

**Joshua**  
*First Things*  
 Joshua 5

We live in a culture of speed and immediacy.

God is not in a hurry. In the Gospels, Jesus is never in a hurry. In fact, Jesus was, at times, intentionally late or delayed, even in life-and-death situations (**Matthew 14; Mark 4: John 11**).

We value hurry, God values holy.

**Joshua 5** reminds us that God's timing is radically different from ours.

**5:1** summarizes the effect the miraculous Jordan crossing had on the inhabitants of the land.

God's priority is his people. It was not time to hurry. It was time to be holy.

**5:2** *At that time Yahweh said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time." So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.*

*"flint knives"*

*"circumcise...a second time"*

*"Gibeath-haaraloth"*

Circumcision was a mark of ownership—a physical sign of a spiritual reality.

The covenant God made with Abraham centered around the provision of a seed, a Son, so the sign of that covenant was placed strategically on the males of Israel.

Physical circumcision was never the ultimate issue with God.

God requires of all his people, a circumcised heart, a heart that is not stubborn toward him, but loves Yahweh their Elohim with all their heart and soul (**Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6**).

Anyone who was not circumcised violated the covenant. No male could participate in the Passover feast without being circumcised (**Exodus 12:48-49**).

Joshua's parallel with Abraham & Moses (**Genesis 17; Exodus 4:24-26**)

There can be no expectation of God's public blessing if there is hidden compromise in our private world.

Yahweh, who promised on oath to their fathers to give them a land flowing with milk and honey (cf. **Genesis 15; 22:16-18; 27:3; Exodus 32:13**), is the same Yahweh who declared by oath that he would not let their fathers into the land.

If Israel defies God, they are in as much danger of God's judgment as the Amorites and Canaanites. God is no respecter of persons.

Circumcision followed saving faith as the outward demonstration of saving faith, NEVER the basis for saving faith.

Abraham had been in a relationship with God by grace through faith for decades before God instituted circumcision.

Also, the regulations in the Mosaic Code were given AFTER the Exodus and the crossing over the Red Sea, not before.

God didn't require circumcision before Israel crossed the Jordan.

The sign of the covenant was never the basis of the covenant, but a first and necessary obedience within the covenant relationship.

v. 8 The conquest had to be delayed until the men recovered. The Israelite warriors were temporarily rendered helpless (cf. **Genesis 34:25**).

We are never stronger than when we are dependent on and obedient to God's word.

v. 9 With the circumcision complete at "*Gilgal*" the reproach of Egypt was "*rolled away*" (**Numbers 14:13-16; Deuteronomy 9:28**)

The sign of our New Covenant relationship with God is baptism.

**Colossians 2:11-12** "*In Christ also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.*"

The covenant sign moves from circumcision to baptism in the new order, whereby the outward and visible sign speaks of an inward and spiritual grace.

This is the spiritual reality of regeneration, accomplished in us by and through the saving work of Christ.

**Philippians 3:3** "*We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.*"

Our first act of obedience as a believer, the *first thing*, in entering the blessing of our inheritance.

v. 10 Now that the covenant sign of circumcision is reinstated in Israel, the nation is qualified to observe the feast of Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (**Exodus 12:2ff; cf. 48-49**).

v. 11 – Feast of Unleavened Bread (**Exodus 12:14-20; Lev 23:6** – starts on day after Passover and lasts for the 7 days)

v. 12 The manna from heaven stops (cf. **Deuteronomy 8:3**).

vv. 13-15 Joshua goes out on a secret reconnaissance mission to size up its fortification.

"*He looked up*" - startled by the appearance of a great Warrior with a "*sword drawn*," ready for battle.

Joshua - "*Are you for us or against us?*"

Warrior – "*No!*" (NIV – "*neither*;" but the word is NO!) Of course this Warrior is there to support Israel, but the point of the blunt "NO" was to say: "*Wrong question, Joshua. I'm the Commander of Yahweh's hosts!*"

"*Hosts*" can mean the fighting men of Israel (**Exodus 12:41**), but more commonly it refers to angelic beings who fight in the spirit realm. In this case, it could be both.

The Warrior's point: "*I didn't come to take sides, I came here to take charge.*"

"*Now, I have come.*" (NOTE: In the **Psalms** that is a phrase pregnant with redemptive meaning. **Exodus 3** - Yahweh - *I have come to deliver.*)

"*Joshua fell facedown and worshipped*"

v. 15 "*Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy, and Joshua did so.*" (cf. **Exodus 3:5** – another Moses parallel).

**Zechariah 4:6** *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says Yahweh of hosts. 2 Chronicles 20:15* *The battle belongs to God.*

Holiness trumps hurriedness every time. Preparing is crucial to possessing. Spiritual disciplines are necessary for spiritual formation.

The question is NOT whether God is on our side, but whether we are on his side, submitted to his sovereign rule and authority over our lives.