

Joshua Chapter 4

V: 1 After all the people had passed clean over the Jordan, then the Lord spoke to Joshua.

2 Corinthians 5:7 “For we walk by faith, not by sight...”

- After he completed the 1st step, he was given the 2nd step.

V: 2-3 God tells Joshua to get 12 men, one from each tribe – each is to take up a stone from the bottom of the river Jordan where the people crossed over and leave them in the camp that night – a monument, a reminder, an “Ebenezer stone”.

- People often have a propensity to forget the great and wonderful things that the Lord has done for us – sometimes we need things to remind us: we should never forget the great things God has done for us.

Psalm 77:11 & 14 “¹¹I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.” – “¹⁴Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.”

V: 4-9 Joshua was obedient and has the men do as the Lord commanded.

- Two sets of stones, stones of remembrance, a memorial of the Lord’s deliverance in the midst of the Jordan, how He rolled the waters back to allow them safe passage across the river.
- One set in the camp where the people lived, a daily reminder. Another set at the bottom of the Jordan where the priests stood holding the Ark of the Covenant.

Deuteronomy 19:15 “... at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”

- The stones are both a testimony and a witness:

Jesus would later say:

Luke 19:40 “... I tell you that, if these should hold their peace (speaking of the testimony of men), the stones would immediately cry out.”

John 1:28 “These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

- Bethabara means “house of passage.”

Matthew 3:9 “And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

- John was no doubt pointing to the very stones laid in the Jordan as a witness.

V: 10-13 The priests bearing the Ark stood by while 3 million people passed by.

- The children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh pass over before the people in fulfillment of their agreement to help conquer and subdue the land.

V: 14-18 God magnifies His servant before all the people, just as He said He would.

Psalm 75:6-7 “⁶For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and sitteth up another.”

- Waiting upon God – Joshua doesn’t move without God’s direction.
- As the priests come up out of the Jordan, the waters return, and the people are now in the promised land.

V: 19-24 They came up out of the river on the 10th day of the 1st month, just before the Passover.

- They camped in Gilgal, near Jericho, 2miles away probably within eye sight of Jericho.

Map / proximity – 2 miles away.

V: 22 “Dry land” – no rationalization of or watering down of God’s miracles.

- This new generation gets their own “Red Sea” experience – a significant first step into the promise land.
- There is an expectation that they will testify to their children.

V: 24 “That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.”

- Imagine being on the walls of Jericho, they are already scared, they’ve heard the stories about the crossing of the Red Sea, about Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan. There may have been skeptics in their midst – but not any more.

Joshua Chapter 5

V: 1 The Jordan River being dried up or held up was a big deal and highly visible – seeing such a great miracle on behalf of the children of Israel melted the hearts of the inhabitants of the land – took the wind out of their sails.

- This is also the fulfillment of what God told the children of Israel:

Exodus 15:14-17 “¹⁴The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold of the inhabitants of Palestina. ¹⁵Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. ¹⁶Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone...”

Deuteronomy 2:25 “This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.”

V: 2-3 All the males are circumcised: Symbolic of God’s covenant with the children of Israel.

- 650,000 men able to go to war + all males over 8 days old – at the “hill of the foreskins”

Key Word: “sharp” knives...

- Joshua is immediately obedient to what God commanded:

V: 4-7 Circumcision was commanded as a sign of the covenant between God and the children of Israel.

Genesis 17:9-10, 14 “⁹And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. ¹⁰This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised.” – “¹⁴And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.”

- This is not a condition that is added to God’s covenant, nor is it a new co-existing covenant.
- Circumcision is a sign, a token, an identification as being party to the covenant.
- They didn’t partake in circumcision to obtain God’s promise, they were circumcised because they had already received God’s promise.

- Just like we don't perform good works to get salvation, we do them because He has saved us already, we respond to His love for us by loving Him!

1 John 4:19 "We love Him because he first loved us."

- Circumcision like baptism is intended as an outward expression of an inward change.
- Physically and symbolically there was a cutting or removal, a complete separation from the sins of the flesh.
- Crossing the Jordan is likened to Baptism in the Spirit, likened to leaving the old life of the flesh behind, willingly living the crucified life in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

- The first thing God commands the children of Israel to do when they entered the promised land was to sever the flesh, be separated from the flesh.
- In time to come, a child that was born was not considered a Jew until he was circumcised.
- You weren't a Jew by birth, but became a Jew the day you were circumcised.

Paul uses this analogy:

Romans 2:28-29 "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."

- As important as this was it is interesting that it was neglected.
- As the children of Israel are leaving Egypt God instructed both Moses and Aaron that no un-circumcised person would be allowed to partake of the Passover.

As Moses was on his way back to Egypt answering the call of God:

Exodus 4:24-26 ²⁴"And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him (Moses), and sought to kill him. ²⁵Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it as his feet, and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me. ²⁶So He let him go: then she said, a bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision."

- Apparently Moses had neglected to circumcise at least one of his sons and we can speculate about the possible reasons but herein we see that both Moses and Zipporah had underestimated God's view of circumcision. Moses almost died because of it.

- Progress and victory in the promise land is predicated on obedience.

Deuteronomy 10:12-16 “¹²And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,¹³ to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? ¹⁴Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. ¹⁵Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. ¹⁶Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.”

- So how do we circumcise our hearts? First you start with a sharp knife.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

V: 8-9 This was more than a simple act of obedience – which in itself is good, it was also an act of faith.

- The children of Israel are camped out in Gilgal, within eyesight of the great city of Jericho.
- All the males, including all the men of war have just been incapacitated before their enemies, they are truly in a vulnerable place – and God is their only defense.

Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please Him...”

Romans 8:31 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

- Because they were obedient with regard to circumcision God rolled away their reproach, the reproach of Egypt. The reproach of the world, the worldly life.
- Egypt is always symbolic of the world, the sins of the flesh. Cutting away the flesh symbolized a separation from the flesh and the new life in the Spirit.
- God was keeping track, he had taken issue with their disobedience – but in their obedience they made it right – there was no more hindrance in their relationship.

1 John 1:8-9 “⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- Being cleansed from un-righteousness is the same as having our reproach rolled away. It clears the slate, we are restored to that right place with the Lord.
- They called the place “Gilgal” which means “Rolling” their reproach was “rolled” away.

V: 10-11 The children of Israel are now able to keep the Passover, again within sight of their enemies. There is no record that they kept the Passover during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

Psalm 23:5 “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

- Imagine being the king of Jericho looking over the wall at the nation of Israel.
- The New Testament equivalent of the Passover is Communion – partaking of and remembering the Lamb that was slain which must also be done “worthily” as Paul admonishes us in 1 Corinthians 11.
- The next day they ate the ripened grain from the land.
- On the Passover they un-leavened cakes and roasted grain.
- They are making the transition to an agrarian culture, raising their own food.
- The children of Israel found fields of wheat and barley as they crossed into the promised land. The inhabitants of the land no doubt fled to the great city of Jericho as the children of Israel approached.

V: 12 The Manna from heaven ceased and from that point forward the children of Israel ate from the fruit of the land – which God also provided.

V: 13-15 Joshua has an encounter with the “captain of the host of the Lord”

- This is none other than a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus referred to as a “Christophony” or “Theophony”
- Abraham & sojourner, Jacob wrestling with God.
- Who’s side are you on? Guts!
- Joshua bows down and worships – which an ordinary angel would have stopped.

Exodus 20:2-3 “I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

Revelation 19:10 & 22:9 “And I fell as his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, see thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant...”

- At first Joshua didn't recognize this stranger to the camp – but upon hearing his voice he immediately recognized who it was.

John 10:27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

- Joshua got to have the same experience as Moses.
 1. To hear God's voice.
 2. To stand on Holy ground.
 3. To stand in the presence of the Lord.

- Jesus asks the same question, who's side are you on?

Matthew 12:30 – “you're either with Me or you are against Me...”

- No middle ground.