

Joshua ch 5-

Well, as we approach ch 5 of the book of Joshua, the children of Israel find themselves in a no retreat, no surrender type of a position, having crossed over the Jordan. God through Joshua called the nation to sanctify themselves, to consecrate themselves and to wash themselves of any unclean thing and He would do a mighty work on their behalf. And the next day Joshua commanded the priests who bore the ark to take the ark and head out about a 1,000 yards before the people and it would come to pass that as their feet entered into the waters of the Jordan that the waters would stand up in a heap and the whole nation would cross over on dry ground. Because nothing short of a miraculous feat of that nature would get them across, because the Jordan was at its peak flood season and the bible tells us that the river was overflowing all its banks. Now the ark was that which represented the very presence of God, and so the nation was being stretched and challenged to enter in to a new dimension in their relationship with God, not one that would see everything happen in advance. But now they were to trust in the presence of God going before them and they were to follow behind, walking by faith, you see, the waters of the Jordan weren't going to just wall up before them as the Red Sea did. But rather this time they were to literally get their feet wet and at that point, when they would step out and trust the Lord even when it didn't really seem to make a whole lot of sense, or maybe it seemed a little slippery, but seeing God's leading they would go for it, God would honor that and do a miraculous and radical work to His own glory. And in essence the whole nation was tried before God and called to raise their standards of trust and faith, and so when they all crossed over; the presence of God having gone before them, being with them in the midst of the crossing and then coming up after them as well the waters collapsed and began to flow again, and they found themselves just as they were before, with no chance of crossing the Jordan in and of their own efforts, but the difference is that now they were on the other side, they were in the Promised Land. And you got to know that there was a spirit of overwhelming joy and excitement that was filling the air throughout the camp of the Israelites, here we are, the land is before us and God is with us, and if God be for us, then who can stand against us. And they took 12 stones from out of the bottom of the Jordan and they set up a memorial in the camp so that it would stand as a testimony to the power of God and the glory of God. So that when their children asked them what those 12 rocks were all about that were all piled up over there, it would open up a window for them to share the reality of God with their kids, have you noticed in our journey through the scriptures God had established just article after article and point after point and one thing after another that were to be used as trigger points for the children, things hanging on their doors, these rocks piled up, and just different things that were to be used as a means to educate and facilitate their children concerning the Lord and what means to have a relationship with the almighty God of the universe.

God emphasizes throughout His word the need for us as parents to communicate the truth of the word of God to our kids and we are accountable before Him and have a responsibility before Him to do just that. They were to set those stones up so that would be reminded through their kids to let them know of the wonders of God and notice vs 24 of ch 5 (read).

Vs1

Why, well #1 because they just got a glimpse of the reality of the power the God of Israel and they knew that these people meant business, and they serve a God who can part entire Seas and the provide for them for 40yrs in the desert and part the mighty Jordan river in the midst of the flood season. And they knew that they didn't stand a chance against a people that served a God as powerful as that, because their God was going to ensure them victory, and #2 Again remember that since it was flood season, they had probably assumed that they had a little more time to prepare for what was coming, but now they're face with the element of surprise. And so all these factors combined, along with knowing what's become of all the other people's that Israel has confronted, theirs hearts melted, now that's not necessarily a bad thing, if it's a heart that melts in repentance and surrender to God. But unfortunately many times this is the case, people are confronted with their own inadequacy and hopelessness, only to have their hearts re-solidify in opposition and some type of animosity or hostility or bitterness toward the Lord. But as for them, as for now, they're shaking in their shoes and rightfully so.

Vs2-8

So it's not that all the males were circumcised twice, what this is saying is that all the men of Israel that had come out of Egypt had been circumcised, but none of their sons, who were born in the wilderness, were. For whatever reason, they had neglected that rite the entire time that they were in the wilderness. And the reason that a new generation was born in the wilderness wanderings, Joshua makes clear; it's because the people had "disobeyed the voice of the Lord." and Now God was giving the land to this new generation, whom He had raised up in the place of them who couldn't inherit the blessings of God due to their unbelief. And now that God was coming through and giving them all that He had promised, and He was beginning to fulfill the covenant that He had made with Abraham way back in Gen ch 17. Where He promised Ab that He was going to make a great nation of Him and give to His descendants the land of Canaan, and the sign of that covenant that was made between God and Ab was that of Circumcision, that was the sign that they God had established to be the mark of a people that was set apart to Him. A people that had severed a life after the flesh, and that's what the act of circumcision was to represent. It was a type of a cutting away a heart that was after the flesh, God wanted a people who whose heart was after the things of the Spirit.

That's why we read vs like Deut 10:16, which says, "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer." and Deut 30:6 which says, "*the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*" and So all the way throughout the scriptures we see the fact that God is always interest, not in the outward condition of my being, by that I mean if I'm doing this just so, or that just right, but rather He's interested in the inward position of my heart. Why is it that I'm doing anything that I'm doing? God wants us to cut away from our hearts, and He wants to cut away from our hearts that longing or desiring after the flesh. And so it was to be a symbolic act which typified consecration to God, and the desire for the things of the Spirit, much like baptism for us today. It's one way that we show outwardly our inward consecration and separation to God. No longer desiring to live a life after the flesh, but wanting the old man to be buried in the waters of baptism that we might live now in the newness of life, that resurrection power of Jesus Christ

Now the Jews got twisted up when it came to this rite, because it got to the point where they would go through the rite, with out the reality of what that rite was speaking of in their hearts. And so they would go through the rite, or the motions, but in their hearts they were still set on the things of the flesh, it just became a meaningless ritual. And Paul addresses that fallacy in the 2nd ch of the book of Rom 2:28-29 when he said, "*he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but 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.*" and Now that the nation of Israel is entering into a new relationship with God, coming into the Land, because this relationship is to typify a new relation after the Spirit, which by the way is the same relationship that God wants to bring you into, that being a life of victory over the flesh. So they were to re-identify with this act of circumcision (as a nation), and all that it entailed, the cutting away of the flesh, signifying that they were no longer going to walk after the flesh but after the Spirit. And when you receive Jesus into your heart, you become as it were circumcised before God, again the emphasis not being on the outward but on the inward, we read in Col 2:11, "*In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.*" Now, they were to be circumcised with sharp knives or flint knives, and really don't have to stretch the "types" because we know that we can easily draw from the swords or knives a picture of the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. The word of God is able to sever, it's able to divide, it shows clearly right and wrong, in today's society everybody is trying to escape into relativism, well if that's right for you then it's right. But that's not what the bible says, the bible is able to clearly mark out and divide or separate that which is flesh, and that which isn't, and they were to sever the flesh from their lives.

And it's interesting to me that the Lord had them wait until they were on the west side of the Jordan, deep in enemy territory before He had them do this. Because this act would completely incapacitate them for several days, we read in the book of Genesis ch 34 that Levi and Simeon were able to overthrow an entire city (just the 2 of them) after the men in that city had been circumcised. So imagine every male in the nation of Israel being completely unable to fight and the enemy catching wind of their condition, they'd all be dead, and so even in this God is calling them to trust Him and to stand in faith even when it just doesn't seem to make much sense. God is taking the nation of Israel through spiritual "growing pains" you might say.

Vs9

You remember that Egypt typifies the life after the flesh, so here, after the circumcision of the nation, God says, today I have rolled away from you the reproach of Egypt.

Vs10

So they came into the land on the 10th day, was circumcised and then 4 days later they kept the 1st Passover in the new land. And The Passover you can read of in Ex ch 12 which was also an incredible foreshadowing of the work of Jesus Christ. And the shedding of His blood for the remission of our sin and sparing our lives the eternal judgment of God. Because you remember that Judgment was coming down, God had issued a judgment of death that was inescapable; death was coming to the 1st born in each family in the land. And God said I'm going to make a way of by which you can be spared this judgment and it's the only way that you can be saved from My wrath, it's the only "method" that will obtain salvation in your house. And if you don't act in faith by doing what I say, then there's nothing that will save you, what you need to do is go out and find a lamb with out spot and with out blemish and it has to be of the 1st yr. And I want you to kill this lamb and you are to take it's blood and strike it on the doorposts and the lintel of your home and then I want you to roast the lamb and partake of the lamb. I want you to ingest the lamb and allow it to become that which nourishes you and sustains you, now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, (hence the name Passover) and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you, and we know of course that that was looking forward to the ultimate Lamb of God, Jesus Christ who was indeed spotless and with out whose blood was shed for the remission of our sin, so that we might not be destroyed in Judgment. And the only way by which we can be spared that judgment is to by faith apply the blood of Christ to the doorposts and lintel of our hearts and to partake of Jesus allowing Him to be that which nourishes us and sustains us. And of course all the other ordinances of the Passover pointed to Jesus as well, the unleavened bread, we know that leaven in the bible speaks of sin, and we know that God's word tells us that Jesus Christ was in all ways tempted as we are and yet He was with out sin, there was no leaven in Him. And as often as they partook of the Passover they were to do it in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, their deliverance from the hard bondage and enslavement to the flesh.

And we know that now we partake of the communion cup and broken bread not in remembrance of the Passover lamb of Egypt, but rather the Passover Lamb of God who said as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, do it in remembrance of Me. Of the deliverance from the world and the life of servitude to the flesh that we were in bondage to, of the deliverance from the judgment of God that we were all destined for but He by His love and grace and mercy shed His blood, died for our sins and raised for our justification, becoming sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, and we're to remember these things when we partake of communion.

Vs11-12

The manna which God had so freely provided for them, to give them all that they needed for nourishment and sustenance all those years also speaks to us of Jesus, who is the bread of life come down from heaven. Jesus said in John 6:48-51, "*I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.*" The Children of Israel had partaken of the manna for some 40 years in the desert, and now that they had entered into the land, which flowed with milk and honey, they partook of the fruits of the Land, God now providing for them in that manner.

There was a variety in their diet, and that's the life lived in the Spirit, it's a life of variety, it's a life of excitement, because you never know what God has planned for you today, and so they're leaving now the monotony of the manna and coming into the variety of the fruits of the land. Now this next portion of scripture is really interesting, and It seems so profound and yet it's just a small insertion in the word, it just sort of pops in there and then it's dropped.

Vs13-15

Now this is an awesome scene, here's Joshua, now I don't know if Joshua was maybe just sort of walking through the camp or maybe it was early one morning and he had just sort of stepped out of his tent and was surveying the situation. But the implication is that he was alone and you have to admire his courage, because he looks up and here stands an individual looking back at him; sword already drawn and in hand. And we're not told whether or not Joshua was even armed, and just having the benefit of knowing the unfolding of this story and who it was that was confronting him, I have a sneaking suspicion that this individual didn't look exactly weak and beggarly. I imagine, He appeared primed and ready for battle, and Joshua just walks right up to him, more or less gets up in His face, (now I'm not trying to insinuate in a hostile or disrespectful manner, but obviously making it evident that fear isn't an issue with him).

And he approaches this fella and he says to Him hey, are You for us or against us, are you for us or our enemies, because he knew there was no in between, even as Jesus said you're either for Me or against Me. And I love the answer he gets because if your bible says that He said, "Neither" that's not really accurate, literally He said "no".

Joshua says, are you for us or against us, and this man replies, No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have come.

And in affect what He's saying is, I'm not for you or them, and it's important that we see that, He's in essence saying I'm every bit as much for the people that are coming under judgment as I am for those who are being used to bring that judgment. Don't try to put Me on one side or the other, because if it were up to Me you'd all be saved, God's not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. We read in Ezek 33:11 where God says, *'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.'* But we know according to scripture that the people of the land of Canaan had become so vile, so base, that there was no turning back, they had gone past the point of no return, the iniquity of the Amorites was complete and they had filled up the wine cup of the wrath of God with their iniquity and the time had come for that cup to be pressed to the lips of that rebellious people and for them to drink of the wrath of God. So the question Joshua isn't whose side am I on, it's whose side are you on, it's not am I for you or against you, it's are you for Me or against Me. And so He answers no and I think that's a good nugget for us to chew on for awhile, the question is are we in line with His purposes, not is He in line with ours. But notice as soon as He told Joshua who it was, Joshua immediately fell on his face and worshipped Him. You know what that tells us about this man, it tells us that it's none other than Jesus Christ Himself; this is what we would refer to as a theophony, an OT manifestation of Jesus Christ How do we know that, well it's pretty simple, there is none that's worthy to be worshipped except for God, and several times in the book of Rev John would fall on his face at the sight of an angel and begin to worship the angel. But the angel would always tell John, hey man get up, don't worship me, I'm just a servant like you, you worship God. And so the very fact that this person receives Joshua's worship is evidence that this is Jesus, the commander of the army of the Lord come to meet him. Telling him a couple of things #1 He's letting him know that He's there with him and is there to lead him into the land, and #2 that he's (Joshua's) not in command and that it's not his battle, it's the Lord's and He's in charge.

And so hey Joshua, keep that clear, and don't touch My glory, you it's possible, though I have no scriptural support for it, but it's possible that Joshua, looking over the armies of 10's of thousands of men that were under him, got to feeling pretty good about that, because he was the man in charge. And here the Lord is reminding him, no Joshua you're not the man in charge, you're not the commander of this army, you're just here to follow orders, My orders to be specific.

Now again I can't know that for sure, maybe Joshua was feeling a little unsure of himself and so the Lord appeared to re-affirm to Joshua what was going on and to strengthen and encourage him. And if you want to see it that way, that's fine to, but the bottom line is, that as soon as he was aware of who it was before him, he was eating dirt, in humble submission and worship. And he said what is it that you want me to do, you remember that Paul the apostle had an encounter with Jesus Christ he responded much the same way, when Jesus identified Himself to Paul, he responded by saying what do you want me to do Lord.

And here Joshua is saying your word is my command and what did the Lord say, take off your shoes, for the place where you are is holy.

Now if there was any doubt as to who this was, it just all evaporated because Joshua who was one who meditated on the word of God, would've been immediately taken back in his mind and heart to what we know as Ex ch 3 when Moses saw the burning bush. And God called to him from that bush and when Moses began to approach it God said, take your sandals from your feet, for the place you stand is holy ground. And now Joshua finding himself with an up close and personal encounter with Jesus is commanded to remove his shoes, because any ground that God shows up on, is holy. And so Joshua learned 1st hand that the battle belongs to the Lord and He is the commander in charge and we'll win every time we're sent to battle so long as we're able to follow orders.