

## Neither?

**Jos 5:13** And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, **Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?**

**Jos 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?

I am certain when Joshua encountered this man with his sword drawn in his hand, he recognized this man to be a mighty man, perhaps a champion of military prowess. He immediately wanted to know on whose side this man stood. “[Art] thou for us, or for our adversaries?” The answer was “Nay.” This was another way of saying “Neither.”

When sides are drawn, men seek to know who is for or against them. Joshua felt no different. Seeing a man of such stature and with his sword drawn indicating his readiness to war, Joshua asked a simple and legitimate question. *Whose side are you on?* The man replied *Neither*. I wonder if for a moment Joshua was taken back. Maybe he thought, “*What kind of answer is that!*”

The expected answer for today’s believers would be “*I am for you, of course! The angels of God are for His people!*” Anything less would throw many a curve ball. I can imagine and almost hear the verse many would be partially quoting: “*If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us?*” Or saying, “*The angels are given charge over us... to succor us... they are encamped all around us!*”

The man let Joshua know he was on neither side. His loyalty was to neither side of man. He did not belong to either army. He identified himself as "*captain of the host of the LORD.*" He was in the LORD's army and on His side! He was a chief ruler, a captain, a general, a high-ranking officer of the angelic hosts. He received his orders from the Commander, Jehovah God.

Joshua, though the ordained leader of the Israelites, when he knew who this man was and that he came for a purpose, fell on his face and worshiped. He then asked, "*What saith my lord unto his servant?*"

It was then that he had a similar experience as Moses. Verse 15 gives us this account, "*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.*"

Perhaps as pastors ("Unto the angel of the church of..." Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14) of congregations, we would fulfill our calling more completely, not by merely taking sides, but by taking the words of our Captain and King and deliver the message that God would give.

I hear a question echoing down through the ages, "*Who [is] on the LORD'S side?*"

-RWT