

# 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?** (פָּאָזֵף עַד לְצַאת... אֶמְאַחַל) —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** (כִּי מִנְחָר אֶתְתֶּנוּ בְּ יָדֶךָ) —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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אַחֲרֵי פִּינְחָס  
And Phinehas against the children  
H6372 H1121 H499 H1121 H175

בְּנֵי אֶלְעָזָר  
of Eleazar against the children  
H1992 H559 H3254 H5750

בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן  
of Aaron  
H1121 H175

עַד נָאֹס רִי  
Shall I yet again  
H3254 H5750

בְּתִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ עַמְּדָה  
stood before it in those days  
H5975 H6440 H3117 H1992 H559 H3254

אִם אַחֲרֵי בְּנֵי בְּנִי  
go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother  
H3318 H4421 H5973 H1121 H1144 H251 H518

אַתָּה כִּי מִתְּרַדֵּד לְאַחֲרֵי  
or shall I cease said And the LORD Go up for to morrow I will deliver  
H2308 H559 H3068 H5927 H3588 H4279 H5414

בְּ יָדֶךָ  
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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