

Introduction

Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right.
Abraham Lincoln

The Bible tells the story of how God set apart a people and nation that belonged to Him. That nation would walk before God and honor His commands. In the early chapters, we find God setting apart Abraham and his descendants as His people in the earth; through them, He would build a *mighty nation*.¹ Toward the end of the book, Peter describes the fulfillment of that vision – the Church – as a peculiar people, and a holy nation of priests.² Between Abraham and the culmination of scripture, we follow the journey and story of how God built and distinguished this great nation from all the other nations of the earth.

In Exodus, God begins to form His people through His deliverance of the enslaved Hebrews in Egypt. Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy detail the unique code of conduct prescribed to the people of God. Something unprecedented unfolds in these books. It is expressed in Deuteronomy, when the people consider the fantastic reality of life that God has bestowed upon them: *'For what great nation has a god as near to them as the LORD our God is near to us whenever we call on him? And what great nation has decrees and regulations as righteous and fair as this body of instructions that I am giving you today?'*³ Deuteronomy ends with the death of

¹ Genesis 12:2

² 1 Peter 2:9

³ Deuteronomy 4:7-8

Moses and his final address to the people. His assistant, Joshua, is prepared to lead this newly formed people and nation into the promised land and the era of conquest.

Whose Side Are You On?

As the Israelites approach their famous siege of Jericho, in the opening chapters of the book of Joshua, scripture informs us of an odd encounter between Joshua, the new leader of Israel, and a mysterious figure referred to as the Commander of the Lord's Army.⁴ The passage of scripture suggests Joshua was walking alone before the battle of Jericho, perhaps planning and considering his tactics for the coming fight, whereupon he encounters a strange Being, sword drawn and prepared to fight. The legendary Hebrew general Joshua does not flinch, but immediately enquires about the strange man's motives: *'Are you on our side, or the side of our enemies?'*

When reading this story, modern readers easily surmise the identity of this mysterious Being. In the next verse, He even identifies Himself as the Commander of the Army of the Lord. In the spirit realm, there is a force that will battle against the enemies of God – and this is the unearthly Being who commands them. Joshua, the commander of the Israelite army, might reasonably presume the Commander of the Lord's Army is an ally; He will fight in the spirit realm, even as Joshua and the Israelites fight in the natural realm. But when Joshua presents his introductory challenge and question to this spiritual being, *'Are you on our side, or the side of our enemies?'* the Commander's response is surprising.

'Neither.'

Did Joshua ask the question wrong? Did the Commander of the Army of the Lord misunderstand him? *Neither?* How can that be? The recent history of the Israelites, indeed, everything written up to this point in the Bible, suggests that God is on the side of the Israelites.

⁴ Joshua 5:13-15

Even the conquest they are about to set out upon was a response to God's command to take the land. Why then would this mysterious spiritual figure, commanding the Lord's forces, answer in this manner?

Joshua asked the wrong question. When asked whose side the Commander of the Army of the Lord was on, he framed the question within the boundaries of an earthly struggle: '*our* side, or the side of our *enemies*'. The forces of God are not on any side in this natural earthly realm. The forces of God *are on the side of God's will*. Whatever advances that purpose is the side on which heaven stands and fights.

In the following chapter of Joshua, God's will manifested in the destruction and conquest of Jericho. Centuries later, God's will manifested in the rise and domination of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon, even at the devastating expense of Israel. The will of God is the defining characteristic of how His power and purpose are enforced upon the earth. The forces of heaven are not loyal to the side of any man or nation. They are loyal to God.

Self-Interests

The kingdoms of this world, every political system and party, every alliance and coalition, are constructed around the priority of self-interests. When Joshua encountered the commander of the Lord's Army, he inquired of His interests – 'Are you for us or for our enemies?' Wrong question. The right question is: 'What is God's will?' Behind that purpose, all of heaven's forces are aligned. Self-interests are irrelevant and frequently antithetical to the will of God. In the Kingdom of God, 'self' is not important. The will of God is important. John the Baptist explained, 'He must increase, but *I* must decrease'.⁵

⁵ John 3:30

Far too many believers have become corrupted in their perspective of what is taking shape in the world today. From politics to climate change, economics to pandemics, many see the world and its ideologies through the lens of ‘friend or foe’. We have trained ourselves to consider, ‘Are you on our side, or our enemy’s side?’ The politicized nature of our culture and media have imprinted this question upon our souls, dividing us from one another and, even worse, isolating us from the purposes of God. The will of God is neither pro-Trump nor pro-Biden. God is moving at a higher plane of truth and purpose, that seeks to bring His designs for the earth and His Kingdom to their ultimate fulfillment.

Even within the Church, many leaders and influencers unwittingly perpetuate this drive toward self-interests and division. They cannot fathom that God’s will might involve anything beyond their political values and priorities. But His ways are not our ways! His thoughts are not our thoughts!⁶ *His politics are not our politics!* God is up to far more than meets the eye in this generation, and it fits neither a Republican nor a Democrat agenda.

When the prophet Jeremiah warned that the Kingdom of Judah would soon fall to the Babylonians, the false prophets denounced him – at one point, even slapping him in the face when he prophesied; then they imprisoned him.⁷ The false prophets offered numerous rationales, and even scripture, to explain how God could certainly not intend the destruction of Judah. The temple came from the heart and mind of God. The throne of David had a covenant with God. How could anyone suggest they spoke for God, and at the same time suggest God would destroy that which He had raised up? The false prophets saw what was right, but spoke what was false – because they *did not recognize the higher will of God*. Their framework for reality was founded upon political

⁶ Isaiah 55:8-9

⁷ Jeremiah 20

perceptions that preserved the self, and they could not even consider anything outside of that framework.

Utter Amazement

This book is designed to lead readers towards a greater vision of God's will in the earth. I hope many will scrape off the blinding scales from their mental and spiritual perspectives in the following pages. Such blindness today is founded upon a political vision of the world that is utterly deceptive. To paraphrase former President Ronald Reagan, politics is not the solution to our problems, politics *is* the problem. Please do not miss this point! This blindness does not only epitomize those on the 'other side' of our arguments and debates. It represents our own problem too! The deception of a political worldview drives our anger, anxiety, and hopelessness today, on both the Left and the Right side of the political spectrum. The politics of Liberalism and Conservatism is a lie.

Secondly, **this book is designed to open our eyes and heart to the truth of God.** It is truth not established upon the values of this world, but the values of His Kingdom. The centerpiece of the Kingdom of God is *His will*. That is the nature of a monarchy. What is the King's will? So, let it be done! When we peer into God's greater reality and will for His people, His truth sets us free. I hope believers will find a renewed vision for the Kingdom of God, that surpasses the narrow political paradigms of this world and this season of the earth. This perspective of His will brings freedom and confidence to our lives and homes, in a world careening out of control.

As a final exhortation within this introduction, allow me to direct readers to the prophet Habakkuk's short book, in the Old Testament's final pages. Habakkuk consists of a dialogue between the prophet and God, that seeks to resolve a state of confusion and perplexity within the man. The prophet begins by asking why and how the wicked could triumph. How can God fulfill

His will in such a state of affairs? God's response: *'Look among the nations and watch—Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you'*.⁸

Habakkuk's perception required an upgrade, similar to what is necessary among many believers today. Habakkuk could not reconcile the rise of corrupt and contemptible forces in the earth with the will of God. Many believers today cannot reconcile the rise of evil and corrupt powers, or the decline of security and stability, with the will of God. They ask, 'Surely God wants to make America great again?' But God is doing something in our day that is utterly astounding and amazing, well beyond the confines of our limited political perspectives and paradigms. **When we see this Truth, we can find freedom and peace that surpasses understanding, even as the world grows darker.**

Thus, the final words of Habakkuk can ring true for us. When we see the higher purposes of God, His will becomes supreme, and the hopes of this darkened world fade in their priority. We find confidence and stability – in Him. We see His Truth amid the chaos. He fills our homes with joy, and He renews our strength.

*Even though the fig trees have no blossoms,
and there are no grapes on the vines;
even though the olive crop fails,
and the fields lie empty and barren;
even though the flocks die in the fields,
and the cattle barns are empty,
yet I will rejoice in the LORD!*

⁸ Habakkuk 1:5

I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!

The Sovereign LORD is my strength!

He makes me as surefooted as a deer,

able to tread upon the heights.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NLT)