

Joshua 5:11 – 6:4, 27

Expanding on the Torah reading in **Leviticus 23** about the feasts of the Lord, this passage mentions Passover, the eating of the grain of the Promised Land (which points to the First Fruit Offering and Pentecost), and the blowing of the shofar, relating to Rosh Hashanah but also Yom Kippur.

This is all in relation to the battle of Jericho.

In essence, we see all the feasts of the Lord arrayed against the walls of that city, representing our rebellious mind and will, which like Jericho is "shut up tight" against God (**Joshua 6:1**) probably, like the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, to show God's power.

Jericho was, according to Targum , closed with iron gates and reinforced with copper bolts.

The ark of the covenant is also mentioned (**6:4**) - which reminds us of Zion, God's dwelling place and the destination of the pilgrimage feasts. That was the subject of **Psalms 87**, another reading for this week.

The Angel of the Lord is the key at the center of all of those images.

Joshua 5:14 - "And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?"

Rashi - "I have now come": to your aid, for no man can wage war against it [Jericho] and seize it, to throw down the wall.

The rabbis saw this as the Archangel Michael, as did Augustine. But many Christian commentators see "the Angel of the Lord" as a manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ.

Joshua 5:15 - "And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

This is similar to the words of the Lord at the burning Bush

- **Exodus 3:2** - "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush..."

- **Exodus 3:5** - "And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

If the Angel had been a created creature, he would not have received worship from Joshua (See **Revelation 19:10**)

The Angel of the Lord as the Word of God

Christ is the Angel/Messenger of the Covenant

- **Malachi 3:1** - "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger (angel - ἄγγελόν in the LXX) of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."

Justin Martyr ('Dial. cum Tryphone,' 56) cites **Genesis 18:1-2** to prove that, as he says, "there is another God under (ὑπὸ) the the Creator of all things, who is called an angel because he announces (ἀγγέλειν) whatever the Creator of all things desires him to announce." And from the expression "the Lord rained down fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven" (**Genesis 19:24**), he deduces the belief that this Being was "Lord from beside (παρά) the Lord who is in heaven."

Jacob saw Him as a man, and said, 'I have seen God face to face, and my soul is preserved.' (**Genesis 32:30**)

Tertullian, ('Adv. Prax.,' 14.) says that God was "invisible as the Father, but visible as the Son."

"Who else," says Origen, in his Homily on this passage in Joshua, "is the prince of the host of the virtues of the Lord, save our Lord Jesus Christ? Joshua would not have adored unless he had recognized God."

Divine Synergy

Christ as the Angel of the Lord, fighting on behalf of his people, while they "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" is an example of synergy

Synergy = The interaction or cooperation of two or more agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

- **Mark 16:20** - "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

"working with them" = *synergeō* - co-working, partnering together
From *syn* = with, beside, accompanying + *ergon* - work, deed, labor, doing

- **James 2:21-22** - "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought (*synergeō*) with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

- **Romans 8:28** - "And we know that all things work together (*synergeō*) for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

The word is also used countless times to describe Christians as "fellow-laborers together with Him"

Throughout the Bible, Israel only had to show up in agreement, to gather at the appointed time and place, then stand still and watch God perform what they could not achieve.

J. R. R. Tolkien on producing the web of an intricate story:

"It is indeed easier to unravel a single thread — an incident, a name, a motive — than to trace the history of any picture defined by many threads. For with the picture in the tapestry a new element has come in: the picture is greater than, and not explained by, the sum of the component threads."

Christ and his people are weaving a mysterious and beautiful tapestry through their *synergeō*. His power combined with our submission and agreement.

Joshua 6:27 - "So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country."