

Lord Sabaoth

Communion Meditation on Joshua 5:13-15

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 7-24-2011

For communion, I want to deal with one of the names of God that is an encouragement to those who are fearful. It is the name Jehovah Sabaoth, which means the Lord of armies or Lord of hosts. And for those of you who are purists, and like to have the Hebrew pronunciation, it is Yahweh Tseba'oth. Yahweh Tseba'oth occurs 245 times, so it is a very frequently used name. And for an additional 40 times, God calls himself Elohim Tseba'oth – God of hosts or God of armies. So the name Tseba'oth is used 285 times. Isaiah 47:4 says, **“As for our Redeemer, Yahweh Sabaoth is His name, the Holy One of Israel.”** And several times in Isaiah and elsewhere it says, **“Yahweh Sabbaoth is His name.”**

The root of the word Tseba'oth means a fight, war or army. So inherent in God's very name is that He wars against things. Think of that. He identifies Himself as a warrior. And when we cut covenant with God, we must vow to war against what God wars against. So many Christians refuse to engage in culture wars; they refuse to war against their flesh; and they have no idea how to war against Satan. They want peace at any cost. They don't want war. But God calls us to be soldiers of the cross. These 285 Scriptures indicate that the hosts of heaven are under His command, and they indicate that God is the commander also of the hosts of Israel. We are part of the hosts that He commands.

And there are two more applications that I want to make from this name, Lord of armies. The second application comes from the word “hosts” or “armies.” We need not fear being a minority among men, because greater are those who are with us than those who are with the humanists. When Elisha was surrounded by the soldiers of Syria, he was not concerned. His servant was terrified. And Elisha said, **“Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”** And he prayed that the servant's eyes be opened. When God enabled the servant to see with spiritual eyes he saw that the mountain was full of fiery horses and fiery chariots all around them. When you feel like turning America back to its foundations is hopeless, don't just look at the physical resources that we possess. Remember that God is Yahweh Tseba'oth. When you feel puny like David when he was up against Goliath, make Yahweh Tseba'oth your comfort as David did. David said to Goliath, **“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the**

God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” That name can encourage us with the huge angelic hosts that are fighting on our side.

But the third application comes from the first word. He is the *Lord* of hosts. He is the one that sets agendas. He is the one who tells us when and how to fight. We fight for Him, and it is only when we fight for Him that He fights for us. Please turn to Joshua 5:13-15. This is a passage that uses that name twice. This takes place right before the conquest of Jericho. And Joshua is out doing some reconnoitering. Let me read verses 13-15:

Joshua 5:13 “**And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, ‘Are You for us or for our adversaries?’**” [What does that question imply? It implies that Joshua is making Israel the center of attention. That question implies that all of life is divided up into whether you are serving Israel or whether you are against Israel. And so the first word to come out of God’s mouth is a contradiction of the assumption. Verse 14:]

Joshua 5:14 “**So He said, ‘No,’** [Joshua didn’t ask a “Yes or No” question. He asked a question with a false dilemma. And God says “No” to either side, of being against or for. He says, “No”] **‘but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant?’** [Now *that* is the attitude that we need to have. *He* sets the agenda; *He* is the Lord. And when we enter into covenant with Him, it is not to get our will done in heaven. It is to pray, “Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”]

Joshua 5:15 “**Then the Commander of the LORD’S army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so.**” Joshua approached God with reverence as we must do too.

So as we renew our covenant with God this morning, let’s remind ourselves that 1) He is a God who wars against things and calls us to war against things. 2) The name Yahweh Tseba’oth implies victory, and we can take comfort in that. 3) We must commit ourselves to bowing before, submitting to and following the agendas of Yahweh Tseba’oth, the *Lord* of hosts. Jeremiah 51 says, “**the Portion of Jacob is not like them, for He is the Maker of all things; and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance. The LORD of hosts is His name.**” Let’s enter into covenant with Yahweh Tseba’oth. Amen.

