

## The Names of God VI: YHWH Sabaoth, or Yahweh of Armies, or LORD of Hosts. An Exposition of Exodus 17:8-16



**Conflict**, in psychology, the arousal of two or more strong motives that cannot be solved together (<https://www.britannica.com/science/conflict-psychology>). Life

has conflict. Conflict in the home, among couples and siblings, conflict at work, conflict in court, conflict for political power, international conflicts, and the inner conflicts of the conscience, decisions, for sanity, conflicts in decision making, to achieve goals, and for love.

How does conflict end? Even if it ends with peace it may leave behind emotional or physical devastation. Every conflict has one side against the other. In order to end conflict one side has to give up attacking the other which usually means a stronger force defeats the weaker side. The hopeful end of conflict is righteous rather than oppressive peace.

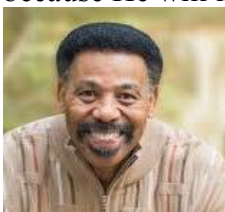
There are conflicts that are so overwhelming that one side needs help to face the overwhelming force of an adversary's attack.

Among nations, conflict is such a threat that countries spend great amounts of money, recruit millions of soldiers, develop constant strategies, and have academies just for the military. Humankind has diligently used technology to produce weapons ever since. Great technology, invention, and creativity so often begins with smart people who want to find the most effective ways to pierce, burn, cut, penetrate, cause sickness, chemically destroy, or concuss the life out of human bodies.

One thing that stresses the spirit is when conflict arises and though truth, right, and wrong is clear, the wrong side has the power, resources, effective lies, has every advantage, where truly, might makes right. This is a challenge that asks, what do you really believe? Is right and wrong an invention of our own making anyway to avoid a morass of relativism? Is it just a mutually agreed system to bring order to our world, and yet rewards the cunning, strong-willed, and wealthy who command people and resources to use and manipulate the system most effectively?

Is there really an absolute standard of righteousness? Please see *Names of God XIII*, the YHWH Tsidkenu message which addressed this question with an astounding YES! It is not only an God's attribute, God is the source of what is right. But the question continues. Is God then merely a righteous watcher who only observes but doesn't intervene to eliminate, redirect, or cause evil to serve a high purpose? Will He intervene for a righteous cause, or is it like the song from *Man of La Mancha*, an impossible dream? Will God take a side, or only cheer His people on to righteousness? Does He limit His involvement to a reward in eternity? Will He step into time, space, and consciousness to do something here and now?

Quoted from the last message on *Jehovah My Banner*, YHWH Nissi, "You may be in a battle for dignity, sobriety, sanity, survival, or for your spirituality, but you can win because He will intervene for you.



To quote Dr. Tony Evans, "You've either been in or are in or are headed toward a battle. Because life brings conflicts, things that you

*run into that seek to defeat you, destroy you, discourage you, depress you, that want to ruin you. You need to be able to fight and fight for victory. Both of these names, Nissi and Tsava-ot come off that...in a scenario when God's people were in a battle."*

**It is possible to know God as one who helps us in conflict.**



The name of God, YHWH Tsava'ot, translated by most bibles as, "LORD of Hosts," is mentioned in scripture 235 times, literally meaning in Hebrew, "Lord of armies": Tza-va (צבא), army, adding the *ot* make it plural, armies. Today it refers to the Israeli Defence Force as, *Tz(a)va Haganah Le'Yisrael*, literally "Army or host of defense to Israel."

God's name as Yahweh Tsavaoth, or Sabaoth, or as translated in most English bibles, "Lord of Hosts," is a statement that He does involve Himself in conflict, for His righteous purposes on behalf of His beloved. It is the privilege of one who knows God, that He will show Himself in the here and now in their conflicts.

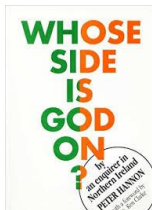
The first time this name appeared in scripture was because of a conflict between two women, wives of the bigamist, Elkanah. Hannah was more loved by Elkanah but her rival wife, Peninnah had shame for a woman to not give children to her husband. Hannah called on God by this name when bullied and terrorized by the rival wife's ridicule of her sterility. God heard Hannah in her conflict and gave her a very famous son, the prophet Samuel. It wasn't an instant answer, but 9 months later, Peninnah was silenced (read about it in 1 Samuel 1:1-20).

### **The Tsava-ot are Armies of Angels**

In 2 Kings chapter 6 The prophet Elisha and his servant, hunted by the king of Syria faced his army and cavalry. Elisha knew very well that they were surrounded by unseen warriors, but his servant was more focused on the vast Syrian army right in front of them. *"When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, "Please strike this people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha"* (2 Kings 6:15-18).

There's lots to take away from this little story. First of all, God has vast invisible armies available to protect His servants. The important thing to receive such protection is logically, to be His servant, serve God! But the prophet, secure in angelic power, said, *"Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."* Second, they come from a different dimension, the spiritual realm. Third, though usually invisible except for special moments when God allows a glimpse into the spiritual world, they protect those who God directs them to in this physical world-- from physical danger.

### **Whose Side Is He On?**



In what could be a joke if it wasn't brutal were religious wars among Christians. Recently Catholics and Protestants killed one another in Northern Ireland, claiming their inspiration from their faith. Really? Didn't

Jesus give His life rather than take lives so we'd follow Him?

How quick we are to desire harsh judgement on those who come against us. Yet, how slow we are to believe that there is no real threat when we are safe in God's hands. How confused and un-compassionate we become, when we forget that the battle belongs

to the Lord. Not only does the battle belong to him, but our enemies also belong to him, and he loves them very much. God does battle for us, but it is for us to be aligned with His purposes. His purposes aren't a cold and ruthless determination without our benefit in His heart. God's purposes are the best for all who join them. Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying to an aide in response to whether God was on the side of the Union in the Civil War, "In the heat of the American

Civil War, one of President Lincoln's advisers said he was grateful that God was on the side of the Union. Lincoln replied, "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." ([https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/abraham\\_lincoln\\_729621](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/abraham_lincoln_729621)).

The biblical hero and general Joshua faced the same issue, "***Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so***" (Joshua 5:13-15). To experience Yahweh Sabaoth is not to insist that God is on our sides. He insists, rather, that we join his side and his purposes. So the question isn't whether God is on our side, but are we on His?

### **Is God a God of Conflict?**

Actually, God is the God of peace. As God of Israel He let them live in slavery 432 years. He wouldn't allow Israel to take the land until the last of the Canaanite nations were irredeemable in their evil and it couldn't any longer be sustained. They burned infants live on grills as offerings to their gods, freely practiced promiscuity with no regard to incest, worshiped by engaged in in prostitution as worship to make the land fertile, the children of such rituals being fodder for sacrifices. Not only the biblical but archaeological records attest to it. But only when the last of the 7 Canaanite nations, the Amorites crossed the line of no return did God free Israel from slavery to take the land. God said it to Abraham 5 centuries before, "***...for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete***" (Genesis 15:16). God did require that Israel defend their nation from attack, but otherwise peace was His purpose.

In the era of Christian faith defined by the New Testament, God's purposes for followers of Christ is to not be identified by conflicts but as Jesus said, "***Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God***" (Matthew 5:9).

### **From Physical to Spiritual Conflict**

However, the bible speaks of war in the spiritual dimension. Michael the angel fought the prince of Persia (Daniel 10:13-21), defended Israel (Daniel 12:1), defeated Satan in heaven (Revelation 12:7-9), and again on Mt. Nebo fighting over Moses' corpse. Though conflict happened in the spiritual world, it entered earth. An angel held the first

sword (made of fire) in the bible to keep people out of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 3:24). Since the angel held the sword, humankind followed suit and has diligently produced weapons ever since.



Great technology, invention, and creativity so often begins with smart people who want to find the most effective ways to pierce, burn, cut, penetrate, cause sickness, chemically destroy, or concuss the life out of human bodies. Wars have become deadlier and deadlier. Wiki's list of wars and genocides and their death tolls comes out to over 850,000,000 dead so far, with more to come. This includes Roman wars, the Huns, Chinese mega wars, Islamic conquests, Mongol hordes, Vikings, the African tribal wars, modern genocides, the wiping out of 100,000,000 native North and South Americans, the great wars of Europe, including WWI and WWII. Sadly, what was then will be small compared to what will come.

### **Christians are called to peace among people but war in the spiritual world.**

It's not always possible, but it's not even a question whether Christians must be people of peace with other people. While the world will be about war, make no mistake, true believers must be about peace. It begins by peace with God ***“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (Romans 5:1). Bringing peace where there is conflict is the mark of a child of the heavenly Father, ***“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”*** (Matthew 5:9). It is to be a serious pursuit for the serious Christian, ***“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all”*** (Romans 12:18), ***“Pursue peace with all men”*** (Hebrews 12:14 NASB). God provides inner peace in troubled times, ***“do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”*** (Philippians 4:6-7).

For the world, war is coming, for the believer there is peace. Of course as much as one strives to be at peace, some people live and thrive in interpersonal conflict. But though Christians do everything possible to live peaceably with other people they are called to *spiritual* violence. A Christian should make war, but not the kind that destroys bodies of flesh, but takes place in the spirit, ***“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.”*** (1 Corinthians 10:3-6).

***“But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you”*** (Matthew 12:28).

The church in the city of Ephesus faced warfare against the schemes of a dark hierarchy composed of "the devil," "rulers," "authorities," "powers of this dark world," and "spiritual forces of evil" (Eph. 6:12, NIV). ***“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*** The Christian sword is the scriptures (Ephesians 6:17) ***“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”***

If Christians are fighting, who then, are they fighting and what are they fighting for? In the world view of the bible, Satan and his demons tempt and lead people to go far from God avoid forgiveness of their sins in Jesus Christ, and live lives of desperate depression, fear, hardness of heart, cruelty, conflict, hatred, racism, anger, no self control, no confidence, self reliance without God and even as far as doing the most horrible of things. By prayer and living for Christ, Christians fight the battles for their own souls, for others, their cities, nations, and the world. Those who call on God will see Him respond to the conflicts on earth with His armies of angels and being their general, He is Lord of Hosts, or YHWH Tsava-ot.

***“The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress”*** (Psalm 46:11).