

Joshua 5

Joshua 5.1

V1 – The pagan people living in the Canaan land considered the Jordan River to be protection from enemies to the east – it was a natural barrier – there were no bridges in ancient Palestine

- What was the effect of the Israelites crossing the Jordan?** No more protection
- The result to the people of Jericho?** *"Their hearts melted"*
- What did the Canaanites learn about God?** He could control nature
- So the strongest defenses of the wicked meant nothing to the one true God
- How did Jesus in the New Testament show his power over nature?**
- Virgin birth
- Feeding of 5000 (*Mark 6.37-44*)
- Healed Peter's mother-in-law (*Mark 1.30-31*)
- Water to wine (*John 2.1-11*)
- Calmed the tempest (*Mark 4.35-41*)
- Walked on the water (*Mark 6.47-50*)
- Really, all the miracles (the definition of a miracle)
- What natural barriers have protected the U.S.?** Atlantic and Pacific oceans
- Should we trust in these barriers to protect our country?** No

Joshua 5.2-7

V2 – God commanded that the Israelites be circumcised [cutting off of extra skin on the male sex organ, normally done shortly after birth]

- When was circumcision begun?** *Gen. 17* – with Abraham
- What was it a sign of?** The covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants
- proof for the promises (one was the land promise)
- The second time?** The fathers (under 20 at the time of the Exodus) were circumcised in Egypt; the sons were circumcised for this second time (see v 5)

V3 – **What was used for the circumcision?** Knives made out of flint (very hard stone)

-**How is flint used today?** – Wikipedia:

The invention of the flintlock gun mechanism in the sixteenth century produced a demand for specially shaped gunflints. The gunflint industry survived until the middle of the twentieth century in some places, including in the English town of Brandon

For specialist purposes glass knives are still made and used today, particularly for cutting thin sections for electron microscopy in a technique known as microtome. Freshly cut blades are always used since the sharpness of the edge is very great. These knives are made from high-quality manufactured glass, however, not from natural raw materials such as chert or obsidian. Surgical knives made from obsidian are still used in some delicate surgeries.

V4 – **What had happened to all the circumcised men who left Egypt?** All died in 40 years in the wilderness

- Except for which two?** Joshua and Caleb
- Why had all the men died in the wilderness?** They did not believe the report of the two good

spies (*Num. 13*)

-Circumcision had stopped for those 40 years

V 5 – No-one was circumcised in the wilderness

V 6 – A review – the reason for 40 years in the wilderness

V 7 – A new generation had arisen in the wilderness: 19 years old and under survived the 40 years (*Num. 14.29-30*)

-**Why 40 years?** One year for each day the spies were in the Promised Land

-**What does circumcision mean under the New Testament?** Physically: nothing at all

Read Rom. 2.29, Gal. 5.11, Phil. 3.3, Col. 2.9-12

-Remember in *Acts 15* how some of the Jewish Christians were requiring Gentile Christians to be circumcised, but the Apostles and elders stopped them with the conference at Antioch of Syria

-See *Acts 15.1-2, 22-29*

-Only things forbidden: things sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, fornication (v 29)

Joshua 5.8-10

V 8 – Circumcision would be rather painful for grown men

-**Was this a wise move from a military point of view?** Absolutely not

-**Why did Joshua do it then?** He wanted to obey God more than he wanted to defeat the enemy

V 9 – **Significance of this day?** Forgiveness of lack of faith in the 2 spies and God

-**New name?** Gilgal (Rolling)

-**Why was the town called "Rolling"?** Because God had rolled away the shame of their disobedience

V 10 – **What feast did they celebrate?** Passover

-3rd time recorded in Bible: *Exod. 12.3ff, Num. 9.1-2* – the second year of the exodus

-**What was the significance of the Passover?** To celebrate the power of God to destroy their enemies and to receive salvation through the shedding of blood

-Blood over doorpost, unleavened bread, dressed to leave in a hurry on a journey

Joshua 5.11-12

V 11 – **What did the Israelites do the next day?** They ate some of the fruit of the land of Canaan

V 12 - **What happened at that time?** The manna stopped

-**Lesson?** God helps people when they cannot help themselves, but otherwise, we are expected to work for our food

-**Read 2 Thess. 3.10-11**

-**Note:** The manna did not continue one day past when it was no longer needed

-So a 40 year miracle came to an end (manna and quail)

Joshua 5.13-15

V 13 – Who did Joshua see at this time? A stranger

-**Description of the stranger?** A man standing with his sword drawn

-**Joshua's question?** Are you for us or against us?

-Notice the thinking of Joshua: Only two sides, either for the people of God or against the people of God (no compromise position)

-**Did Jesus endorse that kind of thinking? Read Matt. 12.30**

V 14 – The answer? I am the captain of the Lord's army

-**Why didn't he answer Joshua's question?**

-Because the real question is not: "*Is God on our side?*" but "*Are we on God's side?*"

-This is why it is irritating to see bumper stickers that say: "God bless America"

-How many wars have been fought because people were just sure that God was on their side

-And that he wanted them to retake Jerusalem and kill the Moslems (the Pope said it was so, so it must have been so)

-The Crusades – we are still suffering the consequences of the Crusades – much of the hatred of the Islamic world toward the West goes back to the Crusades (which started almost a thousand years ago)

-And yet, at the time of the Crusades, people were just sure that God was on their side

-There was even the Children's Crusade – where thousands of children lost their lives being forced to make the trek from Europe to Palestine

-Abraham Lincoln:

“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”

-Today, in spiritual battles with evil people trying to take over a congregation and in spiritual battles in our society, let us not pray that God will be on our side, but that we will be on God's side

-**Reaction from Joshua?** He fell to ground, bowed before the stranger

-**Question from Joshua?** What is your message to me?

V 15 – Reply? Take off your shoes – this is holy ground

-**Other examples of this?** Burning bush and Moses (*Exod. 3.5*), "angel" to parents of Samson (*Judges 13.8-20*)

-Wayne Jackson, "A Brief Study of the Angel of the Lord" (Internet site)

-**The stranger?** Christ before he was flesh (pre-incarnate)

Lessons from Joshua 5

1. God will be with us, if we are faithful.
2. It is more important to obey God than to try to make plans according to human wisdom.
3. God was in full support of Joshua.

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