many swords are drawn in that book. Bible says that war took seven years. The first sword ever drawn in that book was in the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Battle is His, and it's not ours. Not only must you surrender the troops, surrender everything to Him, there's another part of that surrender. Verse 15, remove your sandals for the place where you're standing is holy ground.

He not only had to surrender everything, but then he had to stand in a very un-military way for a commander-in-chief. You know, that was time to put on your military sandals and to lace up those boots with the hob knobs and all. He had to take them off and stand barefoot before God.

What does it mean to stand barefoot before God? I think it means more than awe. I think it means more than reverence. I think it means more than, this is holy ground.

Every place is holy ground. We'd have to walk barefoot everywhere. It's all where the presence of the Lord is, is holy ground.

But I think there's another principle involved. You trace, I did. Every place in the Bible where it says barefoot or take off your shoes or anything, I've traced out every verse.

And I have an idea that there's a principle, and the principle is this. God could have said to Moses, take off your clothes for the place that you're standing is holy ground. He could have said to Joshua, take off your clothes.

But God's a modest God. And so he said, take off your shoes. And naked feet will represent nakedness.

He's bringing them back to the Garden of Eden where they were without clothes before God, naked and unashamed. And a relationship, naked and open before Him. You trace it through in the Bible, and I think you'll see that that principle, take off your shoes, has to do with nakedness.

Listen to Hebrews. I think this is the point. The Word of God is quick, sharp, powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, able to judge the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.

There's no creature hidden from His sight. All things are open and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. In simple words, brother, what he's saying is this.

Christian life is my business. It's not your business. Your business is to let me do my business.

And the way you're going to let me do business is two things. Number one, you are going to surrender everything to me so that I can fight. I'll take you in.

I'll give you the land. And number two, you've got to take off your shoes and stand before me naked, bare, transparent. In simple words, be yourself.

Be who you are. God has never called you to be anybody but you. He's made you you.

Be you. He said if you really want that land, if you're not playing games and you don't want to just go through motions and through the machinery of it, you surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ and be who you are. Because one of the greatest principles in all the word of God is this.

God always deals with me where I am and as I am in order to bring me to the place that He wants me. Oh, that's a precious truth. I wouldn't give all the stars in heaven if they were laden gold for that truth that God deals with me where I am.

That I don't have to fake it. I don't have to play a game. And I can stand barefoot before God.

And He's saying, look, you want the Christian life? It's my business to give it to you. And it's your business to let me do my business. Because two swords can't be drawn at the same time.

You draw yours, I put mine in my sheath. You put yours in your sheath, I'll draw mine. Wonderful thing to read the verse, the battle is not yours, but God's.

Terrible thing to turn that around. The battle's not God's, but yours. And in that seven years, thirty-one kings, thirty-one armies, seven years of fighting, they only had thirty-six casualties on their side.

Because one time they did it on their own and he put his sword back. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joshua at a place called Gilgal, where the burden was rolled away. The angel of the Lord sort of stayed there at the base camp at Gilgal.

Couldn't always see him, but he was there. The Bible says one day the angel of the Lord started walking away from Gilgal. Where did he go when he left Gilgal? Turn to Judges chapter 2 and we'll wrap this up.

Judges chapter 2, verse 1. Now the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bohem. And he said, I brought you up out of Egypt and I fed, I led you into the land which I've sworn to your fathers. I said, I'll never break my covenant with you.

As for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land. You shall tear down their altars. But you've not obeyed me.

What is this that you've done? Therefore, I said, I will not drive them out before you. They will become as thorns in your side. Their gods will be a snare to you.

And when the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept and they named the place Bohem. And there they sacrificed to the Lord. What's Bohem? It means weeping.

It means crying. Because when it all started out, the angel of the Lord was like this with his sword drawn in his hand. But then they tried to help God.

And they slid away from the Lord and they took their eyes off Him and they started to think it was their business to take the Christian life. And they didn't let God do God's business. And so God walks away from Gilgal and He stands at Bohem and He said, I promised you, I took you out of Egypt.

I took you into the land. I kept My word. Thirty-six casualties in all of those armies.

I did it for you. But now you're on your own. Good luck.

Good luck fighting those temptations. Good luck fighting that indwelling corruption. Good luck possessing the land.

Good luck dispossessing the enemy. Good luck overcoming those habits and those bondages that you have. You're on your own.

Go ahead, take the land. Live in the land. I'm not fighting for you anymore.

And oh, they wept. They wept as we should weep. There's no greater news in the world than that the angel of the Lord has His sword drawn and that the responsibility of the Christian life is not mine, but His.

There's no sadder news in the world than that He's put the sword back in its sheath and He's letting me fight my own battles. Have you fought your own battles? Have you wept? Indeed, you'll weep. You'll weep.

You'll crash like Dana said. It's all going to come crumbling down. It has to.

David, one day, writing a psalm, my favorite psalm, Psalm 84. How I love Psalm 84. That's my favorite psalm of all.

My favorite psalms keep changing, but that's my favorite psalm so far. For now, that's my favorite psalm. And he said, how blessed are those that put their faith in Him.

They pass through the valley of weeping and they turn it into a fountain. If you repent at Botham and pass through the valley of weeping, God will turn that into a fountain. And He'll take His sword out again and He'll fight again.

There's music in that. Do you hear the music? Brothers, the Christian life, it's wonderful. Oh, now, finally, I used to think David was lying.

He said, oh, word of God is sweeter than honey. I said, yeah, right. It's dry as dust.

It's not sweet at all. It's awful. But I'll tell you, once you begin to see the Lord, and as Dana was so beautifully expounding from the New Testament, and as God begins to work this in you, you see Christ in the fullness of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit is in your life, taking you into Jesus, and you know His indwelling, and He's fighting for you.

And it's a land of milk and honey, houses you didn't build, farms you didn't plant, orchards you didn't plant, eating, drinking, lacking nothing. God, from the beginning to the end, 24-7, watching over it and so on. But if, along the way, you get the idea that God needs your help, and that it's not His business, it's your business, and you pull out your sword, when you pull out yours, He puts His in, and you're on your own.

And it won't take long, and you'll be at the valley a week, but you can pass through. I don't know where you are right now in your experience, but I promise you this, the angel of the Lord encamps around about those that fear Him, to rescue them. To rescue them from thirst, to rescue them from condemnation, to rescue them from all of the responsibility of living the Christian life.

It's all on Him. It's on His shoulders. He'll give it to you.

You try to take it, you'll lose it. He'll give it to you. Jesus takes you to Jesus.

Brothers, enter into that this week. It's before you. He wants you to have it.

He wants you to enter in. He'll give it to you. This is the angel of the Lord.

As He has been, He is right now. That's how He appears. It's not your business.

It's His. Thinking it was the Holy Spirit, being fooled by religion, not looking to Christ. Forgive us, Lord, and work in us this reality, that the angel of the Lord meets with us, wants us to relinquish our command, give it all to Him, and stand barefoot before Him.

Work it in our hearts, we pray, in Jesus' name. Now I'll go take a nap. There he is.

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