

Take off your sandals



"Do not come any closer," **God said.** "**Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground**" (Exodus 3:5).

"**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 5:15).

Only two events record the command to "take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." The rarely spoken command, by default, puts the events involved into a special and unique category. The first of the two events took place when God Almighty with the "angel of the LORD" in the burning bush commissioned Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. The second event took place after the Israelites crossed the Jordan River and Joshua leading them into the Promised Land, met the commander of God's army who ordered him to take off his sandals for he was standing on holy ground. The act of removing your sandals is an ancient eastern practice of a servant showing submission and reverence to the leadership of their master. There are several common elements to these two events:

- Both men recognize something strange and investigate it.
- Both men are told the ground is holy and to take off their sandals.
 - Both men pledge their loyalty and servitude to God.
 - Both men are appointed leaders: one to rescue and the other to lead into battle.

SOMETHING STRANGE IS INVESTIGATED.

MOSES: "There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So, Moses thought, '**I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up**'" (Exodus 3:2-3).

The imagery of the burning bush reveals an awesome wonder.

God Almighty cannot be seen by mankind and live. The God in the burning bush was His Son who can manifest himself as a man. "There **the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush**" (Exodus 3:2). This angel of the LORD was Jesus Christ.

“He [the Son, Jesus] is the image of the invisible God... For by him [the Son, Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **He is before all things**, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15-17).

The Son created all things **by the power of His Father** (I Corinthians 8:6).

The voice speaking from the burning bush was the Father. God did the same with Gideon. The Son appeared as a man and after he suddenly disappeared, Gideon feared that he saw God and that he would die. The voice remained present and assured him that he had not seen the invisible Almighty God whose power and presence is a consuming fire (Judges 6, Deuteronomy 4:24). But, God did not command Gideon to take off his sandals and no mention of holy ground.

The burning bush ignited with the glory of God. The ancient Israelites witnessed a similar sight during their travels in the wilderness. “And the sight of **the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire** on the mountaintop in the eyes of the Israelites” (Exodus 24:17). It was consuming, yet not destroying the bush—a low growing, insignificant plant, likely imaging Israel’s present state of unholiness. God’s glory is an energy that is all-encompassing and all-consuming with a purifying and refining quality. It extends to cover and surround His throne as if to symbolize eternally a pure and righteous rulership.

“As I continued to watch, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. **His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze**” (Daniel 7:9).

It was like God was speaking directly to Moses from His throne via a miniature window in the shape of a burning bush, appointing him to lead an exceedingly important mission, that is, to rescue His people and lead them out of Egypt. And, it would be the display of His power and glory that would be the means by which this great exodus would succeed and indeed, it is remembered well into the 21st century. This God and ONLY this God is the source of all life and through His power, the Son created everything in heaven and earth (I Corinthians 8:6).

“He who is blessed and **the only Sovereign One**, the King of kings and Lord of lords. **He ALONE is immortal and dwells in unapproachable light**. No one has ever seen Him, nor can anyone see Him. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen” (I Timothy 6:15b-16).

The Israelites came to learn that **THEIR God** is the supreme God. The other gods were real; they exercised power that initially the Israelites feared, but upon their relief during their time of slavery and intense hardship, they learned that **THEIR God is all powerful and greatest among all gods**. He is a consuming fire who dwells in unapproachable light—a light so powerful that it destroys mortals at its sight. Unlike, the gods who ruled the nations, they reeled power from heaven, but none of them could match or overthrow the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was that God who heard their cries and set in motion a plan to rescue them.

The ancient Israelites never questioned the existence of gods in the heavens; **they learned that ONE was supreme above them all.** “Who among the gods is like You, **O LORD? Who is like You**—majestic in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders?” (Exodus 15:11)

“For you, **LORD**, are the **Most High** over all the earth; **you are exalted far above all gods**” (Psalm 97:9) and “For **the LORD** is the great God, the **great King above all gods**” (Psalm 95:3).

The words of King David preserved in the scriptures are of little significance to many Christians into the 21st century, because the gods of the ancient civilizations are considered mythical characters or merely mischievous demons that can be cast out and sent away—a convenient lie to keep Christians unprepared and ignorant of the real forces at play on earth and in heaven.

The tribes the Israelites fought against in the Promised Land have a backstory.

- **Nephilim whose names have never been written in the book of life.**

The peoples of the different tribes living in the Promised Land were both descendants of Adam and Eve as well as Nephilim—giants.

“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and **afterward as well**, when the sons of God had relations with the daughters of men. And they bore them children who became the mighty men of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:4).

Satan the supreme ruler over all of the fallen heavenly rulers, powers and those with heavenly authority spawned Nephilim after the flood in the same way they were conceived before the flood. Their offspring are the “inhabitants” referred to in Revelation whose names have not been written in the book of life at the foundation of the world.

“And all who dwell on the earth will worship the beast—**all whose names have not been written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life** belonging to the Lamb who was slain” (Revelation 13:8).

“The beast that you saw—it was, and now is no more, but is about to come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. And **those who dwell on the earth whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world** will marvel when they see **the beast that was, and is not, and yet will be**” (Revelation 17:8).

The beast **that was**—ruled the ancient kingdoms—**and is not**—at the time of Apostle John for they were overthrown—**and yet will be**—in the last days. People wonder if the gods of the ancient civilizations were real or mythical because their existence today is not evident. Their rule over the nations in ancient times has been overthrown. Christ overthrew the last of the heavenly rulers two thousand years ago with his death on the cross. The return of this beastly heavenly coalition of rulers will occur again, in the last days. Their 21st century Nephilim—“inhabitants” whose names were never written in the book of life, will be ecstatic with the rise of their family and the surrender of the descendants of Adam and Eve.

The nations of the earth will say, “Who is like the beast?” This heavenly coalition will force their surrender. The nations will obey and say, “Who can make war against the beast?” (Revelation 13:4b)

The backstory continues with God delaying the Israelites from returning to the Promised Land until it was evident that the tribes and Nephilim living there were totally corrupted and serving fully their wayward heavenly leaders who initially ruled righteously, but turned more and more to wickedness until they were totally blackened. The nations on earth did not understand that they were used as pawns in the war to take God’s heavenly throne. God has a salvation plan for them, but their heavenly rulers knew better and chose to rebel against God.

“Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there... In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for **the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure**” (Genesis 15:13, 16).

The battles fought were truly against Satan and his vast coalition of heavenly rulers, powers and authorities and his offspring on earth who were a gigantic physical force against the Israelites. God, himself, participated in the overthrow of these physical giants.

“Yet it **was I who destroyed the Amorite** before them, though **his height was like the height of cedars and he was strong as the oaks**; I even destroyed his fruit above and his root below” (Amos 2:9). It would appear that all of the children from this forbidden practice have been destroyed—the “fruit above” or any ability for their reappearance “his root below”. However, in the last days, “inhabitants” whose names are not written in the book of life since the foundation of the world will appear and worship the beast.

- **God’s inheritance and the members of His heavenly court.**

At the time of Babel, “When the Most High assigned lands to the nations, when he divided up the human race, he established the boundaries of the peoples **according to the number in his heavenly court**” (Deuteronomy 32:8). God, the supreme heavenly ruler, received the descendants of Jacob as **His inheritance—His rulership** over them, while the members of His heavenly court received the nations. The intent was that the great heavenly leaders filled with God’s Holy Spirit and His knowledge, understanding and wisdom would rule over the people on earth who at the time of Babel, were wandering back towards wickedness.

God wants to save all of mankind. He wants everyone on earth to repent and turn to Him. The gods of the ancient civilizations on earth were members of God’s heavenly court, but they all fell. God recorded this painful story in Ezekiel 31. He told Pharaoh, the heavenly ruler of Egypt, that he too would fall like one of the greatest members in God’s heavenly court.

“Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his hordes: ‘Who can be compared with you in majesty? Consider Assyria, once a cedar [great leader] in Lebanon [God’s heavenly court]... On the day it [the whole kingdom of Assyria both in heaven and on earth] was brought down to the grave I covered the deep springs with mourning [God wept] for it; I held back its streams and its abundant waters [sources of God’s Holy Spirit] were restrained. Because of it I clothed Lebanon with gloom, and all the trees [leaders] of the field [in heavenly domains] withered away. I made the nations tremble at the sound of its fall when I brought it down to the grave with those who go down to the pit [overthrown heavenly rulers and their hordes go to the pit located inside the earth]. Then all the trees of Eden [all the leaders in God’s government] the choicest and best of Lebanon [God’s headquarters/holy court], all the trees [leaders] that were well-watered [filled with God’s Holy Spirit and highly trained and skilled] were consoled in the earth below [have been imprisoned and await judgment]... Yet you, too, will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth below; you will lie among the uncircumcised [the wicked], with those killed by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his hordes,’ declares the Sovereign LORD” (Ezekiel 31:2-18).

The Apostle Paul reminded Christians that our fight is not against flesh and blood. It is not only against pesky demons who can be cast out and the evil Satan, a lone rider but against a full one-third of the creation in heaven, their “**rulers**, against the **authorities**, against the **power** of this dark world and against the **spiritual forces of evil** in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). The wicked powers of this dark world are not flesh and blood, but unseen dark commanding forces who received authority at one time from God prior to their rebellion. These wicked heavenly beings have authority that cannot be taken back without being overthrown and conquered.

These characters go unseen, but a time will come when they cannot hide. Their physical form will be seen, including evil spirits that have a form like a frog. “**And I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs** coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet” (Revelation 16:13).



Jabba the Hutt, Star Wars character. Jabba as he appears in *Return of the Jedi* (1983)

JOSHUA: “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?’” (Joshua 5:13)

Both men approached a mysterious sight. Moses was told to go no further. “Do not come any closer,” God said (Exodus 3:5). It was as if Moses was not initially ready to battle for and with the God of his fathers. Moses replied, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” (Exodus 3:11).

Joshua asked the man if he was for or against the Israelites and the commander replied, “Neither.” This commander is for the will of His Father, hence his arrival. He added, “But as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come” (Joshua 5:14).

The commander of the army of the LORD.

While God spoke directly to Moses in the burning bush, the commander of the army of the LORD spoke directly to Joshua. Both events are of equal significance resulting in the command to take off their sandals because the ground became holy. Joshua’s commission was supported by the commander who resembles Jesus Christ in Revelation, “he is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and **his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him**, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. **Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations**” (Revelation 19:13-15a).

The commander of the heavenly army of Revelation is the same commander standing before Joshua with his sword drawn. He is the same angel that God said would guard them along the way “and to bring you [the Israelites] to the place I have prepared” (Exodus 23:20). God warned them to listen to this angel. This angel has the authority to forgive sins on earth. “Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. **Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion**, since **my name is in him**” (Exodus 23:21). This same angel later on earth said, “Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?” (Luke 5:23) God’s name is in this angel.

 <p>Lew White, Torah Institute</p>	<p>HAY UAU HAY YOD YAHUAH (My name)</p>
 <p>Lew White, Torah Institute</p>	<p>AYIN SHIN UAU HAY YOD YAHUSHA (YAH our Deliver)</p>

“My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and **I will wipe them out**” (Exodus 23:23). God warned them, “Do not make a covenant with them or with their gods” (Exodus 23:32). Covenants cannot be made with wooden or stone idols. Covenants can only be made with living beings; their heavenly gods were alive and well.

History repeats itself because lessons are not learned. The exodus out of Egypt led by Moses and the great battle against the nations led by Joshua will both occur a second time.

How easy it is for mankind to forget their history. Though God overthrew the heavenly rulers over the nations and gave the nations their freedom, they forgot. Into captivity the twelve nations of 21st century Israel will go, AGAIN.

“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And **there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time**” (Daniel 12:1).

The world will be shocked! A power will rise that will take rulership over all of the nations on earth except for the nations of **21st century Israel. All twelve tribes of 21st century Israel will be attacked, leaving a remnant of survivors who will go into captivity.** The house of Joseph’s superpower status will be snuffed out in the blink of an eye. Jacob’s trouble will cause their allies to tremble. Their power and prestige will be replaced by mocking and ridicule by the nations who will serve the world-ruling power. “For then there will **be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again**” (Matthew 24:21).

All of the survivors of the nations of 21st century Israel will drop to their knees during their captivity and call out for help to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses wrote, “When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, **in the latter days you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice**” (Deuteronomy 4:30).

This time those held captive will repent sincerely and eternally—both houses: Judah and Israel at the same time, unlike their ancient history.

“In those days, at that time, **the people of Israel and the people of Judah TOGETHER** will go in tears to seek the YHWH, their God. They will ask the way of Zion and turn their faces toward it. **They will come and bind themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten**” (Jeremiah 50:4-5).

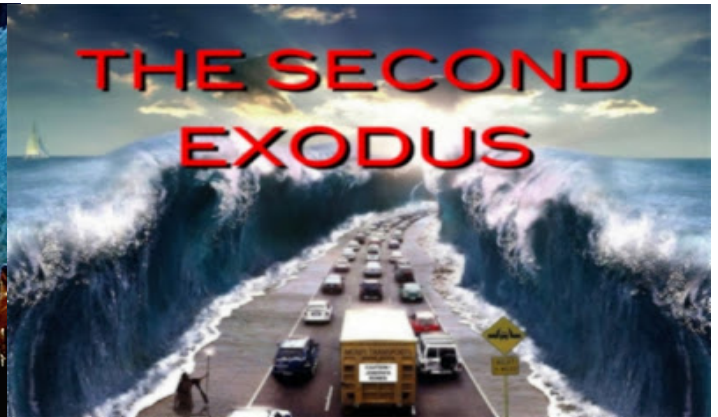
Ah! The nations of Israel will now listen to their God just as He foretold those many years ago. Nobody can thwart the plans of the Great Creator. God will hear them and rescue Israel a second time from captivity. “Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life... **I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back’**” (Isaiah 43:4-6).

The second captivity occurs at the same time for both houses of Israel. **“The people of Israel are oppressed, and the people of Judah as well. All their captors hold them fast, refusing to let them go. Yet the Redeemer is strong; YHWH Almighty is his name. He will vigorously defend their cause** so that he may bring rest to their land, but unrest to those who live in Babylon” (Jeremiah 50:33-34).

So great will be the **second exodus that it will be remembered forever**, while the exodus out of Egypt will fade into a forgotten past. The time will soon come when people swear, **“AS THE LORD LIVES, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them... IT WILL BE SO”** (Jeremiah 16:14-15, 23:7-8).



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Upon their release, God will say, **“Return to your fortress [your military stronghold], O prisoners of hope [In their blood covenant with God, they have the hope of redemption.]”** (Zechariah 9:12). There remains one final battle for God’s people, now a mere remnant.

The Apostle John recorded the moment when the nations prepare for this battle—all of the nations on earth will be worshipping Satan that is why God is against them. It will be like the days of Noah. They will see their Creator as their enemy and fight against God, His Son and His faithful remnant. **“And the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings of the East. And I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.** These are demonic spirits that perform signs and go out to all the kings of the earth, to **assemble them for battle on the great day of God, the Almighty...** They gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called **Armageddon”** (Revelation 16:11-15, 16).

The evil spirits that look like frogs do not diminish the power and authority of the dragon, the beast, and false prophet, but rather, go out to the kings of the earth and their military to assist them by performing miracles in battle against God’s remnant people who will for the first time in hundreds of years battle with their God, while Christ, the resurrected saints and the heavenly army overpower the dragon, the beast and false prophet and all their hordes.

“Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies assembled to wage war **against the One [Jesus Christ] seated on the horse, and against His army**” (Revelation 19:19).

In every battle that ancient Israel participated in, God Almighty and Jesus Christ provided the supernatural power for them to overthrow their enemy. The same battle will occur in the last days. The same enemies will present themselves. History will repeat itself.

Zechariah recorded this victorious battle. In God’s hand, he will grip Judah as his bow and fill it with the arrows of Ephraim [the ten tribes]. “I will rouse your sons, O Zion, **against your sons, O Greece**, and I will make you like a warrior’s sword” (Zechariah 9:13b). The “sons” of Greece refers to some type of offspring spawned by the rebel heavenly ruler of Greece. Satan’s rule on earth will bring into the open everything done in secret today.

God will make His remnant people into a hero's sword. He will appear over them as a mighty warrior. He will sound the trumpet and the battle will begin. He will shield His people as they march into the most violent battle to ever rage on earth (Zechariah 9:14). God’s arrows will flash like lightning into the enemy with devastating destruction. The remnant nations of 21st century Israel will be supernaturally protected, as they devour the enemy like ravenous lions. “They drink and roar as with wine; they will be full like a bowl used for sprinkling the corners of the alter” (Zechariah 9:15).

Satan and his rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities along with the armies of the nations on earth, will fall before the Almighty God. The nations will witness the invincible power of their Creator and the anointed Christ—King of kings, Lord of lords.

Like Joshua who was ready to serve God’s commander of His heavenly army and fell face to the ground in reverence (Joshua 5:14), so too, the remnant nations of 21st century Israel will ask, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?”

“Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground,” will be our Messiah’s reply.

THE GROUND IS MADE HOLY BY GOD.

MOSES: God said, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5).

God, keeping a certain distance, told Moses to take off his sandals for where he was standing was holy now that God [Elohim: masculine plural] was present. After God identified Himself, Moses “hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.” He knew mortals cannot look upon



God and live. But it wasn't God Almighty in the burning bush, it was God, the angel of God—His Son. God Almighty spoke through the burning bush.

Moses did not respond with an immediate readiness to serve God. Moses said, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11). As God assured him that He would provide all his needs to accomplish this mission, Moses added, "O LORD, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue" (Exodus 4:10) and "O LORD, please send someone else to do it" (Exodus 4:13).

That initial distance God kept was slowly closed as Moses grew nearer and nearer to God. Though a slow start, Moses did take off his sandals to serve Almighty God in doing His holy work and free His people from a kingdom ruled by a fallen heavenly ruler.

JOSHUA: "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 5:15).

This was the first order given by the commander of the LORD's army. It was a pledge of allegiance to serve this commander faithfully. And Joshua did without argument or excuse.

When the time comes when our lives are put on the line in service to God to do His work, how will Christians respond? Will they be ready or will some wish the task onto someone else?

Those Christians who love their God and their brothers and sisters unconditionally, they will lay down their lives for them. They will demonstrate their great love, wanting to see everyone come to repent and enter into God's kingdom. They will suffer persecution and some will become martyrs as they remain faithful to God during Satan's rule on earth.

From twelve tribes of Israel, 144,000 people will be sealed. These are blameless and "no lie was found in their mouths... they follow the Lamb [the commander of God's army] wherever he goes... they did not defile themselves with women [false teachers teaching a false theology]. They kept themselves pure [holding tightly onto the testimony of Jesus and keeping God's commandments] (Revelation 14:1, 5, 4).

The first resurrection of the saints will take place upon Christ's return to earth and in time for the final great battle.

"These kings [who were promised a kingdom and receive rulership for one hour] have one purpose: to yield their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will triumph over them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and He will be accompanied by His called and chosen and faithful ones" (Revelation 17:13-14).

God anointed Jesus Christ with all power in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). He anointed him King of kings and Lord of lords, so that he can overthrow the powerful, rogue heavenly

kings, such as the final ten in Revelation 17:13-14 who give all their power to the beast. If these rulers were merely earthly kings, Jesus would not need the power God gave him—all power. As the Apostle Paul warned Christians, our enemy is not flesh and blood. Our enemy is extremely powerful, rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities.

During this coming time that still lies on our near horizon, a great multitude of people from every nation, tribe, language will choose to repent and turn to their Creator. This great number of people will be blessed to serve in God's temple eternally. He will take them under His care along with the 144,000 from the kingdom of Israel. "Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. **'They will be mine,'** says the LORD Almighty, **'in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them,** just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not'" (Malachi 3:16-18).

Of the great multitude from the nations, God has promised that they will be, "before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and **he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them... And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes**" (Revelation 7:15, 17b).

These people will gladly take off their sandals to serve the Great God of Israel in His holy place doing His holy work. There is no greater honor than to be intimately close to God. Of all His creation, He will bring directly into His service a great multitude of repentant people from every nation, tribe, people and language from the humbled planet, earth.

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich