

# Joshua: The God Who Fights for Us (Joshua 1, 5–7)

## Introduction

### Joshua 1

One of my favorite movies is 1980's movies is *Hoosiers*. (FWIW, I think when we get to heaven we'll learn that Western culture reached its pinnacle in the 1980's: *Chicago*, *REO Speedwagon*, *RunDMC*, *Whitney Houston*, *Chuck Norris*, *Bon Jovi 1.0*, *Top Gun*, *the Empire Strikes Back*, *the Indiana Jones Trilogy*... I know that not everyone agrees with me, but that's just because you are not filled with the Spirit. These things are spiritually discerned.)

**Hoosiers came out in 1986 when I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We watched Hoosiers before every basketball tournament in high school.** In the movie, which is based on a true story,<sup>1</sup> you have this little **backwoods, high school team** in Indiana that overcomes incredible odds and makes it all the way to the Indiana state championship, where they face this **school that is 10x bigger** than they are, before this **humongous crowd in Indiana University's** main arena, which is like 100 times bigger than anything they've ever played in before.

**Gene Hackman**, who plays the coach, **walks the team into the arena** the day before the game, and **he can sense how overwhelmed they are** at its bigness. So he gets out a tape measure and has one of them measure **how tall the rim is**—10 feet; then the **distance from the free throw line** to the rim—15 feet. Standard. His point: the arena is much

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<sup>1</sup> <https://roadtrippers.com/stories/the-real-story-behind-the-movie-hoosiers-told-by-the-leading-scorer>

bigger, but none of the basics change. *The key to winning is to keep doing the basics well.*

**That's the point of the opening scenes in the book of Joshua.** God's people are about to go into a **whole new arena**, but the basics of what it means to walk with God never change.

**Not in that day, and not in ours, either.** In your life you will go through multiple seasons—maybe you are in a new one now—being a student; for some of you getting married or having kids; for others of you, building a career. Being single again. Retiring. Becoming famous. Going into ministry. *The arenas change, but none of the basics do.*

And sometimes you **feel like the fear and pressure will swallow** you up: *“Do I have what it takes? Can I make it in this season?”* And God takes out the **tape measure** and says, “See? The basics are the same.”

### Joshua 1:1–9

The **book of Joshua** opens like this: [1:1] After the death of Moses the **servant of the LORD**, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun (which doesn't mean he didn't have parents; Nun was his dad's name... He was), **Moses' assistant** (mancretary), [2] “Moses my servant is dead. **Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.**”

- A little context: **Joshua had been one of the 12 spies** sent out to spy on the land. Two of those sent out came back and said, “Yeah, the giants are big, but our God is bigger,” and Joshua was 1 of those 2. **The other 10 had said**, “There's no way we can do it.” **We don't remember** any of them.
  - One, because they were cowards, and you never remember cowards.
  - Two, because they had **strange names**: Like one was named Shophat. *Sho-phonat*. **Parents, don't name your kids sho-phonat**. If you name your kid *Sho-phonat*, it's not going to

go *sho-well* for them in high school. Shophat is going to prom by himself.

[3] Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. [5] No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Why? Because you are awesome? No, Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Some of you all your life have been told to **look for confidence in the wrong** place. You've been told by your parents and your teachers and the talk shows to look within: "*You are awesome! You are special, one of a kind! You are a snowflake, a rainbow, a skittle. You're irreplaceable.*" You're really not.

- A friend of mine's football coach: if you put your hand in a bucket of water and pull it out, what happens to where your fist was in the water shows how irreplaceable you are.

Confidence doesn't come from looking at what's inside you; it comes from seeing the One standing *beside* you. [7] Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. Joshua, know your Bible!

### Now, Joshua 5:13–15

Joshua's **first major challenge** in taking the land is Jericho, and it's not an easy one, because Jericho is the **most fortified city** in the world. Its walls were so thick that you could ride two chariots across them.

This scene here in Joshua 5 takes place on the **eve of that battle**. As **you could imagine**, Joshua is pretty nervous. War is **imminent**. This is Joshua's **first true moment** of leadership.

- So, understandably, he is having a **little trouble sleeping** ...and so he goes out and **takes a walk**.

- It's **late at night**, and he's out **praying**, or **dipping tobacco**, or playing angry birds on his phone, or however he unwinds.

[5:13] *When Joshua was by Jericho*, Now, the way that is written in Hebrew indicates that Joshua had snuck right up to the walls of the city. It literally says, "When he was *"at Jericho."*<sup>2</sup> *...he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?"*

- Now, first, can we acknowledge—Joshua is a **man's man**. I mean, he's **right by the enemy wall** and he encounters a strange man in the dark with his sword drawn. **A lesser man, like me, would have hightailed** it out of there... but not Joshua.
- Joshua goes **right over and challenges** the guy to a fight. Come on, now. **Write this in your Bible: Joshua is the truer and better Chuck Norris.**
  - Some people wear Superman pajamas. Superman wore Joshua pajamas.
  - Death once had a near-Joshua experience

*"And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" [14] And he said, "No;*

- Uhhh... "No?" Did Joshua even ask him a "yes/no" question? "Hey what's your name?" **No. "No"** means, "**You're asking the wrong question.**"

*"No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come."*

- The **question is not**, "Am I on your side, Joshua, but are you on my side?"

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<sup>2</sup> "The preposition here is  $\text{--}\text{ב}$  [*bi*], commonly translated "in." But the preposition also frequently means "at" (*HALOT* 104), and "at Jericho" fits the scenario easily: Joshua was somewhere near it, not within its walls (cf. 6:1, which says that Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites)." D. M. Howard, Jr., *Vol. 5: Joshua*, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 155–156.

- I'm **not coming as the lieutenant**, says this strange Man; I come as the **General**.

*And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" [15] And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.*

**Now, who is it exactly that Joshua is standing in front of?** You say, "An angel." **Can't be an angel**, because it says that Joshua worshipped this Man, and whomever it was didn't stop him. **Angels never let you worship them.** In Revelation 22:9, John falls down to worship an angel and the angel gets upset: "What are you doing? I'm a creature just like you. Worship God." Joshua, however, falls on his face and this Being doesn't say, "**Whoa, Josh, get up,**" but "thank you for worshipping me."<sup>3</sup>

This is what theologians call a "**christophany**," or an Old Testament, pre-nativity appearance of God in human form. This is **Jesus before he's born** in the manger; **always the Commander in Chief** of the Lord's armies.

**What he demands is surrender.** Because, listen—this is not a battle that Joshua is going to fight for Jesus with Jesus' help. This is a battle Jesus is going to fight for Joshua.

We **skipped this part**, but after they crossed the Jordan, as they lay exposed before Jericho, **God had Joshua circumcise** all the males. That left them really, really vulnerable—why would you put your soldiers in a very vulnerable position before the enemy. To show

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<sup>3</sup> THIRD, If there **were any doubt**, Joshua actually refers to him as "**the Lord**" in the next chapter. Joshua 6:2

them that safety and victory did not belong to them. This was God's battle, not theirs.

**6:1** Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. 2 And the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor." Then he proceeds to **give them instructions** on how to take Jericho.

But the **instructions are odd**. They are **all amped up** for a fight, but **God tells them**, I want you to put the ark in front of you and march around the city, in silence. Once a day for six days; and then, on day 7 I want you to march around 7 times, and on that 7<sup>th</sup> time, shout, and **I'll take care of the rest**.

- Don't lose **how bizarre** this is. They are all **amped up for a fight**. Joshua is itching to **prove himself**.
- Imagine if this happened in a **football game**. "On offense, don't run a play. I want you guys to hold hands and sing "Away in a manger."

How hard must this have been **for Joshua?** He wants to prove himself but no fighting?

God says, "I'll do all the fighting." Then God says, <sup>18</sup> But you, **keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction... all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD.**" That's an important detail. We'll come back to it later.

They did as instructed: **And as soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, they shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat...<sup>21</sup> Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.**

Now, **one thing to deal** with. People read this and say, “**Was this a divinely ordered genocide?** How can we say this is God’s word when it says stuff like this?” Richard Dawkins, because of passages like this one, says, “*The God of the Old Testament is... a petty, unjust, an unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.*” If nothing else, that sentence proves that Richard Dawkins owns a thesaurus.

*A few things to consider with this question (I’ll put this **on the blog** this week):*

- **The first word is Authority:** The rightness or wrongness of certain actions is based solely on whose authority stands behind them.
  - If you **starting writing checks** on behalf of your company, that can be wrong or right based on whether or not you have the authority.
  - **When it comes to life and death**, no one on earth has this kind of authority, but God does. And **no one can take that authority** to themselves. **God gave it for a special time to Israel**, with clear instructions, never again to be repeated.
  - In fact, **after this period** of the conquest, Israel is directly forbidden to do this again in Deut 4:2–9.<sup>4</sup> They were **not even allowed to keep a standing army** as other nations did.
  - And, also, **in these stories you’ll notice God does most** of the fighting. He **knocks walls** over. Later on, he’ll send **huge hail stones on another enemy**. Why? Because he **doesn’t want this to be sitting** on the shoulders of Israel. This is his work.

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<sup>4</sup> They were forbidden to ever take sex slaves like other nations did (Deut 21:10–14).

- **The second word is JUDGMENT. This was not about race, but judgment on Canaan.** God had said very clearly that the **Canaanites were being judged** because of their evil. The Bible and history tells us they were **some of the cruelest**, most oppressive societies ever to walk on earth, even sacrificing their children (Deut 12:31).
  - I know **they seem far removed from us**, but would you feel differently if this was done to ISIS, or to the Nazi party in the 1940’s? This was **all about judgment**.
  - In fact, **in one place, God tells Israel** that there is a certain part of the land they can’t have because the people who live there aren’t wicked enough yet (Gen 15:16).
- **Thirdly, this has nothing to do with race.** Two ways we know that: **1. God spares Rahab**, a Jericho woman, just because she repents and believes, and **the implication is** that he would have spared anyone in Jericho who had done that. They all knew about it; she was the only one who responded. **2. God told Israel repeatedly in Deuteronomy** that these same things would happen to them (and worse!) if they committed the idolatry and wickedness of the Canaanites.
- Now, lastly, you say, “Well, what about the **innocent people?** If not one else, the kids can’t be that much at fault?”
  - I’ve explained before that **we all recognize there is a communal dimension** to our sin. If I sinned by cheating on my wife, my kids will suffer for that.<sup>5</sup> These kids are suffering for the choices of their parents, just like ours do.
  - But in another, more important sense, God says he will never ultimately **hold the innocent accountable for the sins of the guilty;**<sup>6</sup> it’s just that from his perspective, eternity will more than make up for whatever suffering any of us went through here on earth.

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<sup>5</sup> Jonah; Deuteronomy; Ezekiel.

<sup>6</sup> Prov 17:15; Ezek 18:20

- **All people eventually die**, so in a sense when the innocent get caught up in things like this **it is like God is just collecting them early**, and any suffering or deprivation they experience here will **more than be made up** for there.<sup>7</sup>

○ *So, that's how we think about that...*

7:1 But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan... of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel.

Joshua doesn't know... <sup>2</sup>Joshua sent spies from Jericho to Ai (the next city over)... <sup>3</sup>And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai... for the people there are few." <sup>4</sup>So about three thousand men went up.

And they fled before the men of Ai, <sup>5</sup>...And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

The people are distraught. **What happened?** Why has the power of God left us?

So **Joshua gets on his face** before God and God reveals to him what Achan had done, and that they have to get that out before his presence and power will come back on them.

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<sup>7</sup> For more on the problem of genocide in the OT, see the video lecture from **Dr. Peter Williams**, "Moral Objections to the Old Testament," delivered at SEBTS, September, 2013 (online [here](#)), and these two resources from **Dr. Heath Thomas**: "The Old Testament, 'Holy War,' and Christian Morality" (online [here](#)), and the book, *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old Testament Problem* (available [here](#))

Notice how **God describes what Achan did: he "broke faith" (7:1)**—he violated Israel's posture of trust—faith—in God.

- Now, think **about that for a minute**: It looks to me like he got just a little greedy; like he wanted a little bigger piece of the pie. But God says that Achan **broke his faith relationship** to God. He quit depending on God to meet his needs and fill his life with meaning and happiness. So he took matters into his own hands. He says, "Well, I don't trust God or depend on him to fight for me and provide for me... so *I'll take matters into my own hands*."

### (Back to the Basics: 3 Postures)

**From these stories, I want us to focus on 3 postures** God had them re-assume as they **come into this new arena** of the Promised Land. These are **so foundational**; each one is literally a matter of life and death.

- **For you to succeed, with God**, in any area of your life—college, high school, marriage, kids, career—these three postures you must assume.

### 1. Surrender

- **The Man who appears to Joshua** in chapter 5 makes clear that he came not as the lieutenant to assist Joshua, but as the General to command Joshua.
- **How do you see God in your life?** This is a point I make a lot, because **most of us tend to relate to God like** our faithful lieutenant: Someone who can influence us, guide us, comfort us, take care of us, help us through tough times, and, most of all, escort us to a safe place after death so we don't have to be afraid
  - You see this at **funerals**. Everybody assumes God is on their side at the funeral. I walked through a graveyard the other day... literally every stone has a verse, or something about the angels. They all expect God on their side at death. **I know all these people** didn't put God first in their lives.
- And listen, God **wants to do all those things** in your life—he wants to bless and take care of you. But he **comes first as Lord**.

He came as the “**Lord Jesus Christ.**” You can’t have the “**Jesus**” or the “**Christ**” part of him if you don’t take him as “Lord.”

- If you invited me to your house and I ring the doorbell and you say, “Come in J.D.! Stay out, Greear!” I wouldn’t know what to do. I’m all J.D.; I’m all Greear. People say, “I want loving Jesus, helpful Jesus, save me and take me to heaven Jesus, but not **LORD Jesus**, or **Commanding Jesus**, or **holy Jesus**. *If so, you aren’t going to get any Jesus.*
- You **can’t divide him up** like he’s a salad bar.
- The **greatest threat to true, authentic faith** in your life (you really need to hear this if you live in the South!) is religious activity. and **religion is always characterized** by partial obedience.
  - **That’s what you see with Achan:** It’s not like he has switched sides, or quit believing in God. **He just broke his faith in God**, feeling like he needed to **take control of some areas** in his life to guarantee his happiness and security.
    - He probably said, “What’s this hurting anybody!”
    - How often do we justify our lack of obedience with that excuse?
    - His actions were evil not because of what they **did, directly, to other people**; but because of what they revealed about his confidence in God.
- Let me ask: What does this **Achan-kind of compromise look like** in your life? Well, in what areas do you feel like you can’t trust God’s ways and take matters into your own hands?
  - A certain habit you feel like you can’t really or be happy without.
  - Or maybe how you approach relationships. **For many people, I see this spring up all around** dating or marriage. That’s the **one area where you won’t let God** do it his way.
    - I know people who can’t surrender their sexuality to God or do things on his timetable: “*God, I don’t*

*want to be alone and you’re not moving fast enough!”*

- I see it with people who say, “God, I will not submit to you about whether or not I should get divorced. Because I **need to be happy** in that situation and I know best.”
  - You might as well say, “My name is Achan.”
- Maybe it shows up in **how you think about your children**. know many people for whom that is the one area God can’t have free reign in.
- Maybe it’s your **future plans**: “God, I want you as a part of my life, but here’s where I am going to go. I hope you’ll come along and bless me.”
- For many people, it’s what they **do with their money**.
  - I know so many people that **hide this in their tent**. It’s not that they are stingy, they just can’t trust God enough to obey him.<sup>8</sup>
- What do you keep hidden in your tent because you can’t trust God with it? **Lordship is one of those words** that must be total for it to have any meaning at all. If I say to Veronica, “I’m going to be **exclusively yours**, except **Friday nights** between 8pm and 4am.” 93%!
  - **Lord of all**, or not Lord at all.
  - Jesus doesn’t come to be a **part of your life**. He comes to take the **whole thing over**.
- And **the good news, Joshua, he’s got plans far beyond what you’ve dreamed**.
  - **C. S. Lewis said that coming to Jesus was like living in this old, rickety house** where a lot of stuff doesn’t work and so Jesus comes in and gets to work, fixing the leaks and

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<sup>8</sup> Jesus put his finger on why people won’t obey him with money: Matthew 6. They trust it for security or significance, more than they do God!

patching the roof and unplugging the drains... and things are great.

- But then God rips out a wall, and you object, but you realize there is shiplap under it—and you say, “I had no idea!” And then a shag carpet, and there are hardwoods. And you are impressed.
- But then God starts tearing down whole sections of the house. And you are like, “What is happening?” *“The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—(launching out on) a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. And He intends to come and live in it Himself.”*<sup>9</sup>
- **God had a better plan** for Joshua. But it started with surrender. **He’s got a better plan for you**, and it starts with total surrender for you, too.

## 2. Courage

- Throughout the book of Joshua, the primary thing that derails obedience is *fear*. Write this down: **In Joshua, FEAR = REBELLION.**
- **Which brings us to perhaps why God** did things the way he did them in this story. (It’s ok to ask when you read stories like this, “Why did God do it this way?”) **Put yourself in the place** of an Israelite warrior.
  - You are expecting to fight; God just tells them to march. **God never** tells you why or how long to march. (*It never says Joshua explained anything to them.*)
  - And **while you are marching** nothing happens. It **doesn’t say the bricks fell gradually**, or they **started to shake** a little bit each day.
- I don’t know about you, but I need to see progress in order to stay motivated!

- **Imagine these men going home at night.** I’m sure men and women weren’t that different back then. **So your wife asks you**, “How was your day?” *And you know what that means.* That doesn’t mean “yes, no” recounting of facts. That means, “Tell me all of the details, everything that happened, what you thought about it, how you felt about it, and then what you felt about how you felt.” Then she wants you to ask her all that. This is an hour and a half conversation that involves lots of words and facial expressions and feelings. **So, what did these guys say?** “Well.. we kind of... well... we walked around. I think this was like a vision trip or something.” Then, the second day. “So baby! How was the battle? You kill the bad guy, my big oh warrior you?” “Well... we just...walked around again.” **They didn’t see any progress until the last day!**
- Meanwhile, the people on the wall are **taunting you.**
- **Why is God doing it this way?**
  - *Because what he wanted to do through them was not as important as what he wanted to do in them.*
  - God was **preparing them for the promise** they were about to receive.
  - He wanted them to be **less focused on the outcome** and more focused on obedience.
    - **Because outcome is God’s** responsibility; faithful obedience is ours.
  - As they were walking, **nothing may have been happening to the walls**, but something was happening inside them.
- You see, **God doesn’t really need us to accomplish anything** for him. He can speak the world into existence! He doesn’t need my preaching ability; he can speak through donkeys. God doesn’t need you *at all*.
  - So, what we do for him is not nearly as important as who we become in him.

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<sup>9</sup> Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

- Reminds me of the story of the **proverbial woodpecker**. The tapping is not doing anything. It's just the earnest expectation that God is doing to what he said.
- **Where does God have you in the place of that woodpecker?** In your parenting? In plugging away at a job? In faithfully praying for, or sharing Christ with someone?
- **Again, there are 2 things I always feel like I need from God when I obey:** the WHY and the WHEN.
  - I'm like, "God, I'll go through just about anything, but I need to know why—I need to see it working; and I need to know when it will be over."
  - Like **dieting**. I need to eat a salad for lunch and have my clothes fit loosely the next day. Even better, to eat a salad on the scales and watch the weight decrease.
  - **Or working out:** I want to see my muscles get bigger as I work out. And I need to see the clock!
- God **usually doesn't give either** of those things. And **the greatest danger is that you'll quit**. What if they had stopped at day 6? I would have! I wouldn't have made it past day 3. *"It looks the same! Nothing is happening. I'm hitting my Fitbit goal, 10,000 steps, every day, but that is all."*
- What if you stop at day 6?
- *Courage is the ability to keep going even when you can't see results because you know God is faithful!*
- *And to keep going for a long time even when you don't see anything: **Endurance is what courage looks like over the long haul.** Endurance is simply courage repeated day by day.*
- **What derails most of us** in obedience is a **lack of courage**.
- **So let me ask:** Where is fear keeping you from obedience?
  - **Maybe there is a relationship** you know you need to end... but you're scared of what life will be like? Maybe it is in **pressing through** in the relationship
  - Maybe it is **coming clean** with a sin; admitting your problem
    - Bringing your **sexuality** in line with God. You wonder, "How will this work?"
- Maybe obeying God **with your finances**—obedience with the firstfruits; making the sacrifice
- **Having the hard conversation** with someone. Maybe telling them about Jesus or confronting them with hard truth.
- For some of you ladies, maybe it is **quitting the job and staying home with your kids**; You've been sold this bill of goods by your culture about what you should do to have worth and you know God is telling you to do something different.
  - For others of you ladies, **maybe it is to go back to work** but you are afraid all your girlfriends are going to judge you! I don't know.
  - I'm **not the Holy Spirit**. I'm just telling you that you have to listen to him and shut all the other voices out and act without fear.
- Maybe God has been telling you in this season to **quit the job** or start the business. But **you're just so scared** because this is **all you've known** and you have so many questions. God has so much for you!
- Going on **the mission trip**. And there are 1000 reasons to say no, but one reason to say yes: God told you to!
- For some of you, maybe it's to actually go **buy the ring and get down on one knee** and ask the question. You've been dating her for 7 years, hoss! You know she's the one. You're just scared. She knows it, and you know it. And now it's awkward between the two of it because you both realize you haven't asked because you're scared. Get your backbone out of your momma's purse and ask!
- Whatever it is, you **need to act with faith**. I promise you that when you do, when you say, "I'm going to do this!" what will well up in you is fear!

- **Do you know what is the most repeated command in the Bible?** “Fear not”: 366 times (which I’ve always seen as 1 for each day, including leap year).
- And look at this: There is a **very disconcerting line in book of Revelation**, that talks of all people thrown in lake of fire: **But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. Revelation 21:8**
- It is rebellion to delay doing what God has told you to do!

### 3. The Faith to Wait

- In Joshua, the people are ready to fight. The **question was if they were ready to wait!**
- **I hate waiting.**
  - I feel like **the whole world is aligned against me** on that. It’s probably **the source of my troubled relationship** with TWC. I wait so I can wait... and I’m having to re-enter the phone number associated with my account... Do you not have a computer system with caller ID?
  - The **worst, when you are flying into ATL.** (circling the airport) Did they not know we were coming? I can see it! It’s right there! Give me a parachute and I’ll jump!
- **Whenever God calls someone** to do something, there is always a period like that...
  - **Moses. Paul** (that’s a lot of circling, re-entering your phone number!). **David.**
- **Where are you circling?** Don’t abort. Your air traffic controller has it all under control.
- **This is the hardest faith of all:** the faith to wait! The time in your life when you can’t see what God is doing. The circling of...
  - Sickness.
  - Singleness.
  - The loss of job
  - A missions board turning you down
  - Getting passed over for a promotion

- Infertility
- Being a student or an intern when you want to be out doing something significant
- Praying for a loved one to come to faith

Well, Joshua leads them through many conquests in Joshua, and then he ends the book this way:

24:1 Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God. 2 And Joshua... **gave his farewell sermon**, reminding them of everything God had said, and of all the things God had done for them. He closed it like this: 14 “Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt (Here’s a question: Why did they still have *them?*), and serve the Lord. 15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve... whether the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

16 Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods...”

19 But Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the Lord...”

**Talk about a dud ending.** Imagine that at the end of a political talk:

- **ESPN halftime speech:** “We’re down by 10. They’re bigger, faster, stronger... which is why we’re going to lose. You don’t have it in you. Only 20 minutes until it is over, so endure.”

**That’s how Joshua ends. Joshua, like Moses, has been unable** to lead the people to be courageous. *This is how every book in the OT ends!*

So, **another Joshua would come**, and he would give us the courage to obey all the way.

**Because this Joshua would show us in even clearer ways that he was fighting for us.** The city that stood in our way was not Jericho, it was the city of our sin and the curse of death. And Jesus (*which is simply Greek for Joshua*) said, “**Don’t lift a finger to take it down.** There’s **nothing you can do.** I’ll do it for you.”

And he went to the **cross** and when he died he **shouted** and when he did, he **knocked down not walls of brick and mortar** but the wall of eternal separation from God. The **sword of our judgment that he carried in his hands** he turned on himself placed into his own heart.

- And he said, **just watch, and believe**, and shout in worship!

**That’s what it means to become a Christian**—you shout, “**I believe** you paid for my sin Lord Jesus!” And when you do, the wall separation between you and God falls down.

**And then for the rest of your life**, you just **keep shouting—I believe...** (LISTEN) that **if you won this battle** for me—that you will **also give me** the **power to live** the Christian life, or to be a **good husband** or dad, or to **accomplish your will** in my career, to be a **faithful witness**, to overcome **temptation**, to **face cancer** victoriously or to **endure this season** with patience and joy and victory.

- *If you knocked down the **biggest city** of all for me—my death and condemnation—then surely you will knock down these **lesser ones—like cancer or job failure**—through me as well!*
- *The Christian life is not you for Christ, but Christ for you and then in and through you!*

**We obtain victory in life not by superior battle techniques**, but by shouting our belief over and over that he overcame the greatest battle of all for us, and that he will continue to do so as he fights for you.

**All it takes for you to succeed in this season of your life**, or *any season* of your life, is for you to surrender, have the courage to obey and not give up, and the patience to wait on God!