



Joshua 4-5

A New Era: Living in the Land of Promise

Review---



Jordan River

- 156 miles long; From Sea of Galilee to Dead Sea; elevation drops 9 feet per mile
- 98 feet wide (avg) and 3-10 (avg) feet deep;
- Flood stage (Jan-Mar) water overflows its banks; width is half mile
- Fed by 3 river tributaries up north; melting snow/ice from Mount Hermon
- Normally several crossing points (fords); but no crossing at flood stage
- Israelites approached Canaan from the east.
- Jordan River is the border. Crossing over signals arrival in the Promised Land.

Shittim:

- 6 miles east of Jordan River; in plains of Moab
- Last encampment before crossing the Jordan River
- Israel remained there several months
- Moab king (Balak) targets & intices Israel into Baal worship & pagan culture
- Israel falls into deep sin:
 - Sexual immorality
 - Inter-marriage with Moabite & Midianite women
 - God judges Israel with plague; 24,000 men die
- Where God talks to a prophet (Balaam) thru a donkey.
- Where Israel prepares to enter Canaan
 - Defeated Midianites from its HQs in Shittim (massive spoils of war)
 - Tribe-by-tribe census to count men ready for battle (>20 yrs old)
 - Moses delivers farewell message; blesses people
 - Joshua named Moses' successor
 - Joshua sends 2 spies into Jericho

Other Nations

- Canaanites
- Hittites
- Philistines
- Phoenicians
- Moabites
- Ammonites
- Edomites
- Midianites



Chapter 3 - Sequence of Events

- Lord calls people to follow the ark:
 - Move out of Shittim
 - Camp next to Jordan for 3 days; consecrate
 - Jordan River at flood stage
 - Great purpose in the "3-day "delay"
- Lord calls priests to:
 - Keep ark visible
 - Carry the ark; step into the Jordan (at flood stage)
- As priests' soles of feet touch water:
 - River backs up into a heap at town of Adam (25 miles upstream)
 - People cross the riverbed on dry ground

Principle: Focus on what we know, not on what we don't know

But as they looked at the Ark, and venerated it—was God endorsing a kind of idolatry? Had the ark, itself, become an idol?

Joshua 4 Twelve Memorial Stones from the Jordan

4 When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ²“Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, ³and command them, saying, ‘Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests’ feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.’” ⁴Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. ⁵And Joshua said to them, “Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, ⁶that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ ⁷then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever.”

⁸And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the LORD told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. ⁹And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day. ¹⁰For the priests bearing the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua.

The people passed over in haste. ¹¹And when all the people had finished passing over, the ark of the LORD and the priests passed over before the people. ¹²The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the people of Israel, as Moses had told them.

Sons of Jacob

- Reuben *
- Simeon
- Levi
- Judah
- Dan
- Naphtali
- Gad *
- Asher
- Issachar
- Zebulun
- Joseph — Manasseh *
- Benjamin — Ephraim

* 3 tribes with large herds & flocks, authorized by Moses to populate land EAST of Jordan. Prime pasturelands for raising livestock. Wives, children & livestock could settle east of Jordan, but men of fighting age would cross and engage in military campaigns to settle Canaan. They kept their promise and were blessed when returning (Joshua 22)

¹³About 40,000 ready for war passed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho. ¹⁴On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.

¹⁵ And the LORD said to Joshua, ¹⁶ "Command the priests bearing the ark of the testimony to come up out of the Jordan." ¹⁷ So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan." ¹⁸ And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

¹⁹ The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. ²⁰ And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. ²¹ And he said to the people of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?' ²² then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.' ²³ For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, ²⁴ so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

What would God accomplish by insisting the people make a monument like this?

The greatest enemy of our faith just might be forgetfulness.

Deuteronomy 8

¹¹ "Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. ¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' ¹⁸ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.

What is it about us? Why are we forgetful about God's work in our lives?

We must beware of thinking that God is only in the earthquake, wind, and fire; of thinking that manna but not grain is God's food. Most of God's gifts to his people are not dazzling and gaudy but wrapped in simple brown paper. Quiet provisions of safety on the highway, health of children, picking up a paycheck, supper with the family—all in an ordinary day's work for our God.

Dale Ralph Davis

Joshua Chapter 5

New Section of Book: *The Taking of the Land*

The New Generation Circumcised

5 As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel.

2 At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time." **3** So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.



4 And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. **5** Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. **6** For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt,

perished, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord; the Lord swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. **7** So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

8 When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. **9** And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

What circumcision was:

- A surgical cutting away of the male foreskin of the penis
- Already being practiced a little in the ancient near-east
- But God instituted it for special religious and theological purposes
- Started with Abraham (Gen 17)
 - A surgical sign of faith in God's promise to Abraham
 - A sign of the covenant God had with Abraham and his descendents
 - Symbol of Israel's unique identity

- It was costly, painful and required immediate obedience
- Supposed to be performed on male babies at the 8th day after birth
- **Why couldn't God have required a tattoo or something? A pierced ear? Why THERE? On the male organ?**
 - The whole point is for the need to “cut away sin and be cleansed”
 - The male organ represented the depth of depravity
 - It carried the seed that produced depraved sinners.
 - Circumcision symbolized the need for a profoundly deep cleansing to reverse the effects of depravity
 - BTW, there was a side-health benefit, since disease could be kept in the folds of the foreskin. Removing it prevented that.
 - Historically, Jewish women have had the lowest rate of cervical cancer.
 - It's gory and bloody. It's intimate and somewhat creepy
 - To show us the penalty of sin
 - Sin is dire—and an intimate betrayal of God
 - Cutting away the foreskin of the male was meant to be a SPIRITUAL sign of the cutting away of the flesh of the heart.
 - It pointed to re-birth & regeneration
 - The physical circumcision of the male organ pointed to the circumcision of the heart
 - Jeremiah, centuries later, would admonish the people of Israel:
 - **Circumcise yourselves to the Lord; remove the foreskin of your hearts... (Jer 4:4)**

Circumcision marked what?

- Membership in the covenant people of Israel (Like baptism today)
- Faith can come after this sign.
 - But, objectively and externally, an 8-day-old son belonged to the covenant
- Divine seal on those God had chosen for His people
- Their identity was marked for God
- Not all will exercise true faith to accompany that sign
- Ideally, the SIGN should be joined with faith

First Passover in Canaan

¹⁰ While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.