

# Judges 20:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

## Analysis

**And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days**—the high priest Phinehas (grandson of Aaron) officiated, establishing this as legitimate priestly inquiry through Urim and Thummim (Exodus 28:30). **Saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease?** (הֲאֵוֹסֶה עוֹד לְצִמְאֹת...אֶם־אֶחָדָל)—critically different question: 'or shall I cease?' They're finally willing to accept 'no' as an answer! **And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand** (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֵלֵךְ) —explicit promise of victory!

This is Israel's first inquiry that includes willingness to cease. Previously they asked 'Who goes first?' (v. 18) and 'Shall we go again?' (v. 23)—assuming continuation, seeking only permission. Now they ask 'Should we cease?'—genuine submission to potential redirection. Only after reaching this posture of complete surrender does God promise victory explicitly: 'I will deliver them.' The progression is instructive: presumptuous inquiry yields permission without promise → painful consequences → deeper seeking → explicit divine promise. When we finally surrender control and genuinely ask 'Should I cease?', we're positioned to receive God's full guidance and blessing. The question matters: those willing to hear 'no' are ready to properly receive 'yes.'

## Historical Context

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Phinehas's presence establishes chronology—this occurred early in the Judges period (Phinehas served c. 1400-1350 BC). His faithfulness in opposing Midianite idolatry (Numbers 25:6-13) earned him God's covenant of perpetual priesthood. His officiation here signals legitimate divine inquiry through proper channels. The explicit promise 'tomorrow I will deliver' contrasts sharply with earlier terse permissions, showing the difference between divine allowance and divine promise.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean to seek God with genuine willingness to hear 'cease' rather than just 'continue'?
2. How does surrendering your desired outcome position you to receive God's full guidance?
3. What's the difference between seeking permission for predetermined plans versus seeking divine direction?

## Interlinear Text

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וּפִינֶחָס	בְּנֵי	אֶלְעָזָר	בְּנֵי	אֶהֱרָן
And Phinehas	against the children	of Eleazar	against the children	of Aaron
H6372	H1121	H499	H1121	H175
עָמַד	לִפְנֵי	בַּיָּמִים	וַיֹּאמֶר	הֲאֹסֶף
stood	before	it in those days	said	Shall I yet again
H5975	H6440	H3117	H559	H3254
אֵל	אָחִי	בְּנֵימִן	בְּנֵי	עַם
go out	to battle	against the children	of Benjamin	my brother
H3318	H4421	H1121	H1144	H251
אֶחָדָל	וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	עֲלֹו	כִּי
or shall I cease	said	And the LORD	Go up	
H2308	H559	H3068	H5927	H3588
			מָחָר	אֶתְּנֶנּוּ
			for to morrow	I will deliver
			H4279	H5414
בְּיָדָךְ:				
them into thine hand				
H3027				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Judges 7:9** (References Lord): And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

**Deuteronomy 18:5** (References Lord): For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

**Joshua 24:33** (Parallel theme): And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

**Deuteronomy 10:8** (References Lord): At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day.

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