

## WHOSE SIDE IS GOD ON?

Passage for study and prayer: **Joshua 5:13-6:16**

***“Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a Man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our adversaries?” “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” (Joshua 5:13,14)***

These days, as the whole world takes sides in the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, believers in Jesus need to remember Joshua’s experience, as he was about to lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land. The Man he saw was the Commander of the armies of Yahweh, and He did not fight on either side against the other. Instead, He had his own agenda, to command the will and purpose of God in the coming battle.

Likewise today, the Lord does not take sides in a human sense, and neither must we. It is all too easy to let our flesh rise up and produce ungodly motives, so that we find ourselves praying for Israel and the Middle East out of a wrong spirit or from a limited human perspective. Those kind of prayers do not get very far.

Instead, like Joshua, we need to worship (v 14), listen for God’s word (v 14), and obey the call to holiness (v 15). It was only after this personal encounter with His Commander, this obedience and consecration, that Joshua was given detailed instructions on how to fight God’s way for Jericho. His battle became obedience to God, rather than overcoming his adversaries. Face to face with the Man, he received the anointing to be the Lord’s instrument and part of His army. What a lesson this is for us. To be effective intercessors, we must be in close fellowship with Him, knowing His Word, seeking His will, and living in a way that reflects His character. Then we pray with His heart and Spirit. What a challenge, but what a blessing!

Praise God that this conflict is above all a spiritual one, led by the Lord Himself, with whom you have a personal relationship! Seek Him for His heart for all peoples involved, so you may pray according to His agenda and with His love in the days ahead. ***“What does my Lord say to His Servant?” (v 14)***

Pray for the peoples on both sides of this war, who have suffered much and are filled with a growing anger and despair. Stand against strongholds of hatred and revenge, and pray for God to grant grace to forgive. ***“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.” (Proverbs 10:12)***

God’s will is definitely and primarily for the spiritual salvation of Israel and all the peoples of the Middle East. Pray fervently that all the suffering and evil both Israelis and Palestinians are experiencing will lead many to faith in the Prince of Peace. ***“A Man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” (Isaiah 32:2)***