

Do you ever ask, “How can a good God allow bad things to happen to me?” If so, you are using yourself as the criteria for God’s goodness. Instead, you should throw yourself upon His mercy and ask Him to deliver you from your condemned condition.

Are you on God’s side?

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We like to think that anyone who is against us is bad, and anyone for us is good. The logical conclusion of such thinking is that, if God is good, He must be on our side. We use ourselves and our interests as the criteria by which we judge God. The Lord taught Joshua that this is wrong.

As Joshua prepared to lead the Israelites into battle against the city of Jericho, he saw one who appeared as an armed man with a raised sword poised for battle. Joshua approached Him and said,

*“Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”*  
(Joshua 5:13).

The answer Joshua received changed his whole perspective!

*“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? And the captain of the LORD’S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou*

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*standest is holy. And Joshua did so”* (Joshua 5:14-15).

God, who was the one appearing as an armed soldier, had immediately reset Joshua’s thinking. He made it very clear that He, not Joshua, was the one in charge. God is not good because He helps us. He is good even if He destroys us for our sin.

Consider this whole incident from the point of view of Jericho’s inhabitants. Though they certainly came to understand that God was their enemy, this did not change the reality of His righteous holiness. In preserving Israel, God totally destroyed all but one family in Jericho. That one family was the family of Rahab the harlot. She later became part of Christ’s human lineage.

Joshua’s response is noteworthy. He immediately worshipped the Lord, as commanded, and declared himself, rather than God, to be the servant. God told him to take off his shoes in recognition of God’s righteous holiness. Joshua did.

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