

Lord of Hosts

January 26, 2014

I. Definition: Jehovah (LORD) & Hosts (Saba)

A. Hosts; the Heb. Word is saba; pronounced (˘tsaw-baw)

B. There are **486 occurrences of saba** in the Old Testament. The name "LORD of hosts" or "**Jehovah saba.**" is found 258 times in the NASU.

1. The word "hosts" is used very frequently in the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the Bible Gen - Deut) to refer to the armies of Israel.

2. Saba is used frequently in 1 and 2 Samuel to refer to armies.
(1 Sam 12:9; 14:50; 17:55; 2 Sam 2:8; 8:16; 10:16),

3. Saba is used most frequently by the prophets
(Jeremiah 88 times, Zechariah 55 times, Malachi 25 times, Haggai 14 times)

C. Saba is used both as a **noun** and a **verb, singular** and **plural**.

D. When used as a **noun** it is translated as "military service; war; army; service; labor; forced labor; or conflict."

Dr. Vine says that "this word involves several interrelated ideas: a group; impetus; difficulty; and force. These ideas undergird the general concept of "service" which one does for or under a superior rather than for himself. It is usually applied to "military service" but is sometimes used of "work" in general (under or for a superior)."

E. When used as a **verb** it is translated as "to wage war, to muster an army, to serve in worship."
Dr. Vine says that "this verb appears 14 times in biblical Hebrew, and means "to wage war" in."

F. It is thought that the compound name "**Jehovah Saba**" - refers to Jehovah as the God of armies, that is, God has his armies to serve him.

G. It is to this "**Jehovah Saba**" that Israel's commanders were to give:

1. Allegiance

Jos 5:14-15 He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, " Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

2. In whose name Israel was to be blessed.

2 Sa 6:18 When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offering, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

H. Why the name of "**Jehovah Saba**" is so significant
(from The New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words)

First, **the connection of this term with Jehovah** is important.

Jehovah identifies God as the living, active, ever-present Lord, who intervenes in history on behalf of his people.... It is significant that the word "armies" is linked with this particular name of God; this affirms his active presence in history.

Second, **the concept of armies extends beyond massed human military forces.**

The forces of heaven as well as of earth are at God's command, and nature itself may be called into battle on behalf of God's people (Jos 5:13-14; 10:10-19).

The conviction that "it was the Lord... God who fought for" Israel (Jos 23:3) was basic to the OT believers' understanding of Israel's relationship with God.

Third, **the concept** LORD of Armies (LORD of Hosts) **affirms God's rule over every earthly power.** God retains universal power over human-kind. While His power may be masked now and denied by those who refuse to believe the truth, the day is coming when God will openly exercise His power as Lord of hosts and enforce His will on all. In the meantime, although that power may be masked, it continues to operate in our world.

II. How Saba is used (translated) in the Old Testament

A. First it speaks of an army, leader of an army, military service, war,

1. The word is used for the Army itself
Nu 1:52 ... according to their armies.
2. The word is used for the "leader of an army"
Gen 21:22 Phichol, is the captain of Abimelech's army.
3. The word is used for the "military service"
Nu 1:2-3 "Take of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, ... from twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel, ...

2 Sa 5:10 David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him.
4. The word can be used in serving in a military campaign.
Jos 22:12 When the sons of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the sons of Israel gathered themselves at Shiloh to go up against them in war.
5. The word can be used of the actual battling itself.
Nu 31:14 Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come from service in the war.

B. Saba can refer to nonmilitary service

1. The word can be used of the burdensome everyday "toil" of mankind:
Job 7:1 Is not man forced to labor on earth, and are not his days like the days of a hired man?

Job 14:14 "... All the days of my struggle I will wait ...
2. The word can be used for a gathering of people.
Ex 7:4; 12:41 the tribes of Israel are called "the hosts (saba) of Jehovah" as they came out of Egypt

Ps 68:11 ... the women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host:
3. The word can be used for a "conflict": "
Dan 10:1 ... and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood ...
4. The word can also mean "to serve" in some contexts
Nu 4:23 ... to perform the service to do the work in the tent of meeting.

Nu 8:24 "This is what applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall enter to perform service in the work of the tent of meeting.

C. Sometimes Saba refers to the "host of heaven," or the angels, or the army of angels.

Ge 32:2-3 we find the idea of an army of angels where Jacob calls the angels of God who appeared to him the "camp of God,"

Dt 33:2 also in the blessing of Moses where the "ten thousands of saints" (Kodesh) are not stars, but angels, or heavenly spirits;

Josh 5:14 the commander of the "host" of God confronts Joshua.

Jdg 5:20 the fighting of the stars against Sisera in the song of Deborah probably refers to a natural phenomenon, by which God had thrown the enemy into confusion, and smitten them before the Israelites.

1 Ki 22:19 Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left.

Ps 103:21 This heavenly "host" not only worships God but serves to do all His will:

Dan 8:10-11 God Himself is the commander of this "host"

D. The phrase "hosts of heaven" can also signify the stars and constellations

Dt 4:19 And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

Ps 33:6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.

Jer 33:22 Another meaning of the phrase "the host (s) of heaven" is simply "the numberless stars":

Gen 2:1 it includes the heavens, the earth, and everything in the creation:

Gen 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.

E. Jehovah Saba The Lord of hosts is a title for God, the leader of the earthly hosts (armies) of Israel (Ex 7:4; Ps 44:9). Jehovah-saba is translated "The-LORD-of-hosts," it was used in the days of David and the prophets, witnessing to God the Savior who is surrounded by His hosts of heavenly power (1 Sa 1:3).

1. First appears in 1 Samuel 1:3. In chapter 1 we read Hanna's desperate prayer in which she begs God for a son and expresses her willingness to give that son back to the Lord in service. Her appeal is addressed to God as "LORD of hosts", which expresses her conviction that if God chose to give her a son, He could surely do so.

1 Sa 1:3 Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD there.

1 Sa 1:11 She made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life,

2. The Psalmists frequently address their prayers to Jehovah Saba.

Psalm 80 illustrates this point.

V. 7 - "Restore us, O God of hosts"

V. 14 - "Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts

V. 19 - "Restore us, O LORD God of hosts"

Ps 46:7 The LORD of hosts is with us;

3. The Lord of hosts is the King of glory

Ps. 24:10 "Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts [Jehovah Saba], he is the King of glory"

4. Elisha found that the Lord of hosts surrounded His people in times of attacks by the enemy.

2 Ki 6:11-19 Now the heart of the king of Aram was enraged over this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you tell me which of us is for the king of Israel?" 12 One of his servants said, "No, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." 13 So he said, "Go and see where he is, that I may send and take him." And it was told him, saying, "Behold, he is in Dothan." 14 He sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. 15 Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18 When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, "Strike this people with blindness, I pray." So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

5. This title was often used by the prophets (Isaiah and Jeremiah) during times of national distress to remind the people that Jehovah was still their Protector. At times when God's people had either suffered defeat at the hands of enemy armies or were threatened by defeat. So the compound name was used to remind them that their covenant God had great hosts to fight and work for him on behalf of his people. Thus, though Israel's armies failed, their covenant God was sufficient for every possible circumstance.

1 Ki 19:10, 14 Elijah says "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts;"

Isa 40:2 "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins."

Isa 54:5-6 For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth. For the LORD has called you, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even like a wife of one's youth when she is rejected," says your God.

Am 5:27 "Therefore, I will make you go into exile beyond Damascus," says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

6. Joshua finds that the Lord of hosts had a spiritual (angelic) captain over His army, the angel of the Lord, when appearing in front of Jericho in the form of a warrior, made himself known to Joshua as "the prince of the army of Jehovah," i.e., of the angelic hosts.

Jos 5:13-14 Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" 14 He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD."

Note; And it is in this appearance of the heavenly leader of the people of God to the earthly leader of the hosts of Israel, as the prince of the angelic hosts, not only promising him the conquest of Jericho, but through the miraculous overthrow of the walls of this strong bulwark of the Canaanites power, actually giving him at the same time a practical proof that the prince of the angelic hosts was fighting for Israel, that we have the material basis upon which the divine epithet "Jehovah God of hosts" was founded, even though it was not introduced immediately, but only at a later period, when the Lord began to form His people Israel into a kingdom, by which all the kingdoms of the heathen were to be overcome.

7. Jehovah Saba represents Jehovah as ruler over the heavenly hosts:

the angels Ge 32:2; 1 Ki 22:19; 2 Ch 18:18
who are called the "armies" of Jehovah in Ps 103:21; 148:2;
These are considered to be armies of angels who are ministering servants to God.

the stars Isa 40:26; Psa 33:6

Jehovah Saba is simply applied to the God of the universe,
who governs all the powers of heaven,
both visible and invisible,
as He rules in heaven and on earth.

III. Notes:

1. Lord of hosts. "Jehovah Saba" is an abbreviation of "Jehovah Elohe Saba,"

Ps 59:5 You, O LORD (Jehovah) God (Elohe) of hosts (Saba), the God of Israel, awake to punish all the nations; do not be gracious to any who are treacherous in iniquity. [Ps 80:4, 19; Ps 84:8]

2. Lord of hosts. "Jehovah Saba" is an abbreviation of "Adonai Saba " (Isa 10:16),
Isa 10:16 Therefore the Lord (Jehovah), the GOD (Elohe) of hosts (Saba), will send a wasting disease among his stout warriors;

3. Saba is never used alone in the Old Testament as one of the names of God.

4. "Lord of Hosts" is transliterated twice in the New Testament
Isa 1:9 Unless the LORD of hosts had left us a few survivors, we would be like Sodom, we would be like Gomorrah.

Ro 9:29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABA (Hosts) HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

Jas 5:4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Saba (Hosts).

IV. Application:

Jehovah Saba is the Old Testament name of God in spiritual warfare.

A. Jehovah Saba is first mentioned in unanswered prayer

1 Sam 1:3, 11 story of the birth of Samuel
He is fighting on our behalf to answer our prayer.
Dan 10:12-13 Daniel receives an answer to prayer 21 days after he first began to pray.

Luke 18:1-8 parable of the unjust judge

John 14:13 God will answer prayer offered in the name of Jesus (14:14; 15:16; 16:23-26)

B. Our war (battle) is spiritual, involving angels and demons.

Eph 6:11-18 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the

powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints

C. We are part of an army, we fight together.

Eph 6:12 our struggle
2 Co 10:3 we walk

D. Jehovah Saba is with us in our battle.

2 Ti 2:3-4 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

E. Saba was used in the service (the work) of both the military and the temple.

2 Co 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

The following References were used in this study:

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