

Joshua 5 Commentary

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Paul J Bucknell - Biblical Foundations for Freedom

LAND ALLOTMENTS
(Joshua 13-21)
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JOSHUA			
A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST			
HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS			
CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND		DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND	CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE
ACTION		ALLOCATION	APPEAL
Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45	Josh 22:1-24:33
WARLORDS IN CANAAN		LANDLORDS IN CANAAN	
ENTERING CANAAN	CONQUERING CANAAN	DIVIDING CANAAN	
SECURING THE LAND		SETTLING THE LAND	
Preparation	Conquest	Possession	Consecration
ca. 1 Month	ca 7 Years	ca. 18 Years	

Joshua 5:1 Now it came about when 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 how the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the sons of Israel until they had crossed, that their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the sons of Israel.

- **all the kings of the Amorites:** Jos 12:9-24 24:15 Ge 10:15-19 15:18-21 48:22 Jud 11:23 2Sa 21:2 Eze 16:3 Am 2:9
- **all the kings of the Canaanites:** Jos 17:12,18 Ge 12:6 Ex 23:28 Jud 1:1 4:2 Eze 9:1 Ps 135:11
- **who were by the sea:** Nu 13:29 Jud 3:3 Zep 2:4-6
- **heard:** Jos 2:9-11 Ex 15:14,15 Ps 48:4-6 Rev 18:10
- **there was no spirit in them any longer:** 1Sa 25:37 1Ki 10:5 Isa 13:6-8 Eze 21:7 Da 5:6
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Joshua 2:9-11+ and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. 10 "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 "When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

CANAANITE HEARTS MELT AT ISRAEL CROSSING A FLOODED RIVER

Observe the overview charts above, noting especially that these first 5 chapters are preparation for conquest of the promised land.

Donald Campbell has an excellent introduction to this chapter - Under Joshua's leadership and by miraculous intervention some 2 million soldiers and civilians crossed the Jordan. A beachhead was quickly established at Gilgal, and from every human point of view it was time to strike immediately at the strongholds of Canaan. After all, the morale of the people of Canaan had utterly collapsed in the face of one old and two recent news items that had spread through the land: (a) that the God of Israel had dried up the Red (Reed) Sea (Josh 2:10); (b) that the Israelites had defeated the powerful kings of the Amorites in Transjordan (Josh 2:10); (c) that Yahweh had also dried up the waters of the Jordan River so that the Israelites could cross over into Canaan (Josh 5:1; cf. Josh 4:24). As this news spread, so did fear. What better time to strike a paralyzing blow? Certainly the military leaders of Israel must have favored an immediate all-out offensive. But this was not God's plan (**ED: IMAGINE THE PRESSURE HUMANLY SPEAKING ON JOSHUA, BUT CLEARLY HE REMAINED ATTENTIVE TO ONLY ONE MILITARY LEADER, YAHWEH! A GOOD LESSON FOR ALL US TO ALWAYS ASSESS OPPORTUNITIES THAT SEEM HUMANLY SPEAKING TOO GOOD TO PASS UP. PRAY THEM UP FIRST!**). He is never in a hurry though His children often are. From God's point of view Israel was not yet ready to fight on Canaan's soil. There was some unfinished business—and it was spiritual in character. It was time for renewal. Consecration must precede conquest. Before God would lead Israel to victory, He would lead them through three experiences: (a) the renewal of circumcision (Joshua 5:1–9), (b) the celebration of the Passover (Joshua 5:10), and (c) the appropriation of the land's produce (Joshua 5:11–12). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Consecration must precede **conquest**.

-- Campbell

Don Anderson summarizes this chapter: There are four things that stand out in this chapter:

1. A new POSITION in the circumcision rite
2. A new BEGINNING in the celebration of the Passover
3. A new FOOD in the corn and produce from the land
4. A new CAPTAIN, the commander of the Lord's army.

Now - Joshua 4:24 ends with in essence a prophecy, a declaration "that all the peoples of the earth may know that [the hand of the LORD is mighty](#)," and Joshua 5:1 is the beginning fulfillment of that prophecy as the citizens of the Promised Land came to

understand that the God of Israel was mighty and they were "mighty afraid" as we used to say in the country.

It came about when 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- Joshua 3:10 mentioned 7 nations, but only 2 are mentioned here, and they must be representative of all 7. **By the sea** refers to the Mediterranean Sea. Bad news traveled fast in Canaan, in this case the bad news for the [Amorites](#) and [Canaanites](#) that 2 million Israelites had crossed the flooded Jordan River and were now camped on the east side. So much for the protection a flooded river might have afforded the pagans from the threat of invasion led by Jehovah (see Dt 20:4+)!

J Vernon McGee adds - Because the Jordan River was at flood stage, the Amorites and Canaanites did not expect the Israelites to cross over. They expected them to cross over after the flood season was over. They probably thought they had quite a bit more time to prepare for battle, and it was a shock for them to discover that God had enabled Israel to cross Jordan. ([Joshua 5](#))

Heard how the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the sons of Israel until they had crossed, that their hearts melted - In short, the Lord went before Israel and demoralized their enemies. The Canaanites were already afraid (Josh 2:9-11), and now their fears totally demoralized them. What a better time for Israel to strike, but that was not God's plan.

As an aside it is interesting that 4 chapters in Joshua begin with something the kings (or king) **heard** (Joshua 5:1, Joshua 9:1-2, Joshua 10:1-2 and Joshua 11:1-3).

Irving Jensen makes an excellent point that "The miracle of the Jordan crossing left no possible suggestion of mere coincidence or favorable chance. This is confirmed by the reactions of the enemies of the land, whose hearts melted in fear when the report reached them that "Jehovah had dried up the waters of the Jordan" (Joshua 5:1).

And there was no spirit in them any longer because of the sons of Israel- Whether Joshua actually knew the emotional/mental state of his enemy is not stated in the text, but he had already been informed by the two spies. You would have expected Joshua to mobilize the army immediately and attack Jericho. After all, the people of Israel were united in following the Lord; and the people of the land were paralyzed by fear. From the human point of view, it was the perfect time for Joshua to act. But God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isa 55:8,9); and Joshua was getting his orders from the Lord, not from the military experts. The nation crossed the river on the tenth day of the first month (Joshua 4:19). The events described in Joshua 5 took at least ten days later, and then the people marched around Jericho for six more days. God waited over two weeks before giving His people their first victory in the land.

Brian Harbour - The conquest of the land did not come about because of the strength of the Hebrews but because of the strength of God. The Hebrews acknowledged that by marking themselves with the sign of the covenant and by celebrating the Passover.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary - Verses 1-9. How dreadful is their case, who see the wrath of God advancing towards them, without being able to turn it aside, or escape it! Such will be the horrible situation of the wicked; nor can words express the anguish of their feelings, or the greatness of their terror. Oh that they would now take warning, and before it be too late, flee for refuge to lay hold upon that hope set before them in the gospel! God impressed these fears on the Canaanites, and dispirited them. This gave a short rest to the Israelites, and circumcision rolled away the reproach of Egypt. They were hereby owned to be the free-born children of God, having the seal of the covenant. When God glorifies himself in perfecting the salvation of his people, he not only silences all enemies, but rolls back their reproaches upon themselves.

Theodore Epp - Evidence of Separation

As far as Israel was concerned, there was no inheritance possible to them until they were circumcised. This was clearly stated in Genesis 17 where the covenant concerning the land was given. So now, as the nation stood at the edge of Canaan, it was necessary that they follow through on the sign of separation, which for them was circumcision. This was the sign God made with Abraham, and it was to be continued by his posterity.

The people renewed their separation through circumcision and also renewed their relationship by celebrating the Passover. Egypt with its bondage was behind them; the desert wanderings were over; Jordan, the place of decision, was crossed; and the nation was now ready to conquer Canaan. A new kind of food was necessary as Israel went against her enemies and took possession of the country.

Joshua soon discovered that he was face to face with the Captain of the Lord's hosts, the commander of the Lord's armies. Here was the Warrior and Leader, coming not to help but to take charge.

The Captain of the Lord's hosts came not only to direct the armies of Israel but also to fight for Israel and with Israel and through Israel. This is the same truth as is taught in Ephesians 6:10 (note) where we are told to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (see note Philippians 3:3).

QUESTION - [Who were the Amorites?](#)

ANSWER - The Amorites were an ancient nation mentioned frequently in the Old Testament.

(**EDITORIAL NOTE** - 86X IN 85V - Gen. 10:16; Gen. 14:7; Gen. 14:13; Gen. 15:16; Gen. 15:21; Gen. 48:22; Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:17; Exod. 13:5; Exod. 23:23; Exod. 33:2; Exod. 34:11; Num. 13:29; Num. 21:13; Num. 21:21; Num. 21:25; Num. 21:26; Num. 21:29; Num. 21:31; Num. 21:32; Num. 21:34; Num. 22:2; Num. 32:33; Num. 32:39; Deut. 1:4; Deut. 1:7; Deut. 1:19; Deut. 1:20; Deut. 1:27; Deut. 1:44; Deut. 2:24; Deut. 3:2; Deut. 3:8; Deut. 3:9; Deut. 4:46; Deut. 4:47; Deut. 7:1; Deut. 20:17; Deut. 31:4; Jos. 2:10; Jos. 3:10; Jos. 5:1; Jos. 7:7; Jos. 9:1; Jos. 9:10; Jos. 10:5; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 10:12; Jos. 11:3; Jos. 12:2; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 13:4; Jos. 13:10; Jos. 13:21; Jos. 24:8; Jos. 24:11; Jos. 24:12; Jos. 24:15; Jos. 24:18; Jdg. 1:34; Jdg. 1:35; Jdg. 1:36; Jdg. 3:5; Jdg. 6:10; Jdg. 10:8; Jdg. 10:11; Jdg. 11:19; Jdg. 11:21; Jdg. 11:23; 1 Sam. 7:14; 2 Sam. 21:2; 1 Ki. 4:19; 1 Ki. 9:20; 1 Ki. 21:26; 2 Ki. 21:11; 1 Chr. 1:14; 2 Chr. 8:7; Ezr. 9:1; Neh. 9:8; Ps. 135:11; Ps. 136:19; Ezek. 16:3; Ezek. 16:45; Amos 2:9; Amos 2:10)

They were descended from one of the sons of Canaan (Genesis 10:15–16). In early inscriptions, the Amorites were also known as Amurra or Amurri. The “land of the Amorites” included Syria and Israel. Some of the southern mountains of Judea were also called the hill country of the Amorites (Deuteronomy 1:7, 19-20).

Two kings of the Amorites named [Sihon](#) and [Og](#) were defeated by the Israelites under Moses’ leadership ([Deuteronomy 31:4](#)). In Joshua 10:10, five Amorite kings were defeated by the people of Israel, and the victory was decisively won in Joshua 11:8. In the time of Samuel, peace existed between Israel and the Amorites (1 Samuel 7:14).

Less than a century later, King Solomon forced the remaining Amorites into slavery: “All the people who were left of the Amorites . . . who were not of the people of Israel—their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel were unable to devote to destruction—these Solomon drafted to be slaves” (1 Kings 9:20-21). The Amorites are last mentioned in Amos 2:10. It is assumed they either died out or were absorbed into the culture of Israel.

The Amorites were known as fierce warriors during their prime. Moses referred to Og, the king of the Amorites, as a very tall man whose bed was approximately 13.5 feet long (Deuteronomy 3:11). Despite their strong numbers and military might, the Amorites were destroyed due to their worship of false gods. Israel’s conquest of their land was part of God’s judgment on the pagan Amorite culture.

Here are a couple lessons to learn from the Amorites:

First, only the one, true God is worthy of worship. The idols of the Amorites and the false gods they represent cannot compete with the omnipotent God of Israel.

Also, God gives nations opportunity to repent before judgment (2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 2:20-21). The Amorite nation had plenty of time to turn from their idolatry, but they despised God’s goodness and longsuffering and refused to repent (Romans 2:4). The Lord’s judgment upon them was severe, and anyone who imitates their rebellion will eternally regret it (Romans 2:5; Matthew 10:28; Revelation 2:22-23). [GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [Who were the Canaanites?](#)

ANSWER - The Canaanites were a group of ancient people who lived in the [land of Canaan](#) on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Canaan is described in the Bible as extending from Lebanon toward the Brook of Egypt in the south and the Jordan River Valley in the east. In the Bible, notably in Genesis 10 and Numbers 34, this was called the “land of Canaan” and occupies the same area that is occupied by modern Lebanon and Israel, plus parts of Jordan and Syria.

The Canaanites are mentioned over 150 times in the Bible. They were a wicked, idolatrous people descended from Noah’s grandson Canaan, who was a son of Ham (Genesis 9:18). Canaan was [cursed](#) because of his and his father’s sin against Noah (Genesis 9:20–25). In some passages, *Canaanites* specifically refers to the people of the lowlands and plains of Canaan (Joshua 11:3); in other passages, *Canaanites* is used more broadly to refer to all the inhabitants of the land, including the Hivites, [Girgashites](#), Jebusites, Amorites, Hittites, and [Perizzites](#) (see Judges 1:9–10).

The land of Canaan was the land God [promised](#) to give to Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 12:7). The Canaanites are described in

the Bible as a large and fierce people, not easily defeated, so the Israelites would need divine help to come against them, defeat them, and take their land away. God promised Moses and Joshua that help (Joshua 1:3).

After the Exodus, when the Lord told Moses to invade Canaan, Moses sent a group of spies into the land of Canaan to see what the people were like. The spies came back with a report that was both encouraging and daunting. The fruit of the land was huge—it took two men to carry back one cluster of grapes (Numbers 13:23)—and the land was bountiful in many other ways. However, the Canaanites were strong, and the cities were large and fortified. Also, the Israelite spies had seen what they described as Nephilim and the [descendants of Anak](#) there (Numbers 13:28, 33)—next to these fierce people, the Israelites saw themselves as “grasshoppers” (verse 33). In the end, the Israelites were so afraid of the Canaanites that they refused to go into the land God had promised to them. Only Joshua and Caleb were confident that God would help them defeat the Canaanites. Because of their unwillingness to trust God, that generation of Israelites was denied entry into Canaan (Numbers 14:30-35).

After Moses' death, Joshua was called by God to lead the people of Israel through the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. The first city they came to was Jericho, a strong-walled city of the Canaanites. Joshua believed God and told the people that God would drive the Canaanites out of the land so that Israel could take the land of Canaan (Joshua 3:10). The fall of Jericho was a supernatural event, as God overthrew that city (Joshua 6). This victory was a sign to the people of Israel and to the people of Canaan that God had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites.

Despite a long campaign against the inhabitants of Canaan, there remained several pockets of Canaanites in Israel after the land had been divided among the twelve tribes (Judges 1:27–36). Some of the Canaanites who remained in Israel were pressed into forced labor, but many strongholds remained in the land. The partial obedience of Israel, resulting in these Canaanite citadels, caused much trouble throughout the time of [the Judges](#). ([GotQuestions.org](#))

Canaanite - 76x in 73v - Gen. 10:18; Gen. 12:6; Gen. 13:7; Gen. 15:21; Gen. 24:3; Gen. 24:37; Gen. 28:1; Gen. 28:6; Gen. 28:8; Gen. 34:30; Gen. 38:2; Gen. 46:10; Gen. 50:11; Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:17; Exod. 6:15; Exod. 13:5; Exod. 13:11; Exod. 23:23; Exod. 23:28; Exod. 33:2; Exod. 34:11; Num. 13:29; Num. 14:25; Num. 14:43; Num. 14:45; Num. 21:1; Num. 21:3; Num. 33:40; Deut. 1:7; Deut. 7:1; Deut. 11:30; Deut. 20:17; Jos. 3:10; Jos. 5:1; Jos. 7:9; Jos. 9:1; Jos. 11:3; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 13:3; Jos. 13:4; Jos. 16:10; Jos. 17:12; Jos. 17:13; Jos. 17:16; Jos. 17:18; Jos. 24:11; Jdg. 1:1; Jdg. 1:3; Jdg. 1:4; Jdg. 1:5; Jdg. 1:9; Jdg. 1:10; Jdg. 1:17; Jdg. 1:27; Jdg. 1:28; Jdg. 1:29; Jdg. 1:30; Jdg. 1:32; Jdg. 1:33; Jdg. 3:3; Jdg. 3:5; Jdg. 4:23; Jdg. 4:24; 2 Sam. 24:7; 1 Ki. 9:16; 1 Chr. 2:3; Ezr. 9:1; Neh. 9:8; Neh. 9:24; Ezek. 16:3; Zech. 14:21; Matt. 15:22

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

1. And it came to pass, &c. As this verse is much more intimately related to what goes before than to what follows, it would probably have been better to have joined it to the preceding chapter. The present would then have commenced with an entirely new subject.

All the kings of the Amorites—and of the Canaanites. As the whole land of Canaan was of comparatively small extent, the several nations, as they are called, which inhabited it, must have been mere clans or hordes, and what are termed their kings nothing more than petty chieftains, ruling over territories scarcely larger than the counties in many of the states of the American union. The term king, in modern usage, conveys the idea of a power and dominion altogether more extensive than was possessed by these petty potentates. The Amorites and the Canaanites here mentioned probably stand for the whole of the devoted nations, they being specified on account of their superiority to the rest in numbers, power, and courage. The nation of the Amorites occupied both sides of the Jordan; two of their kings, Sihon and Og, had already been slain on the eastern side, Deut. 4:46, 47.

Which were by the sea. The Mediterranean sea; along the coasts of which the Canaanitish tribes, properly so called, were spread. This region was afterwards known by the name of Phœnicia, of which Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities. On this account the same person who is called ‘a woman of Canaan’ by Matthew, 15:22, is called by Luke, 7:26, ‘a Syro-Phœnician.’

Had dried up the waters of Jordan. Which they regarded as the natural bulwark of their country, one too strong for the enemy to break through, especially during the season of its annual overflow. It should seem that the Canaanites, if they had acted according to the rules of war, would have opposed the Israelites in their passage. But the destruction of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, some time before, and the recent victories over Sihon and Og, had spread such a panic through the land, that they did not dare to avail themselves of any supposed advantage, lest they should perish after their example. The event, indeed, shows how vain any attempt on their part would have been. It shows, too, that when the measure of any people's iniquities is full, they shall in no wise escape the vengeance of God. Whatever obstacles may appear to lie in the way, and whatever barrier an ungodly world may have, or think they have, for their defence, God will surely make a way for his indignation. Opposing myriads shall be only as the stubble before the fire of his wrath.

Until we were passed over. These words intimate the writer to have been one of the company.

Their heart melted. In modern language we read of the heart melting with pity and being dissolved with grief. The sacred writers, on this and similar occasions, apply the same metaphor, with equal truth and beauty, to the operation of fear and terror.

Neither was there spirit in them any more. The special providence of God is to be recognized in the panic which fell upon these nations at this particular juncture. It gave the Israelites just the opportunity they required, to administer the rite of circumcision, and to keep the Passover securely and without disturbance. Had it been otherwise, and had the Canaanites attacked them, as Simeon and Levi did the Shechemites when they were sore, they would

Joshua 5:2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make for yourself flint knives and circumcise again the sons of Israel the second time."

- **circumcise:** Ge 17:10-14 De 10:16 30:6 Ro 2:29 4:11 Col 2:11
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Genesis 17:7 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." 9 God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 "This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. 13 "A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

Leviticus 12:3 (see note) 'On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Irving Jensen outlines chapter 5 which he entitles **SPIRITUAL PREPARATION** (Joshua 5:2–15)

1. The Token of Circumcision: Restoration to covenant favor (Joshua 5:2–9)
2. The Token of Blood: Anticipation of deliverance (Joshua 5:10)
3. The Token of Fruit: Appropriation of the blessings (Joshua 5:11–12)
4. The Token of a Sword: Revelation of a holy war (Joshua 5:13–15)

Ancient Flint Knife

CARRYING OUT THE COVENANT OBLIGATION OF CIRCUMCISION

Jensen explains "Israel was not yet fully prepared to enter into battle on the soil of Canaan. The unfinished business was spiritual in character. Partly, it involved the observance of Moses' law (cf. Joshua 1:7–8); wholly, it was Israel's heart relationship to Jehovah. This chapter records four experiences which God brought to Joshua and the people, each one centered about a token, or symbol: circumcision, blood, fruit, and a sword."

At that time - When? After the **Now**. Always be alert to the time phrases which can help see progression of the narrative or text.

One would have thought from a human perspective this was the strategic moment to strike the fearful enemy. But God's ways are not man's ways as He stated in Isaiah

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

THOUGHT - What is a principle we can extract from this truth? Man wants to **DO**, but God wants us to **BE**! He is more interested in consecration. Consecration must precede conquest. So much of our Christian working is "**doing**" which is too often deficient in "**being**." God is more interested in **who we are** then in **what we do**. He knows that if we give attention to the "**being**", the "**doing**" will follow. As a corollary when God takes the measure of a man, he does not put a tape measure around their head to see how much they know, but He puts it (figuratively speaking of course) around their heart to see how much they will obey.

[Don Anderson](#) adds that "*God is never in a hurry. God's delays are always infinitely more profitable than our haste. We are always in a fever to do something for God and have forgotten that the first thing God wants is that we should be something for Him. In this time of delay God had lessons to teach His people which were going to decide all the future course of warfare in the land.*" (Quoting from Alan Redpath - [Victorious Christian Living](#)) **Anderson** adds that "There is a principle of Scripture that we can verify on many occasions, and that is, when we are most eager to act is when we'll make the most pitiful mistakes."

Donald Campbell adds that God "is never in a hurry, although His children sometimes are. If you feel pressured to make a decision or to act immediately in a situation, without time to consult the Lord about it, you need to resist the pressure. God does not ask you to reach decisions without adequate opportunity for prayer and consideration." ([No Time for Neutrality](#))

The LORD said to Joshua - This divine revelation is given to Joshua alone, but he will pass on God's instructions to the people, in this way functioning like an intermediary or mediator, much as did his predecessor Moses. As alluded to above, it is very likely that the military leaders under Joshua were encouraging him to "[strike while the iron was hot](#)" The triumphant conquest of the land was to be the victory of God, not the victory of Israel or of Joshua. It was neither the expertise of the Israelite army nor the tremulous emotions of the enemy that would give Israel the victory, but the presence of the Lord of Hosts, the almighty God.

In this section we see that God instructs Joshua on three steps that were necessary before He would give His people victory over their adversaries (1). Renewing the Lord's covenant (Joshua 5:1-9). (2) Remembering the Lord's goodness (Joshua 5:10-12). (3). Reaffirming the Lord's presence (Joshua 5:13-15)

The message of the Lord to Joshua is to do something to the Israelites before he does anything to the enemy.

Make for yourself flint knives Why did God command this ritual at this time? In fact, since circumcision had been clearly commanded in Genesis 17, why would they need to perform it? Clearly, Israel had not performed it on their children born in the 40 years in the wilderness! They had become apathetic regarding circumcision which was to have been a reminder of Israel's covenant relationship with God. The new generation was now at the inception of receiving their inheritance from God, but it was important to Yahweh that they renew their covenant relationship with Him. If during their wilderness journey Israel was tempted to sin, how much more they would be tempted now that they were living in the land! They would be surrounded by pagan people with immoral religious practices, and they would be tempted to compromise with their enemies. Later, this is exactly what future generations did, because they forgot the true meaning of circumcision.

The physical operation on the body was ultimately always meant to be a symbol of a spiritual operation on one's heart. As Moses instructed the second generation of Israelites "Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more." (Dt 10:16+). No amount of external surgery can change the inner person. It's when we repent and turn to God for help that He changes our hearts and make us love and obey Him from a new heart. (Ro 2:25-29+) Sadly over the succeeding years, the Jews came to trust in the external mark of the covenant and not in the God of the covenant who wanted to make them a holy people (see Acts 7:51+). They thought that as long as they were God's covenant people, as long as they had the physical sign, they could live just as they pleased! Moses warned them about this sin (Dt 30:6+), and so did the prophets (Jer 4:4). When John the Baptist called them to repent, the Jewish spiritual leaders said, "We have Abraham as our father" (Mt 3:9+). They were not unlike many today who feel sure they are saved and are going to heaven because they have been baptized, confirmed, were raised in a Christian family, go to church regularly, etc. As good as these religious activities can be, they must never be allowed to become substitutes for genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

TSK on flint knives - (see [Wikipedia](#)) Before the use of iron was common, all the nations of the earth had their edge tools made of stones, flints, etc. Our ancestors had their arrows and spearheads made of flint; which are frequently turned up by the plough. And even when iron became more common, stone knives seem to have been preferred for making incisions in the human body. The Egyptians used such to open the bodies for embalming; and the tribe of Alnajab in Ethiopia, who follow the Mosaic institution, perform the rite of circumcision, according to Ludolf, {cultris lapidibus,} with knives made of stone.

And circumcise again the sons of Israel (all less than 40 yo) **the second time** - Circumcision was the "badge" of the Abrahamic Covenant, the covenant which gave Israel the land. At the time of the Exodus, circumcision was an absolute requirement for all

males who would keep the Passover (Ex 12:44, 48) and now that Israel was preparing for another Passover (Joshua 5:10-12). Israel has just entered the land which is a part of the promise in the Abrahamic Covenant, but the majority of Israelites (presumably Joshua and Caleb had been circumcised) no longer bear the mark of the Abrahamic Covenant in their flesh. So this matter must be taken care of first before they can go on to conquest.

Irving Jensen has an interesting explanation of why there had been no circumcisions in the wilderness - The covenant promise of God to Israel had been temporarily suspended during the nearly forty years' judgment of exclusion from Canaan because of Israel's sin. Since the judgment was a national one, everyone, including young people and babies born in the wilderness, had to live in the environment of a punished nation. Until the ban would be lifted, the rite of circumcision, which was the token of God's covenant between Himself and His people (Gen. 17:11), was purposeless, and so the rite was discontinued (5:4-6) Now that the ban was officially lifted, on Israel's entrance into Canaan, the day to renew the rite and restore the nation to positional relationship of covenant favor had arrived. And so Joshua, at the command of God, had all the children of Israel circumcised.

Dale Ralph Davis offers another view of why circumcision ceased in the wilderness wanderings - These verses explain, in part, why the present generation of Israel had to be circumcised (vv. 4-5); they do not directly explain why they had *not* been circumcised before this time. The closest clue comes in verse 6—the wilderness period was the time of unbelief and judgment (see Nu 14), a time for the old Israel to die and perish. The original exodus generation doomed themselves to wander forty years and perish in the wilderness (Num. 14:34-35). Some, therefore, infer that the sign of circumcision was likely withdrawn (by God) during the wilderness period as a sign of Yahweh's displeasure and that Israel was (as it were) on probation. But this inference, though credible, goes a bit beyond the text and we cannot be sure that circumcision was withheld by divine direction. However, in light of Genesis 17:14, one can say that this lack of circumcision was a sign that Israel was 'cut off' (because of their unbelief?). They were God's people and yet they were not; they remained objects of God's care and yet possessed no sign to show they were his. These are brief words for a complex issue, but they must suffice. ([Focus on the Bible Commentary – Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

H A Ironside applies this passage to NT believers - The sharp knife speaks of self-judgment. Before a believer is fit to enter into combat with his spiritual enemies he needs to use this knife of self-judgment, which is the Word of God in living power upon his own heart and life.

Alan Redpath - Fellow Christian, do not be afraid of the knife. It is in the hand of the lover of your soul, Jesus your Saviour. Whatever be the cost, let Gilgal be for you today the place of absolute renunciation of everything that the Spirit of God reveals to you that is contrary to His will That is Christian experience which is not merely the teaching of a doctrine but the living of a life. It is not merely the understanding of truth, it is looking into the face of Jesus and asking Him to make Calvary real in your soul, no matter what it may cost you. Do you dare face that renunciation? ([Victorious Christian Living](#))

Brian Harbour - What did circumcision mean? It was an outward sign of their inward commitment to God **ED**: See Dt 10:16+, Dt 30:6+, Jer 4:4, Ro 2:25-29+, cf "uncircumcised in heart" = Acts 7:51+). And it was a mark of identity. It was their way of acknowledging they were a part of the family of God. Doing this now was a sign that they were turning from the pattern of their disobedience. In the words of God, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you" (Joshua 5:9). The abstention from the practice indicated the covenant had been temporarily discontinued. The resumption of the practice acknowledged the covenant between God and Israel had been renewed.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

2. At that time. As if in allusion to the remarkable circumstances by which they were now surrounded; encamped in the midst of an enemy's country, and yet that enemy providentially restrained from harming them, so that they were commanded, as if in their very sight and presence, to reduce themselves to a condition of comparative weakness and helplessness. 'This formed a very great trial of their faith, and their prompt and universal obedience in such critical circumstances, manifested a confidence in the Lord's protection, and a submission to his will, which confirm the sentiment that this was the best of all the generations of Israel.' Scott.

Make thee sharp knives. Heb. עשה לך חרבות צרים esēh lekâh harbôth tzurim, prepare, make ready, knives of rock, stone, or flint. Of such materials were the edge-tools of all nations made before the use of iron became common. At this day, among most of the savage tribes inhabiting the islands of the sea, or other barbarous climes, the same custom prevails. Their knives, and also their arrow and spear-heads, are made of stone; and similar relics of the aborigines of our own country are often turned up by the plough. It is not probable that the Israelites were altogether strangers to the use of iron, or were unfurnished with various metallic tools, as their different fabrications in the wilderness force upon us the belief that they must have employed both iron and steel; but from the case of Zipporah, Ex. 4:25, it appears to have been unlawful to use any kind of metal in this religious rite, and this opinion is confirmed by the practice of a tribe in Ethiopia at this day, who, professing to follow the Mosaic institution, perform the rite of circumcision, according to Ludolf, with knives of stone. It is supposed too that such instruments were not so liable to cause inflammation, as knives or razors of metal.

And circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. Heb. **ושוב מל** veshūb mōl, return (and) circumcise. This is not to be understood as a command to repeat circumcision on those individuals who had already received it. This would have been at once unnecessary and impracticable. It merely implies that they were to renew the observance of a rite which had been neglected in their travels in the desert. The command was given now, at this early period after their entrance into the promised land, (1) That the reproach of Egypt might be rolled away; (2) That they might be duly prepared to celebrate the Passover, of which none might eat who were uncircumcised, Ex. 12:48; and (3) As a trial of their faith under the circumstances in which they were now placed, surrounded by enemies intent upon their destruction, and who could desire no greater advantage than such a crippled state of their invaders would give them. 'There is a general circumcision now of the people, as there had been at their coming out of Egypt; and as God then closed the Egyptians in three days' darkness that they could not stir, so now he striketh the Canaanites with terror, that they dare not stir to hurt the people while they were sore. Circumcision sealed the lease of the land of Canaan; and therefore as soon as they set foot on it they must be circumcised.' Light-foot. Had Joshua acted on the principles common to all other generals, when invading an enemy's country, he would either have prosecuted his advantages instantly, while his enemies were filled with terror, and crushed them before they had time to prepare for their defence; or he would have fortified his own camp to prevent surprise, and to be in constant readiness for any emergency that might arise. But instead of adopting any military plans whatever, the very day after he had invaded the country, without waiting to know what effect the invasion would have, he appoints nearly every male in the congregation to be circumcised! Thus by one act disabling the greater part of his whole army from even standing in their own defence! What but a principle of the most triumphant faith could have brought them to submit to such an injunction as this?

Joshua 5:3 So Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.

- **Joshua:** Ge 17:23-27 Mt 16:24
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

So - Joshua's obedience was not faltering but instant & complete. It was a manifestation of his strong faith in a God Who could be trusted for the victory.

THINK ABOUT THE SETTING FOR A MOMENT: Israel was camped in enemy territory, just a few miles from Jericho. The enemy's heart had melted. Israel was poised for certain victory over this city "fortified to heaven" (Dt 1:28, Dt 9:1). Now God asks them to temporarily **disable** every male in the nation, including every soldier in the army! What a golden opportunity for the enemy to attack and wipe them out. (see timing of Israel's revenge of Dinah's defilement in Ge 34:22-24,25.) It took faith for Joshua and the people to obey the Lord, but their obedience to the Law was the secret of their success (Joshua 1:7,8+). Comparing this event to Paul's thorn in the flesh, Israel in their weakness was made strong (2Co 12:9, 10); and through faith and patience they inherited the promises (Heb 6:12).

KNIVES SHARPENED AT "HILL OF THE FORESKINS"

Shortly after Israel departed from Egypt, [God tested them at Meribah](#); and they failed the test (Ex 17:1-7+; Ps 81:7). Shortly after Israel entered the Promised Land, God tested them by commanding the men to be circumcised; and they passed the test. The people had faith to obey God, and this faith was demonstrated in their outward act of circumcision which laid hold of the blessing and power inherent in God's promise (esp Jos 1:8).

THOUGHT - After we've experienced an exciting victory of faith (CF ISRAEL JUST CROSS A FLOODED RIVER), God often permits us to be tested. Abraham arrived in the land of promise and was confronted with a famine (Ge 12:10+). Elijah triumphed over Baal and was threatened with death by Jezebel and he became fearful (1Ki 19:1-3). After Jesus' baptism in the Jordan (A "MOUNTAIN TOP" EXPERIENCE) the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (Mt 3:13-4:11+). Since great victories can lead to great pride, God allows us to be tested in order to remind us to depend on Him.

"Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle."

-- Scottish preacher Andrew Bonar (1810-92)

Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at [Gibeath-haaraloth](#) - Names in the OT are often very significant and this name [Gibeath-haaraloth](#), which meant "the hill of the foreskins," served to memorialize this location as the site Israel obeyed God's command to undergo circumcision, their obedience reflecting their faith that He would protect them from enemy

attack while they were physically vulnerable.

It is remarkable that all of the men consented to this rigorous, painful ordeal and what this demonstrates is they clearly have an attitude of compliance with their commander's desire (contrast the many episodes of Israel resisting Moses' leadership).

ESV Note on flint knives - The use of flint knives, even in a time period when metal instruments had been developed, may attest to the antiquity of the practice (cf. Ex. 4:25), or it may have to do with the need for many instruments at one time. Flint, or obsidian, was readily available and was particularly well suited. An Egyptian text, dated to the twenty-third century b.c., speaks of 120 young men being circumcised at one time. The inscription on a similarly dated Egyptian tomb relief depicting circumcision indicates that flint knives were used.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

3. And Joshua made him sharp knives. That is, he caused them to be made, they were made by his order.

Circumcised the children of Israel. Meaning those of them who had not been already circumcised, those who had been born in the wilderness and were under forty years of age. This he did by means of his agents. As the number to whom the rite was to be administered was immensely large, and the time allotted for it short, a great many hands must necessarily have been engaged in it. Probably any one who was himself circumcised, was authorized to perform it. In ordinary circumstances it is proper to stand upon instituted observances with great exactness, and to have religious rites performed by appropriate officers, but when peculiar emergencies arise, such scrupulousness must sometimes be waived, and rituals give way to essentials. God will have mercy rather than sacrifice, when only one can be rendered him.

At the hill of the foreskins. So called from the hillock of foreskins, the result of the transaction.

Joshua 5:4 This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way after they came out of Egypt.

- **All the:** Nu 14:22 26:64,65 De 2:16 1Co 10:5 Heb 3:17-19
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WHY PERFORM CIRCUMCISION?

This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way after they came out of Egypt - God reminds Joshua of what he had witnessed for 40 years, Israelites daily dying in the desert because of their disbelief and disobedience (note these two "dis's" go together in that order - the antithesis of trust and obey).

They came out but they did not go in!

Phillip Keller - In essence, circumcision for Israel in this occasion marked them as dead to the past, and alive, eager to be utterly God's in the future. It was the counterpart to the sacred sacrament of baptism so unique in the spiritual saga of modern day Christians. It was a titanic turning point upon which the nation's history hinged. Only because of Joshua's fearless faith in God's ability to preserve Israel in this their hour of mortal peril did he proceed with it." (Joshua: Man of Fearless Faith)

J Vernon McGee - All of this has a spiritual message for us today. The old nature is no good. The old nature cannot inherit spiritual blessing. The old nature cannot even enjoy spiritual blessing. The old nature will not like Canaan, nor anything in the heavenlies. In Galatians 5:17 Paul says, "For the flesh lusteth [which is literally wars] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Paul found that there was no good in the old nature. He also discovered that there was no power in the new nature (see Rom. 7). The circumcision of the children of Israel recognized these facts. ([Joshua 5](#))

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4. And this is the cause, &c. The omission in this case was probably with the Divine connivance, as the people knew not the precise times when they were to march, and a removal immediately after the operation might have been dangerous to tender infants. Moreover, as one design of this rite was to distinguish the Israelites from all other people, it was not so necessary to be

administered while they were secluded from the world, for forty years in the wilderness. This instance, however, is not to be pleaded as authorizing the neglect or postponement of any Divine ordinance in common circumstances.

Joshua 5:5 For all the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised.

- **had not been circumcised.** De 12:8,9 Ho 6:6,7 Mt 12:7 Ro 2:26 1Co 7:19 Ga 5:6 6:15
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For - The explanation continues as to why Joshua had to circumcise them.

All the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised - The first generation parents disobeyed God's command to circumcise every male child.

Genesis 17:10-14 This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. 13 "A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

Dale Ralph Davis offers a pithy comment - Hear the warning: They **were circumcised** but 'they did not listen to the voice of Yahweh'. You can have all the marks of the people of God but lack the response of the people of God. You can receive the sacrament but have no faith. Paul is right—you can experience the exodus, eat the manna, drink the water from the rock, and remain in unbelief (1Co 10:1-5+). You may hold membership among God's flock but have no relationship with the Shepherd. You may live in the King's country but reject His sovereignty. ([Focus on the Bible Commentary – Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

Joshua 5:6 For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, that is, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD, to whom the LORD had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.

- **walked:** Nu 14:32-34 De 1:3, 2:7, 14 8:4 Ps 95:10, 11 Jer 2:2
- **to whom the LORD had sworn that** Nu 14:23 Heb 3:11
- **a land flowing with milk and honey:** Ex 3:8, 17 Eze 20:6, 15 Joe 3:18
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Numbers 14:22-23+ Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, 23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.

Numbers 14:32-34+ **(GOD'S PUNISHMENT ANNOUNCED)** 'But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. 33 'Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. 34 'According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you will know My opposition.

Psalms 95:10; 11 "For **forty years I loathed that generation**, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. 11 "Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest."

Exodus 32:13+ **(GOD'S COVENANT PROMISE OF THE LAND)** "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself (RECALL ABRAM WAS ASLEEP - ONLY GOD WALKED THROUGH THE DEAD ANIMALS! - Ge 15:17-18+), and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the

stars of the heavens, and **all this land** of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.”

FORTY YEARS OF PERISHING BECAUSE OF A "MOMENT" OF DISOBEDIENCE!

For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, that is, the men of war who came out of Egypt (cf Dt 2:14-16+), **perished** ([tamam](#)) **because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD, to whom the LORD had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey** - The **the men of war** refers to "all the men old enough to fight when they left Egypt" (NET) Note that **did not listen** does not mean they did not hear for not only had they heard His voice at Sinai (Dt 5:4, 24+), every time Moses uttered a "thus saith the LORD" statement, they in effect heard a Word from the LORD. The problem was not stopped up ears but stiff necks and hard hearts. They heard but did not believe and thus they disobeyed (Lxx renders **did not listen** with [apeitheo](#) meaning to disbelieve and be disobedient). They heard but willfully refused to obey. The Lxx adds an interesting twist describing these men as [aperitmetos](#) which means "uncircumcised." However we know this first generation was physically circumcised (Josh 5:5), so the figurative sense is intended = uncircumcised in hearts and ears, i.e. stubborn, obstinate people (cf Acts 7:51+ which uses [aperitmetos](#)) - Notice they do not even get to **see the land**, something even Moses was allowed to do even though he could not enter. (Dt 32:49-52+). The phrase **LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us**, refers to the everlasting land grant to Israel as promised to the **fathers** in the Abrahamic Covenant (Abraham and the other "fathers" Isaac and Jacob).

Note also the two mentions of **had sworn**, the first negative, the second positive. The point is clear, that God's promise to Israel endures even though many in Israel were unfaithful. And by the way, that principle still applies. The majority of Israel back in the land is there in unbelief and yet God's promised oath still holds true, awaiting the return of the Messiah, when it will finally and fully be consummated, regardless of who those who teach the non-Biblical beliefs of [replacement theology / supersessionism](#), a [New Israel](#) or a [spiritual Israel](#). Listen to Yahweh's declaration regarding the promised land ""I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, **all the land of Canaan**, for an **everlasting possession** (HOW LONG?); and I will be their God." (Ge 17:8) You can mark it down that God is NOT FINISHED WITH THE LITERAL NATION OF ISRAEL! ([See Are Israel and the church the same thing? Does God still have a plan for Israel? | GotQuestions.org](#))

Davis - Yahweh does fulfil his promises in spite of human unbelief. Unbelief may forfeit the benefits of the covenant promise but it cannot negate the promise. . ([Focus on the Bible Commentary – Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

Land flowing with milk and honey - this is the only use of this description in Joshua - it occurs 19x in the OT - Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:17; Exod. 13:5; Exod. 33:3; Lev. 20:24; Num. 14:8; Num. 16:13; Num. 16:14; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 11:9; Deut. 26:9; Deut. 26:15; Deut. 27:3; Deut. 31:20; Jos. 5:6; Jer. 11:5; Jer. 32:22; Ezek. 20:6; Ezek. 20:15

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6. Walked forty years. Led for that time a wandering, unsettled life.

Till the people—were consumed. Heb. עד כי תם חגוי ad ki tōm haggōi. It is not a little remarkable that the word here rendered people (גוי) is not the usual term employed to denote the peculiar people, but that which almost invariably designates the Gentiles, or heathen, in contradistinction from the race of Israel. We know of no reason for its adoption here, unless it be to intimate, that they had, by their deportment, rendered themselves unworthy the name and privileges of Israelites. They were doubtless those of whom it is elsewhere said, that 'their carcases fell in the wilderness,' a doom which befell them by reason of their rebellion.

Would not show them. Heb. הראותם harōthām, cause to see, i. e. would not permit them to enjoy. Thus Eccles. 2:24, 'There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy' (Heb. הראה את נפשו herāh eth naphshō, cause his soul to see) good in his labor.' Ps. 4:6, 'Who will show us any good?' (Heb. מי יראנו mi yarēnu, who will cause us to see, i. e. to enjoy, to have the fruition of good).

Joshua 5:7 Their children whom He raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way.

- **their children:** Nu 14:31 De 1:39
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Numbers 14:31+ 'Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected.

Deuteronomy 1:39+ 'Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it.

JOSHUA CIRCUMCISED THE UNCIRCUMCISED

Their children whom He raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way - Note the phrase **whom He raised up** signifying these were God's work. **In their place** is a sad phrase for their disobedience resulted in their disqualification.

THOUGHT - If you refuse God's call on your life, you will forever regret it. And you will not frustrate God's plan, for He will raise up someone in your place! I know a man who knew he had the call of God to become a pastor but instead he choose to work as a NASA engineer -- and he regretted his decision in his latter years. I know another man who clearly was being called to pastor and instead he went with Dell computers in the early years. I lost track of him but undoubtedly he became worldly rich but missed the opportunity of a lifetime to serve God! Riches drew him away from God's calling. There is another reason of course that God might have to raise up someone in your or my place - **DISQUALIFICATION!** Paul explains in 1 Cor 9:24-27+ writing

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? **Run** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) n such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so **that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.**

Note the emphasis by repetition (Joshua 5:5,7) on the failure of the wilderness generation to be circumcised.

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7. Their children whom he raised up in their stead. Or, Heb. הֵקִים hēkim, caused to stand, made to survive, preserved. The writer's design seems to be, to state a contrast in the lot of the fathers and the children, using the term 'raised up,' in opposition to 'consumed,' in the preceding verse, The one he destroyed for their rebellion, the other he graciously preserved alive, established, caused to subsist. See Note on Ex. 9:16, where this sense of the term is amply confirmed. The words contain a fulfilment of the promise given in connexion with the threatening, Num. 14:29–31.

Joshua 5:8 Now when they had finished circumcising all the nation, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed.

- **until they were healed:** Ge 34:25
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CIRCUMCISED REMAIN CAMPED TO HEAL FROM CIRCUMCISION

Now when they had finished circumcising all the nation, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed - The verb translated "healed" usually means "live." Parallel uses of the verb in Deut. 30:6 and Hos. 6:1, 2 indicate the spiritual significance of the events.

Deuteronomy 30:6 "Moreover 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, so that you may live.

Hosea 6:1; 2 "Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. 6:2 "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may

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8. Till they were whole. Till they were healed. Heb. עד היותם ad hayothâm, until they lived. The original is, in repeated instances, used to signify being restored to health. Thus Num. 21:8, 'Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live,' i. e. be recovered. 2 Kings 8:8, 'shall I recover of this disease?' Heb. 'shall I live?' Is. 38:21, 'Lay it for a plaster on the boil, and he shall recover;' Heb. 'shall live'. The particle 'till' does not imply that they abode in their tents no longer than during the time of their recovery; for they remained there while keeping the Passover. The same remark is to be made of the import of this word in numerous other instances.

Joshua 5:9 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

- **rolled away:** Jos 24:14 Ge 34:14 Lev 24:14 1Sa 14:6 17:26,36 Ps 119:39 Jer 9:25 Eze 20:7,8 23:3,8 Eph 2:11,12
- **Gilgal:** That is, rolling. Jos 4:19
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Exodus 32:12+ (**REPROACH OF EGYPT**) "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people."

Numbers 14:13-16+ (**REPROACH OF EGYPT**) But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the **Egyptians** will hear of it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from their midst, 14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 "Now if You slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say, 16 '**Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath**, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.'

Deuteronomy 9:28+ (**REPROACH OF EGYPT**) 'Otherwise the land from which You brought us (**EGYPT**) may say, "Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which He had promised them and because He hated them He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness."

Proposed Location of Gilgal Near Jericho

REPROACH ROLLED AWAY

Then - Then marks progression in a narrative and in this case is especially significant for it marks the Lord's response to Israel's obedience.

The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Gilgal is similar to the Hebrew galal which means "to roll." The taunts were leveled by the Egyptians at the Israelites for their failure to gain their Promised Land when Israel failed to trust God at Kadesh Barnea . That **reproach** had now been **rolled away** (Gilgal = "the rolling"). When Aaron made the golden calf at Mt. Sinai and the people broke God's law, God threatened to destroy them and make a new nation from Moses. But Moses argued that God would lose glory if He did that, because the Egyptians would only say that God delivered them in order to kill them (Ex 32:1-12). At Kadesh Barnea Moses used the same appeal when God said He would destroy Israel (Nu 14:11-14). Moses didn't want the Egyptians to spread the word that the God of Israel couldn't finish what He had started.

Lange's Commentary has an interesting note - Today have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you! This word is fulfilled, (1.) at Gilgal; (2.) much more gloriously at Golgotha.--(1) The reproach of Egypt--(2) sin and its misery.

So the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day- Note again the fact that names in the OT are often significant and often are "explained" in the immediate context as in this case.

Paul Enns - Two basic thoughts are involved in the phrase "reproach of Egypt." (1) God had withheld His covenant blessings from

the generation of rebels that died in the desert. (2) The Egyptians derided Israel, suggesting God had taken them into the desert in order to slay them (Exod. 32:12). When the Israelites obeyed the command to be circumcised, God removed from them the reproach of Egypt. The people again stood under the blessing of God, who promised to give them the land as their inheritance. In recognition of this significant event, the place was named Gilgal, meaning "rolling," to signify that God rolled away the reproach of Egypt from Israel there. ([Joshua. Bible Study Commentary](#).)

Alan Redpath applies **Gilgal** - Do you know what that word "**Gilgal**" means? It means that "the reproach has been rolled away." I want to say here that any believer, man or woman, boy or girl, living in the wilderness of carnality and spiritual defeat and failure, is a reproach (**ED**: See Pr 14:34). But if we have established a bridgehead, and have crossed over Jordan, the reproach has been rolled away, and Gilgal is the place of resurrection (**ED**: AND "RESURRECTION POWER" - May Paul's prayer be true in your life dear believer. Amen - Eph 1:18-19+). ([Victorious Christian Living](#))

Reproach (Lxx translates with [oneidismos](#))(02781) [cherpah](#) means scorn, disgrace, contempt (referring to a state of dishonor and low status), shame. It refers to the casting of blame or scorn on someone. Reproach in English describes censure mingled with contempt or derision. It expresses rebuke or disapproval. As an aside on the cross Christ bore the shame of our sin. Followers of Jesus are called to bear the reproach of Christ and to suffer for His name (2Co 12:10; 1Pe 4:14).

Woodrow Kroll Rolled Away

According to one source, Americans spend \$50 million a year on subliminal message tapes designed to help them do everything from improve their self-image to learn a foreign language. Unfortunately, the National Research Council has concluded that subliminal messages simply don't work. Despite all the hype to the contrary, these tapes don't deliver the life-transforming changes they promise.

But there is one source who always delivers on His promises--God. As the Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land, they needed to renew their covenant with God. This relationship required that circumcision be performed as a sign of the covenant. Those Israelites who left Egypt had been circumcised, but those males born during the wilderness wandering had not (Joshua 5:4-5). It was now time for the younger generation to take their stand and have the "reproach of Egypt" rolled away.

Circumcision is no longer a sign of the covenant relationship with God. When Jesus died on the cross, the outward sign of circumcision was replaced with the inner presence of the Holy Spirit. He is the fulfillment of the promise in Ezekiel: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26). When the Holy Spirit comes in, the old life is rolled away and we become "a new creation" in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

This experience can be yours as well. If you are still walking in your old life, why not receive Christ today and let Him roll your sins away? The reproach of the past can be replaced with a hope for the future.

Christ doesn't improve you; He transforms you

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

9. This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt. It has been much disputed by commentators what is meant by 'the reproach of Egypt.' We take the expression, in a very full sense, to mean the reproach connected with Egypt, in whatever way, whether actively or passively. (1) Actively; inasmuch as the Israelites themselves, while in the wilderness, did virtually reproach the Most High in respect to the land of Egypt, grieving that they had left it, wishing that they had died there, charging him with leading them out thence to slay them in the desert, and proposing to appoint a leader and to return thither. The 14th chapter of Numbers details these murmuring complaints, and shows that God was exceedingly angry with the people on this account, and would have destroyed them but for the intercession of Moses. But now the guilt of that conduct was to be rolled away or pardoned, they were no longer on account of it to be kept out of possession of the promised land; and not only so, they should never have any more the least occasion or inducement to vent such groundless reproaches. By being brought into Canaan in so gracious and glorious a manner, and having every promise fulfilled to them, all occasion of complaint was for ever cut off. (2) Passively; their bondage in Egypt was, in a sense, a reproach and a disgrace to them; it would be so accounted by other nations, while it continued, and they would be disparaged by reason of it. It is probable also that the Egyptians themselves, seeing them wander so long in the wilderness, reproached and taunted them, as if brought there to be destroyed; but now, having entered Canaan in triumph, and being put in possession of all the covenanted blessings promised to the seed of Abraham, of which circumcision was the seal, this reproach was henceforth done away. Both the disgrace of their bondage and the contemptuous aspersions of their oppressors, should cease from this time forward for ever.

Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day. That is, 'rolling,' 'rolling away.' Gilgal was situated between

Jericho and the river Jordan, about one mile and a half, or two miles, from the former, and six from the latter. Nothing of this city now remains; but travellers are shown a pile of stones denominated Galgala, which, though at a considerable distance from the site of the ancient Gilgal, is supposed by some to be the monument erected by Joshua. The clause 'unto this day,' sufficiently indicates that the events related in the book of Joshua, or at least in this part of it, were not consigned to writing immediately upon their occurrence, but after the lapse of some considerable time.

Joshua 5:10 While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho.

- **observed the Passover:** Ex 12:3,6,7-16 Nu 9:1-5 -
- **Other historical Passovers** - 2Chr 30:15-15; Ezra 6:19-22; Lk 22:7-14
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Exodus 12:24-25 (**PASSOVER PRESCRIBED WHEN PROMISED LAND ENTERED**) "And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever. 25 **"When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite.**

Exodus 12:48 (**CIRCUMCISION MUST PRECEDE PASSOVER**) "But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it.

ISRAEL'S THIRD PASSOVER

While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal - Israel was forced to wait on the Lord's timing. But even though they were waiting, they were not passive, for during this waiting period they carried out circumcision which led to communion in celebrating Passover.

THOUGHT - Waiting is one of the most difficult things we often have to do because our human tendency is to "rush in and take Jericho" (whatever that "Jericho" is in our life). Isaiah reminds us that "Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength (MORE LITERALLY EXCHANGE STRENGTH [Lxx - [allasso](#)] - OURS FOR HIS); They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary." (Isa 40:31+) Gilgal is an important stop and God often puts a "Gilgal" in our life, that we might remember Christ's sacrifice and the power of His precious blood (1Cor 1:18+).

They observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho- Israel's first **Passover** occurred 40 years earlier when Yahweh redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage (Ex 12:1-20+). Israel's second **Passover** was celebrated at Mt. Sinai, before leaving for Kadesh Barnea, Moses recording "They observed the **Passover** in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did." (Nu 9:5+, cf Nu 9:1-14). Note the time was **on the evening**, just as prescribed in Ex 12:6 "You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight (same Hebrew word - ereb = evening, sunset) **Passover** had not been celebrated at any time during their years of wilderness wandering.

Note that no male could participate in the annual Feast of the **Passover** unless he had been circumcised (Ex 12:43, 44, 48+). There is thus another reason for Joshua circumcising Israel at this time. **Passover** would also serve as a poignant reminder that God had delivered Israel from the strong hand of the Egyptians, and would serve as encouragement that He could and would now do the same thing with the heavily fortified city of Jericho. It would have been easy for the Israelites to look at Jericho "fortified to heaven," which might demoralize and discourage them (see Dt 1:28+, contrast the promise in Dt 9:1+). And so we see that Circumcision and Passover would both serve to draw Israel's eyes back to Yahweh and be reminded of His immutable promises to fight for them and give them the land.

THOUGHT - We all face problems "fortified to heaven" (so to speak) but the key is how do we respond - do we fix our eyes on the problem that looks like a "fortress" or do we fix (see [aphorao](#)) our eyes on Jesus (Heb 12:2+), our "Joshua" ([Iesous](#)), Who will give us the victory. And even if He does not remove the problem, He is faithful (dependable, trustworthy, reliable) and promises to show us "the way of escape also, so that we will be able to endure it." (1Co 10:13+)

THOUGHT - Even as no uncircumscribed person could eat the Passover, no person who has not been "circumcised" in heart (Col 2:11+) can eat the Lord's Supper, Jesus' replacement for the rite of Passover. It is sad and a loss to a believer who does not partake of the Lord's Supper, sometime even for years. As Jesus commanded "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; **do** ([present imperative](#)) this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (1Co 11:25b+) How often to you remember Christ in communion?

Notice the phrase **the desert plains of Jericho** which signifies that not only are they in close proximity to Jericho, it is likely they could even see the fortified city from where they were camped (and the city could see them).

Davis quips "No longer can the Egyptians crack their Hebrew jokes."

Brian Harbour - If the circumcision was a reminder of who they were, the celebration of the Passover was a reminder of who God was. This was the first time this generation of Hebrews had celebrated the Passover. The Passover celebration acknowledged that they were God's covenant people and it acknowledged that their covenant God was a God of great power.

ESV Study Bible has an interesting note - The notice in Josh. 4:19 that "the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month" suggests a parallel; the transition from wandering in the wilderness to arrival in the land was a kind of "second exodus." In the first exodus, the Passover preceded the crossing of the Red Sea. In this "second exodus," it followed the crossing of the Jordan.

Guzik on Gilgal - The city of Gilgal became a beachhead and camp for Israel in their conquest of Canaan. They returned there after battle and remembered, finding strength in the remembrance of the memorial, their obedience, and their redemption. It is good to have a place like Gilgal in our life. This is a place where we first come into God's promises, a place of memorial, a place of obedience and redemption. ([Joshua 5 Commentary](#))

Warren Wiersbe - "Forgetting those things which are behind" (Phil. 3:13) is wise counsel for most areas of life, but there are some things we must never forget. In his farewell address to the nation, Moses repeatedly commanded the Jews to remember that they were once slaves in Egypt and that the Lord had delivered them and made them His own people (Deut. 6:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22). This great truth was embodied in their annual Passover feast. They were never to forget that they were a redeemed people, set free by the blood of the lamb. (Exposition Commentary – Be Strong - Joshua).

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary - Verses 10-12. A solemn passover was kept, at the time appointed by the law, in the plains of Jericho, in defiance of the Canaanites round about them. It was a performance of the promise, that when they went up to keep the feasts, their land should be under the special protection of the Divine providence, Exodus 34:24. Notice is taken of the ceasing of the manna as soon as they had eaten the old corn of the land. For as it came just when they needed, so it continued as long as they needed it. This teaches us not to expect supplies by miracles, when they may be had in a common way. The word and ordinances of God are spiritual manna, with which God nourishes his people in this wilderness. Though often forfeited, yet they are continued while we are here; but when we come to the heavenly Canaan, this manna will cease, for we shall no longer need it.

Gilgal - Holman Bible Dictionary - name meaning, "circle," and probably referring to a circle of stones or a circular altar. Such a circle of stones could be found almost anywhere in Palestine and led easily to naming towns "Gilgal." The many references to Gilgal in the Old Testament cannot thus be definitely connected to the same town, since several different Gilgals may well have existed.

1. Gilgal is most closely associated with Joshua, but the number of Gilgals involved continues an unsolved question. After crossing the Jordan, Joshua established the first camp at Gilgal (Joshua 4:19). There Joshua took twelve stones from the bed of the river to set up a memorial for the miraculous crossing. Gilgal, the first foothold on Palestinian soil, became Israel's first worship place, where they were circumcised and observed the Passover. There God appeared to Joshua and affirmed his mission (Joshua 5:1). This Gilgal apparently became Israel's military base of operations (Joshua 9:6; Joshua 10:6; Joshua 14:6), though some scholars would identify this with a Gilgal farther north near Shechem. Joshua set up Gilgal as the border between Judah and Benjamin (Joshua 15:7; compare Joshua 18:17), though many Bible students think the border town must be south of the original camp. Ehud, the judge, passed Gilgal in his mission to slay the king of Moab (Judges 3:19, Judges 3:19,3:26). David passed through Gilgal as he fled from Absalom (2Samuel 19:15, 2 Samuel 19:40). This Gilgal is often located at modern khirbet Mejjir, a little more than a mile east of Jericho. Others would locate it at khirbet en-Nitleh, two miles southeast of Jericho. Still others remain baffled at finding a location. The boundary town is often seen as Khan el-Ahmar or Araq ed-Deir. The military camp is at times located at Tell Jiljulieh east of Shechem but without archaeological support. This could be the same Gilgal of Deuteronomy 11:30, if Joshua's original town is not meant. Gilgal was also one of the three places where Samuel annually held circuit court (1 Samuel 7:16). This could be near Tell Jiljulieh or at Joshua's first landing place near the Jordan. Saul was both crowned and rejected as king at Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:14-15; 1 Samuel 13:14-15). Gilgal established itself as a major place of worship for Israel with ancient traditions. However, it also permitted worship associated with other gods and became the object of prophetic judgment (Hosea 4:15; Amos 4:4; Amos 5:5).

2. Elijah and Elisha were associated closely with Gilgal. At one time Elisha made his headquarters there (2 Kings 4:38), where Elijah was taken up into heaven (2 Kings 2:1). This was apparently told Jiljulieh about three miles southeast of Shiloh, though it could still be Joshua's original Gilgal.

3. Gilgal of the nations is mentioned as a royal city near Dor (Joshua 12:23). The earliest Greek translation reads this as "kings of the nations in Galilee," which many scholars think is the original reading, a copyist of the Hebrew text using the word "Gilgal" since it had become familiar in the earlier chapters of Joshua. If the Hebrew Gilgal is original, its location is not known. See Bethgilgal; Elisha; Joshua; Samuel; Saul .

Related Resources:

- [What is the importance of Gilgal in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Gilgal](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Gilgal](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Gilgal](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Gilgal](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Gilgal](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Gilgal](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Gilgal](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Gilgal](#)

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

10. And kept the passover. Heb. 'and made the passover.' The third from its institution. The first was observed in Egypt on the eve of their departure, the second at Sinai on the following year, Num. 9:1, 2, while during the long interval down to the present time it had been wholly suspended. Amos 5:25.

On the fourteenth day of the month. That is, the fourteenth day of the first month, or Nisan.—From this remarkable portion of the sacred narrative we may learn, (1.) That in whatever circumstances we are placed, religion should be our first concern. If ever there were circumstances which would seem to justify the postponement of religious duties, one would think they were those of Joshua on this occasion, when he had but just set foot on the land where great and powerful nations were prepared to combat for their very existence. Yet we behold him calmly and sedately engaging in the duties of religion, as if it were of vastly more consequence that God should be honored and served in the way of his appointment, than that the preservation or triumph of Israel should be secured. (2.) To place implicit confidence in God, even in the midst of the most appalling dangers. Nothing, to human view, could have been more rash or perilous than for the chosen people, just at this juncture, to suspend all their military preparations, and give themselves to the celebration of a religious festival. But conscious of being in the way of duty, they reposed so strong a confidence in the protecting power of Jehovah, that they gave themselves no concern as to the many dangers by which they were surrounded. Provided our motives and our conduct are right, we can be in no hazard of confiding too implicitly in God.

Joshua 5:11 On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain.

- **unleavened cakes:** Ex 12:18-20 13:6,7 Lev 23:6,14
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Exodus 12:25+ **"When you enter the land** which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite (**PASSOVER**).

Exodus 16:35+ (**CESSATION OF MANNA WAS PROPHESED**) The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

Leviticus 23:5-8+ (**FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD**) 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover. 6 'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for **seven days you shall eat unleavened bread**. 7 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. 8 'But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.'"

YAHWEH CHANGES ISRAEL'S DIET

On the day after the Passover, on that very day- This is another important time phrase and marks a transition. In Joshua 5:1-9 we have seen their new position as a result of circumcision and now we see their new beginning in celebrating the Passover.

THOUGHT - [Manna from heaven](#) is an idiom which refers to "an unexpected benefit or assistance, especially when it comes at the time when it is needed most."

They ate some of the produce (KJV = "old corn") **of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain** - Manna from Heaven had ceased, but God's supply for His people shifted to the produce of the promised land. How they received the produce is not stated, but it was clearly from the land, not the sky. However in both cases it was still God Who supplied the bounty! When Israel entered Canaan, it was spring, "the days of the (barley) harvest" (Josh 3:15+) and so grain was available. Some propose that the inhabitants of the area had left grain behind when they fled to Jericho for safety and that grain was also available. Whatever was the source, it is clear that Yahweh prepared a table for His people in the presence of their enemies, and Israel did not have to be afraid (Ps 23:5). Note that **the day after the Passover** is the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the people were able to use the grain of the land to make [unleavened cakes](#).

God had promised to provide for the people when they entered the land

Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, 11 and **houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied**, (Deut 6:10-11+)

Believer's Study Bible - (vv. 11,12) Note the emphasis achieved by alternating repetition in these verses. There was no need to continue the "heavenly bread" after Israel entered into their possession (Ex. 16:1-30; Ps. 78:25; John 6:48-51). Typical of God's redemptive program in Scripture, the miraculous was only temporary.

Stephen Grant - They feasted on the benefit of other men's labours. This was true of all the land that the children of Israel possessed and is a beautiful picture of the blessings of salvation which a believer comes into by faith. The blessings have been provided at great cost to the Lord, and the believer is required only to take possession of His provision. The Lord had also promised the people that when they went up to Jerusalem three times a year to observe the feasts, they could leave their land since no man would "desire thy land" (Ex 34:24). As they observed the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in the plains of Jordan, they received the first evidence of the Lord's protection. They were unmolested by the people of Jericho or the other cities nearby which, in itself, was evidence of the Lord fulfilling His promise. ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua Judges Ruth](#))

Davis - Clarence Macartney (see his great sermon [Come Before Winter](#)) told the story about Dr. John Witherspoon's wisdom in this regard. Witherspoon was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and president of the (then) College of New Jersey. He lived a couple of miles away from the college at Rock Hill and drove a horse and rig each day to his office at the college. One day one of his neighbours burst into his office, exclaiming, 'Dr. Witherspoon, you must join me in giving thanks to God for his extraordinary providence in saving my life, for as I was driving from Rocky Hill the horse ran away and the buggy was smashed to pieces on the rocks, but I escaped unharmed!' Witherspoon replied, 'Why, I can tell you a far more remarkable providence than that. I have driven over that road hundreds of times. My horse never ran away, my buggy never was smashed, I was never hurt.' So 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. ([Focus on the Bible Commentary – Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

The Passover and the Lord's Supper Compared

The Passover	The Lord's Supper
The Passover was a memorial of a physical deliverance from Egypt by the sacrifice of a lamb (Ex. 12:1f).	The Lord's Supper is a memorial of a spiritual deliverance in Jerusalem through the sacrifice of the Lamb (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7).

The Passover was also an anticipation in shadows and types of a future fulfillment-the person and work of Christ in His first advent, which encompassed His birth, sinless life, and death on the Cross as the Lamb of God to redeem us from the clutches of sin.	The Lord's Supper not only points to the fulfillment of those types, but it is to be kept also in anticipation of a future fulfillment, the second advent and kingdom of God on earth when the Lamb becomes the Lion.
Source - Hampton Keathley	

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

11. And they did eat of the old corn of the land. Of the old grain, of whatever kind it were. This they probably found in abundance in the deserted granaries of the inhabitants, who had fled away, and betaken themselves for safety to the defenced city of Jericho. The original phrase, however, may be rendered simply, 'They did eat of the product or yielding of the earth,' in contradistinction from the manna which came from heaven.

And parched corn. That is, the new corn of the present year, which they found standing in the fields. The new or green corn was parched to enable them more easily to grind it for food. This would not be necessary in respect to old corn.

On the morrow after the passover. Meaning, probably, on the sixteenth day of the month; for the paschal lamb was killed and roasted on the fourteenth, and the feast began that night, which, according to their reckoning, formed a part of the fifteenth day, through the whole of which the feast continued, so that the sixteenth day was the morrow after the passover, when they were required by the Law (Lev. 23:10, 11) to offer to God the wave-sheaf of the first fruits, and then were allowed to eat the rest.

In the self-same day. Perhaps importing the very great eagerness of the people to feast upon the fruits of the land as soon as they might lawfully do it. Having previously renewed their covenant with God and partaken of its seals, circumcision and the passover, they wished at once to enter upon the enjoyment of all the rights and privileges thereby confirmed to them.

Joshua 5:12 The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.

- **the manna:** Ex 16:35 Ne 9:20,21 Rev 7:16,17
- **they ate some of the yield of the land** De 6:10,11 Pr 13:22 Isa 65:13,14 Joh 4:38
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE MANNA SUDDENLY CEASED THE LAND PROVIDED PRODUCE

The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce ("old corn" KJV) **of the land** - The Passover was celebrated on the 14th day of the first month, the following day they ate produce from the land and the following day the **manna** ceased. **Manna** ceasing as suddenly as it had begun was evidence of its supernatural Source, and it signaled a new chapter in Israel's history. The "bread from heaven" (Jn6:31,32) ceased as suddenly and miraculously as it had begun (Ex16:4,15). God does not dispense miracles capriciously, but with a redemptive purpose. The manna was essential for the survival of His people during their sojourn in the wilderness, but not afterwards. God's laws by which natural processes are ordered are good laws, so miraculous intervention therein is only rarely necessary.

Typical of God's redemptive program in Scripture, the miraculous was only temporary.

Guzik points out that "God always provides; but He is perfectly free to change the source of His provision from time to time. We need to trust in Him, not in His manner of provision, or we will stumble when that changes." ([Joshua 5 Commentary](#))

Campbell draws attention to the lovingkindness of Yahweh noting that "God did not discontinue the **manna** when Israel despised it (Num. 11:6), or even when the unbelieving generation turned away from Kadesh Barnea and wandered in the trackless wilderness. At least for the sake of their children He continued to give it, till they grew and entered the land of promise." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

So that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year- On the day after Passover, the manna ceased; and thus ended a forty-year miracle (Ex16). If the Passover reminded the Jews of their redemption from Egypt, the manna reminded them of their desire to go back to Egypt! "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full" (Ex16:3). God fed His people the bread of heaven, the food of the angels (Ps78:23-25); and yet they still lusted for the food of Egypt (Nu11:4-9). God easily took His people out of Egypt, but it was difficult for Him to take Egypt out of His people. God was saying in essence to His Children "You've crossed the river and are now in your inheritance. Don't look back and desire the things of Egypt or the wilderness. Let God feed you and satisfy you with the harvest in the inheritance."

Alan Redpath - There are two further lessons that we must learn at Gilgal before we can start a warfare against the enemy. We have learned thus far that Gilgal was a place of **remembrance** and **resurrection**. It was also a place of **renunciation** and of **restoration** where fellowship with God was renewed. Now I want to show you from these verses in Joshua that it is yet further a place of **realization** and of **revelation**. "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." (Joshua 5:12).

Lange's Commentary - God usually performs no miracles when one can have natural means to accomplish something, and then He points us to the ordinary way of subsistence and toil; He will bless that and will support us therein. Therefore, Christian, sing, pray, and go on in God's ways.

Keathley - what was the manna? It was a supernatural gift for the desert journey, but it was not food for the land of promise. From now on, in keeping with their possession of their land, God would supply food through natural means, which is God's normal means of supply. When we walk with the Lord, when we focus on Him and live obediently, we are able to appropriate and taste of His goodness. Miracles like the manna are exceptions to the rule, special provisions for special purposes. While the Lord is always able to work supernatural miracles at will, we should not expect them nor should we be disappointed or think something is wrong with our walk when we do not experience them.

A W Pink - "To show that it did not come by chance, or by common providence as snow or hail does, but by the special designation of Divine wisdom and goodness; for as it came just when they needed it, so it continued as long as they had occasion for it, and no longer" (M . Henry) . The practical lesson which we are to draw therefrom is, that we are not to expect extraordinary supplies when they can be had in an ordinary way: God works no unnecessary miracles.

Woudstra writes that "The lesson taught by the manna (Deut. 8:3) had been sufficient. God's pedagogy could now resort to other means, namely those of ordinary providence." ([The New International Commentary on the Old Testament The Book of Joshua](#))

It is interesting that some writers have applied the going away of the manna and presence of fruit of the land to the going away of Christ, as He stated in John 16:7 "'But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.'" And so William Blaikie writes "But more nourishing is the new corn with which the Spirit feeds us. Let us prize it greatly so long as we are in the flesh. We shall know the good of it when we enter on the next stage of our being. Then, in the fullest sense, the manna will cease, and we shall eat the corn of the land."

J Vernon McGee - **Manna** was a picture of Christ we are told in the New Testament. Jesus said, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:49–51). Manna represents Christ in His death. He is the One who came down to this earth "to give his life a ransom for many."([Joshua 5](#))

Related Resources:

- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary [Manna](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Manna](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Manna](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Manna](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Manna](#)

Spurgeon - "They did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." —Joshua 5:12

Israel's weary wanderings were all over, and the promised rest was attained. No more moving tents, fiery serpents, fierce Amalekites, and howling wildernesses: they came to the land which flowed with milk and honey, and they ate the old corn of the land. Perhaps this year, beloved Christian reader, this may be thy case or mine. Joyful is the prospect, and if faith be in active

exercise, it will yield unalloyed delight. To be with Jesus in the rest which remaineth for the people of God, is a cheering hope indeed, and to expect this glory so soon is a double bliss. Unbelief shudders at the Jordan which still rolls between us and the goodly land, but let us rest assured that we have already experienced more ills than death at its worst can cause us. Let us banish every fearful thought, and rejoice with exceeding great joy, in the prospect that this year we shall begin to be "for ever with the Lord."

A part of the host will this year tarry on earth, to do service for their Lord. If this should fall to our lot, there is no reason why the New Year's text should not still be true. "We who have believed do enter into rest." The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance; he gives us "glory begun below." In heaven they are secure, and so are we preserve in Christ Jesus; there they triumph over their enemies, and we have victories too. Celestial spirits enjoy communion with their Lord, and this is not denied to us; they rest in his love, and we have perfect peace in him: they hymn his praise, and it is our privilege to bless him too. We will this year gather celestial fruits on earthly ground, where faith and hope have made the desert like the garden of the Lord. Man did eat angels' food of old, and why not now? O for grace to feed on Jesus, and so to eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan this year!

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

12. And the manna ceased on the morrow. Because it was now no longer necessary. God would not have us expect extraordinary or miraculous supplies when they may be procured by ordinary means. The sudden cessation of the manna would teach the people also very impressively that it was not an ordinary production of nature, that it had not fallen for so long a time by chance, or, like the dew, in consequence of fixed laws, but that it was a special and preternatural gift of the Divine goodness. We are prone to look upon our common mercies as matters of course, and God sometimes withdraws them to teach us our dependence more effectually.—'The word and ordinances of God are spiritual manna, with which God nourishes his people in this wilderness, but when we come to the heavenly Canaan, this manna will cease, for we shall then no longer have need of it.' Henry.

Joshua 5:13 Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?"

- **he lifted:** Ge 33:1,5 Da 8:3 10:5
- **a man:** Jos 6:2 Ge 18:2 32:24-30 Ex 23:23 Jud 13:8,9,11,22 Da 10:5 Ho 12:3-5 Zec 1:8 Ac 1:10 Rev 1:13
- **his sword:** Nu 22:23 1Ch 21:16,17,27,30
- **Are you for us:** 1Ch 12:17,18
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JOSHUA ENCOUNTERS A MAN WITH DRAWN SWORD

Irving Jensen sets the stage for this dramatic supernatural encounter - As Joshua was looking in the direction of the fortress of Jericho, he thought of one thing, his responsibility in the battle. In mind's eye he envisioned the two foes, Canaanites and Israelites, in mortal combat, and though he had already been given assurances of victory, he could not avoid wondering about the outcome as he compared the military strength of both. The closer the hour of actual combat, the more he felt that this was his war. At such a critical moment he saw ahead of him a man holding a drawn sword. The drawn sword told Joshua that whatever the man was up to, or had to say, concerned battle.

Donald Campbell - God had just brought the Israelites through three events: the rite of circumcision, the celebration of the Passover, and eating the produce of Canaan. All of these were for Israel's edification. Next came an experience for Joshua alone. It too was extremely meaningful and would shortly be shared with the people. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked - Joshua's eyes seem to have been directed downward, fixed on the ground as is the case with many who are heavy burdened with cares of pending or actual warfare.

Campbell comments that "since no divine message of instruction had yet come to Joshua (as before the crossing of the Jordan), he went out to reconnoiter the seemingly impregnable city. Was Joshua perplexed as he viewed the secure walls of Jericho? The spies reported at Kadesh Barnea that the cities of Canaan were "large, with walls up to the sky" (Deut. 1:28). Despite Joshua's long military experience he had never led an attack on a fortified city that was prepared for a long siege. In fact, of all the walled cities in Palestine, Jericho was probably the most invincible. There was also the question of armaments. Israel's army had no siege engines, no battering rams, no catapults, and no moving towers. Their only weapons were slings, arrows, and spears—which were like

straws against the walls of Jericho. Joshua knew the battle of Jericho must be won because, now that they had crossed the Jordan, Israel's troops had no place to which they could retreat. Further, they could not bypass the city because that would leave their women, children, goods, and cattle at Gilgal exposed to certain destruction. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

And behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" - Joshua was undoubtedly startled by the appearance of this man with drawn sword and asked in essence "Who goes there—friend or foe?" And yet Joshua goes toward him, which is a manifestation of being his "strong and courageous."

Campbell comments on the stranger "If He were a friend, an Israelite, He was off limits and had some explaining to do. Especially was this true since Joshua had given no command for anyone to draw a sword! If the Stranger were an enemy, Joshua was ready to fight!" ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

NET Note - The verb הִנֵּה (hinneh, "look") invites the reader to view the scene through Joshua's eyes. By calling the stranger "a man," the author reflects Joshua's perspective. The text shortly reveals his true identity (vv. 14–15).

Spurgeon reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

J Vernon McGee sees that as "the call and commission of Joshua. It is the same as Moses' call on the plain of Midian at the burning bush. Joshua learned that GHQ was not in his tent after all. It was at the throne of God. God was leading them. Actually, he was not captain of the hosts of the Lord; he was under Someone else. And he would be taking orders from Him. We shall be seeing this in the next chapter as he marches the army around the city of Jericho for seven straight days. If you had stopped Joshua on the sixth day and said, "Look, General Joshua, this is a silly thing to be doing," he probably would have said, "That's exactly what I think." "Then why are you doing it? You are in command here." Joshua would say, "You are wrong. I take my orders from Someone above me. I am only a buck private in the rear ranks. I am doing this because I have been commanded to do it." ([Joshua 5](#))

Mt Henry comments (and I agree) - "We have reason to think that this man was the Son of God, the eternal Word, who, before he assumed the human nature for a perpetuity, frequently appeared in a human shape. So bishop Patrick thinks, consonant to the judgment of the fathers. Joshua gave him divine honours, and he received them, which a created angel would not have done, and he is called Jehovah, ch. 6:2. 2. He here appeared as a soldier, with his sword drawn in his hand. To Abraham in his tent he appeared as a traveller; to Joshua in the field as a man of war. Christ will be to his people what their faith expects and desires. Christ had his sword drawn, which served, (1.) To justify the war Joshua was engaging in, and to show him that it was of God, who gave him commission to kill and slay. If the sovereign draw the sword, this proclaims war, and authorizes the subject to do so too. The sword is then well drawn when Christ draws it, and gives the banner to those that fear him, to be displayed because of the truth, Ps. 60:4. (2.) To encourage him to carry it on with vigour; for Christ's sword drawn in his hand denotes how ready he is for the defence and salvation of his people, who through him shall do valiantly. His sword turns every way. IV. The bold question with which Joshua accosted him; he did not send a servant, but stepped up to him himself, and asked, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? which intimates his readiness to entertain him if he were for them, and to fight him if he were against them. This shows, 1. His great courage and resolution. He was not ruffled by the suddenness of the appearance, nor daunted with the majesty and bravery which no doubt appeared in the countenance of the person he saw; but, with a presence of mind that became so great a general, put this fair question to him. God had bidden Joshua be courageous, and by this it appears that he was so; for what God by his word requires of his people he does by his grace work in them. 2. His great concern for the people and their cause; so heartily has he embarked in the interests of Israel that none shall stand by him with the face of a man but he will know whether he be a friend or a foe. It should seem, he suspected him for an enemy, a Goliath that had come to defy the armies of the living God, and to give him a challenge. Thus apt are we to look upon that as against us which is most for us. The question plainly implies that the cause between the Israelites and the Canaanites, between Christ and Beelzebub, will not admit of a neutrality. He that is not with us is against us. V. The account he gave of himself, v. 14. "Nay, not for your adversaries, you may be sure, but as captain of the host of the Lord have I now come, not only for you as a friend, but over you as commander in chief." Here were now, as of old (Gen. 32:2), Mahanaim, two hosts, a host of Israelites ready to engage the Canaanites and a host of angels to protect them therein, and he, as captain of both, conducts the host of Israel and commands the host of angels to their assistance. Perhaps in allusion to this Christ is called the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10), and a leader and commander to the people, Isa. 55:4. Those cannot but be victorious that have such a captain. He now came as captain to review the troops, to animate them, and to give the necessary orders for the besieging of Jericho. VI. The great respect Joshua paid him when he understood who he was; it is probable that he perceived, not only by what he said but by some other sensible indications, that he was a divine person, and not a man. 1. Joshua paid homage to him: He

fell on his face to the earth and did worship. Joshua was himself general of the forces of Israel, and yet he was far from looking with jealousy upon this stranger, who produced a commission as captain of the Lord's host above him; he did not offer to dispute his claims, but cheerfully submitted to him as his commander. It will become the greatest of men to be humble and reverent in their addresses to God. 2. He begged to receive commands and directions from him: What saith my Lord unto his servant? His former question was not more bold and soldier-like than this was pious and saint-like; nor was it any disparagement to the greatness of Joshua's spirit thus to humble himself when he had to do with God: even crowned heads cannot bow to low before the throne of the Lord Jesus, who is King of kings, Ps. 2:10,11; 72:10, 11; Rev. 19:16. Observe, (1.) The relation he owns between himself and Christ, that Christ was his Lord and himself his servant and under his command, Christ his Captain and himself a soldier under him, to do as he is bidden, Mt. 8:9. Note, The foundation of all acceptable obedience is laid in a sincere dedication of ourselves, as servants to Jesus Christ as our Lord, Ps. 16:2. (2.) The enquiry he makes pursuant to this relation: What saith my Lord? which implies an earnest desire to know the will of Christ, and a cheerful readiness and resolution to do it. Joshua owns himself an inferior officer, and stands to receive orders. This temper of mind shows him fit for the post he was in; for those know best how to command that know how to obey. VII. The further expressions of reverence which this divine captain required from Joshua (v. 15): Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, in token of reverence and respect (which with us are signified by uncovering the head), and as an acknowledgment of a divine presence, which, while it continued there, did in a manner sanctify the place and dignify it. We are accustomed to say of a person for whom we have a great affection that we love the very ground he treads upon; thus Joshua must show his reverence for this divine person, he must not tread the ground he stood on with his dirty shoes, Eccl. 5:1. Outward expressions of inward reverence, and a religious awe of God, well become us, and are required of us, whenever we approach to him in solemn ordinances. Bishop Patrick well observes here that the very same orders that God gave to Moses at the bush, when he was sending him to bring Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 3:5), he here gives to Joshua, for the confirming of his faith in the promise he had lately given him, that as he had been with Moses so he would be with him, ch. 1:5. Had Moses such a presence of God with him as, when it became sensible, sanctified the ground? So had Joshua. And (lastly) Hereby he prepares him to receive the instructions he was about to give him concerning the siege of Jericho, which this captain of the Lord's host had now come to give Israel possession of.

Dale Ralph Davis addresses the issue that often arises which is that of accusations against God for calling for utter obliteration of the Canaanites - In Genesis 15:16 Yahweh explained to Abram that his descendants would not inherit Canaan immediately but would come back in the fourth generation, 'for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete'. The implication is that Yahweh was being patient with the present inhabitants of the land but that when their sins had reached the limit, he would use Abram's descendants to bring judgment upon them. This view is confirmed in the rest of the Pentateuch. Yahweh cast out the residents of Canaan because of their gross sexual perversions (Lev. 18:24-25) and their zeal for magic, divination, and all such pagan hanky-panky (Deut. 18:12). Hence Israel must not assume a holier-than-you-all attitude, for Yahweh will not bring his people into the land because they are righteous and deserving; 'it is because of the wickedness of these nations that Yahweh is driving them out before you' (Deut. 9:4-5). The conquest is not a bunch of land-hungry marauders wiping out, at the behest of their vicious God, hundreds of innocent, God-fearing folks. In the biblical view, the God of the Bible uses none-too-righteous Israel as the instrument of his just judgment on a people who had persistently reveled in their iniquity. This will not answer all your dilemmas with the conquest, but you must see the Old Testament's view—the conquest is not gross injustice but the highest (and most patient [Gen. 15:16]) justice. . ([Focus on the Bible Commentary – Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

Behold (02009) [hinneh](#) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so [hinneh](#) is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! [Hinneh](#) is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). The first use of [hinneh](#) in Ge 1:29 and second in Ge 1:31

All the uses of hineeh in Joshua - Jos. 2:2; Jos. 2:18; Jos. 3:11; Jos. 5:13; Jos. 7:21; Jos. 7:22; Jos. 8:20; Jos. 9:12; Jos. 9:13; Jos. 9:25; Jos. 14:10; Jos. 22:11; Jos. 23:14; Jos. 24:27

The 'What Man' - Woodrow Kroll

While watching his father tune up the family car, a five-year-old boy announced, "I know what I want to be when I grow up. I want to be a 'what man'!" His puzzled father asked him to explain, so the little boy elaborated, "A **what man**' has a place where people bring their cars when there is something wrong with them, and he tells them what to do."

Israel had reached a point in their invasion plans where they also needed a **'what man.'** Jericho was surrounded by fortified walls and defended by trained soldiers. Both were seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Yet as Joshua stood near the city, pondering what to do, the Commander of the Lord's army appeared to him. Most Bible scholars believe this to be a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. Joshua fell down before Him and said, "Tell me what you want me to do."

Often in life we need a **"what man."** Situations arise leaving us totally confused about what to do. That's when we need to turn to the Lord. Only the Lord God is capable of being our "what man." He has a plan for us that works out all the "whats" and "whys" of life. Through Jeremiah the prophet, He said, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

Seek the Lord, read His Word daily, and find out what His will is for you. Avail yourself of His wisdom and you'll discover that He always knows what to do.

The "what" is never a secret to God.

F B Meyer - Behold, there stood a Man.

When Jericho, its fortifications looming dark through the night, must be assailed, then the Divine Man may be looked for. Only let circumcision do its keen work of separation, so that there be nothing of the flesh with its energy and pride to vaunt itself before God; then, as we stand face to face with some imminent peril, God will be revealed as our very present help. Not weeks before our need, not before the Jordan has been crossed in faith, not before circumcision has been performed; but when all God's demands have been met, and tomorrow calls for action, then behold there will stand the Man Christ Jesus, not by Himself, but as Captain of the Lord's host, awaiting with mighty legions on the wing for his least word.

It is sometimes thought that the Divine Warrior had come to supersede Joshua; this is not so. He was Prince of another host than Israel. His host was the celestial armies, which were going forth to war against Canaan. As long as Israel was true to God, these were its allies. Look up, Christian soul! Thou thinkest thyself alone; or countest sorrowfully thy poor array; but in very deed the Man of Calvary and of the throne is beside thee. All heaven owns his authority, and will supplement thine efforts. Be reverent, obedient, full of faith and prayer. Keep step with the goings forth of God. Thou shalt have light work to do. Before the impact of his might, thy Jericho shall fall. The battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift; but each to those who are living lives separate from the world, and dedicated to God. The vessels which are meet for the Master's use are pure ones. Cleanness, rather than cleverness, is the prime condition of successful service.

Joshua 5:13-15 CHOOSE YOUR SIDE

Whose side are you on?

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"

So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so. —Joshua 5:13-15

This man Joshua has been likened to the first SAS soldier! Joshua started out as a brave young soldier and eventually ended up as a great leader. He led the army of Israel (God's people in the Old Testament) into battle and, in this story, against the fortified city of Jericho.

Before this fight God spoke to Joshua through the commander of His own heavenly armies. Joshua saw he had his sword drawn, so naturally he shouted the standard 'Who goes there?' challenge. He wanted to know if God was on his side. The response was remarkable. "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."

Whose side was the commander on? Not Joshua's or Jericho's. He was on God's side—the point being that Joshua should be as well. It wasn't a case of God being on Joshua's side, but Joshua being on God's side. Joshua realised his allegiance to God was more important than his allegiance to his country, so he fell on his face, saying, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" When Joshua showed this submission to God above all others, he was told he was on 'holy ground', and was accepted into God's presence.

Being on God's side

We can ask the same question of God when we have to go into battle: is God on our side? What if He is for the other side? The truth is, as Joshua realised, that for every one of us who gives our lives to God, we will be fully accepted by Him forever, and He will always be on our side. God doesn't support countries, movements or organisations. He is the God of His people (those who trust Jesus):

In [Jesus] you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance (a place in heaven). —Ephesians 1:13-14

When we give our lives to Jesus and trust His death to pay for our sin and His resurrection to give us new life with God, we are “sealed” by the Holy Spirit “who is the guarantee of our inheritance”. We know that God is on our side, because He has marked us as His own possession, and we are sealed so that we can’t lose this standing with Him.

No matter what stands we may have to make or battles we may have to fight, let us make sure that first and foremost we belong to God. When we do, we know He will be with us forever, and that we have a guaranteed place in heaven when we die.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

13. When Joshua was by Jericho. Heb. בִּרְיֹחוֹ beriho, in Jericho; i. e. in the plains of Jericho, in the country or territory immediately adjoining Jericho, and called by the same name probably at some distance from the camp, whither he may have repaired for the purpose of observing in person the position of the city and the most favorable point of attack. The sixth chapter ought certainly to have commenced here, as the subject now entered upon is entirely new, and the present arrangement most unnaturally divides the communication which Joshua had with the angel, and which is continued to ch. 6:5.

There stood a man. One in the appearance of a man, one whom Joshua at first took for a man. That he was a superhuman being, however, is evident from what follows; and there seems no good reason to dissent from the established opinion of both ancient and modern expositors that this was no other than the Son of God, the Eternal Word, appearing in that form which he was afterwards to assume for the redemption of men. The reasons for this opinion are, (1) The title which he here gives himself, ‘Captain of the host of the Lord,’ which is but another form of the name ‘Lord of hosts,’ implying the ruler of all the heavenly hosts, and which is evidently the appropriate title of Jehovah-Jesus. (2) His acceptance of the worship or adoration which Joshua here pays him. This an angel or any created being would undoubtedly have refused. Comp. Rev. 19:10; 22:9; Judg. 13:16. Here, however, instead, of reproving Joshua for doing him too much honor, he commands him to do still more, by ‘loosing his shoes from off his feet;’ thus insisting upon the highest acknowledgment of the Divine presence which was in use among the eastern nations. (3) From the place being made holy by his presence, which was the special prerogative of God, Ex. 3, 5; and (4) From his being expressly called ‘Jehovah,’ ch. 6:2, which passage undoubtedly forms a part of the present narrative, as otherwise he must have appeared without any ostensible object, neither delivering any message, making any promise, nor uttering any command, except merely that Joshua should loose his shoes from his feet.

Over against him. As if with a hostile intent, in somewhat of a threatening attitude. The same phrase in the original occurs Dan. 10:13, ‘The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me (Heb. ‘stood over against me.’)

With his drawn sword in his hand. As a symbol of the character in which he was now to manifest himself in behalf of Joshua and Israel. So he is elsewhere termed, ‘A man of war,’ Ex. 15:3. His appearing in this form would serve also not only to justify the war in which Joshua was now engaged, to show him that it was of God, who had given him his commission to kill and slay, but to encourage him to prosecute it with vigor. If God was for him, who could be against him? He had indeed previously received many promises of success, but God is often graciously pleased to confirm and follow up his promises, by signal manifestations of his presence and favor: ‘Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.’

And Joshua went unto him. Displaying herein a remarkable courage and intrepidity. Instead of turning away from the formidable personage before him, and seeking hastily to regain the camp, he walks boldly up, and demands of him whether he be a friend or a foe. This undaunted bearing was the fruit of his strong confidence in God. No face of clay will intimidate him who looks upon God as his friend and protector, and who is found in the way of duty. It is the disobedient, the obstinate, the rebellious spirit, in which cowardice dwells. The good man is ever the true hero.

Warren Wiersbe - Joshua had read in the Book of the Law what Moses had said to the Lord after Israel had made the golden calf: “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here” (Ex. 33:15, NKJV). The Lord had promised to be with Joshua just as He had been with Moses (Josh. 1:5), and now He reaffirmed that promise in a personal way. Like his predecessor, Joshua refused to move until he was sure the Lord’s presence was with him.

This paragraph records one of the pre-incarnation appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in the Old Testament. To Abraham the pilgrim, the Lord came as a traveler to share in a friendly meal (Gen. 18:1–8). To Jacob the schemer, He came as a wrestler to bring him to the place of submission (32:24–32). The three Hebrew men met Him as their companion in the furnace of fire (Dan. 3:25), and Joshua met Him as the Captain of the Lord’s armies. Our Lord always comes to us when we need Him and in the way we need Him.

It must have been a great encouragement to Joshua to realize that he was not alone. There is a loneliness to leadership that can be disturbing and even depressing as you realize how much your decisions affect the lives of others. “To be President of the United States is to be lonely,” said Harry Truman, “very lonely at times of great decisions.” Joshua must have been feeling some of that loneliness.

God had promised to be with Joshua (Josh. 1:5, 9), and the people had prayed that the Lord would be with him (vv. 16–17). The enemy knew that God was with Israel (2:8ff), and Joshua had encouraged his people with this promise (3:9ff). Joshua was now experiencing the reality of that promise! The Lord met him as Captain of the Lord’s armies, whether in heaven or on earth. “The Lord of hosts [armies] is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge” (Ps. 46:7, 11). Joshua would recall the song Israel had sung at the Red Sea: “The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name” (Ex. 15:3).

I appreciate the courage of Joshua as he confronted this stranger; for he wanted to know whose side he was on. With Joshua, there was no compromise: You were either for the Lord and His people or against them (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23). When Joshua discovered the visitor was the Lord, he fell at His feet in worship and waited for His orders.

In Christian ministry great public victories are won in private as leaders submit to the Lord and receive their directions from Him. It’s doubtful that anybody in the camp of Israel knew about their leader’s meeting with the Lord, but that meeting made the difference between success and failure on the battlefield. The Chinese Bible teacher Watchman Nee wrote, “Not until we take the place of a servant can He take His place as Lord.”

Joshua was reminded that he was second in command. Every father and mother, pastor, and Christian leader is second in command to the Lord Jesus Christ; and when we forget this fact, we start to move toward defeat and failure. The Lord came to Joshua that day, not just to help but to lead. “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, NKJV). Joshua was an experienced soldier, whom Moses had trained for leadership. Yet that was no guarantee of success. He needed the presence of the Lord God.

The Lord’s first order to Joshua revealed to him that he was standing on holy ground. This reminds us of God’s words to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:5). Joshua was standing in “heathen territory”; yet because God was with him, he was standing on holy ground. If we are obeying the will of God, no matter where He leads us, we are on holy ground; and we had better behave accordingly. There’s no such thing as “secular” and “sacred,” “common” and “consecrated,” when you are in the Lord’s service. “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31, NKJV).

The sequence here is significant: first humble worship, then holy walk, then heavenly warfare. This parallels the “spiritual postures” found in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Joshua first bowed the knee (Eph. 3:14); then he submitted to a holy walk (Eph 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15); and then he went out to battle the enemy in the power of the Lord (Eph 6:10ff). Like Joshua, we have already been given our inheritance (described in Eph. 1–2) and we must overcome the enemy in order to claim it for ourselves and enjoy it.

When Joshua met the Lord, he discovered that the battle was the Lord’s and He had already overcome the enemy. All Joshua had to do was listen to God’s Word and obey orders, and God would do the rest. God had already given Jericho to Israel (Josh. 6:2); all they had to do was step out by faith and claim the victory by obeying the Lord.

In a meeting with a small group of missionaries in China, James Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship) reminded them that there were three ways to do God’s work: “One is to make the best plans we can, and carry them out to the best of our ability ... or, having carefully laid our plans and determined to carry them through, we may ask God to help us, and to prosper us in connection with them. Yet another way of working is to begin with God; to ask His plans, and to offer ourselves to Him to carry out His purposes.”

Joshua followed the third plan, and that’s why the Lord blessed him.

The main lesson of Joshua 5 is that we must be a spiritually prepared people if we are going to do the Lord’s work successfully and glorify His name. Instead of rushing into the battle, we must “take time to be holy.”

In a letter to his missionary friend Rev. Daniel Edwards, the saintly Scottish preacher Robert Murray McCheyne wrote:

“Remember you are God’s sword—His instrument—I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.”

That letter was written in 1840, but its admonition applies to God’s people today. All of us are His ministers, His servants; and we want to be holy instruments that He can use successfully. ([Be Strong -- Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

Joshua 5:14 He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?"

- **captain of the host of the LORD**, Ex 23:20-22 Isa 55:4 Da 10:13,21 12:1 Heb 2:10 Rev 12:7 Rev 19:11-14
- **fell on his**: Ge 17:3,17 Lev 9:24 Nu 16:22,45 Mt 8:2 Lu 5:12 Ac 10:25,26 Rev 19:10 22:8,9
- **What has my lord to say to his servant**: 1Sa 3:9,10 Isa 6:8 Ac 9:6
- my lord: Ex 4:10,13 Ps 110:1 Mt 22:44 Lu 1:43 20:42 Joh 20:28 Php 3:8
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE CAPTAIN OF THE HOST OF THE LORD

He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as Captain of the host of the LORD- NET = "He answered, "Truly I am the commander of the LORD's army." The man in Joshua 5:13 does not give a direct answer to Joshua's question as to whose side he was on. Indeed, He did not come to take sides but to take over! What Joshua needed to see very clearly at this time, was the truth that the battle was not his but the Lord's battle.

NET Note on no - Heb "He said, "Neither." An alternative reading is יו' (lo, "[He said] to him"; cf. NEB). This reading is supported by many Hebrew MSS, as well as the LXX and Syriac versions. The traditional reading of the MT (אין, lo', "no, neither") is probably the product of aural confusion (the two variant readings sound the same in Hebrew). Although followed by a number of modern translations (cf. NIV, NRSV), this reading is problematic, for the commander of the LORD's army would hardly have declared himself neutral.

Guzik - The response of the Man is curious, almost elusive. "No" was not a proper answer for Joshua's question.. In a sense, the Man refuses to answer Joshua's question because it is not the right question, and it is not the most important question to be asked at the time.. The question really wasn't if the LORD was on Joshua's side. The proper question was if Joshua was on the LORD's side. ([Joshua 5 Commentary](#))

To Abraham the pilgrim, the Lord came as a Traveler to share in a friendly meal (Ge 18:1-8). To Jacob the schemer, He came as a Wrestler to bring him to the place of submission (Ge 32:24-32). The three Hebrew men met Him as their Companion in the furnace of fire (Da 3:25), and Joshua met Him as the **Captain** of the Lord's armies. Our Lord always comes to us when we need Him and in the way we need Him. It must have been a great encouragement to Joshua to realize that he was not alone (Jos 1:5,9, Dt 31:6; Heb 13:5). There is a loneliness to leadership that can be disturbing and even depressing as you realize how much your decisions affect the lives of others.

Harry Truman once said "To be President of the United States is to be lonely, very lonely at times of great decisions." Joshua must have been feeling some of that loneliness.

Campbell - What kind of a military force did this divine Commander lead? The "army of the LORD" was surely not limited to the army of Israel though it may have been included. More specifically, it referred to the angelic host, the same "army" of heaven that later surrounded Dothan when Elisha and his servant appeared to be greatly outnumbered by the Aramean army (2 Kings 6:8-17). In the Garden of Gethsemane at the time of His arrest, Jesus referred to this heavenly army when He said that 12 legions of angels were ready to defend Him (Matt. 26:53). In Hebrews 1:14 they are described as "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation." Though invisible, they serve and care for God's children in times of great need. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down - This happens even before he is told to remove his sandals.

THOUGHT -Oh, how we all need a renewed (or maybe even first-time) awareness of His glory. "There is a dangerous absence of awe and worship in our assemblies today. We are boasting about standing on our own feet, instead of being broken and falling at His feet. For years Evan Roberts prayed:"Bend me! Bend me!" God answered finally in the form of the GREAT WELSH REVIVAL!

Campbell - It seems clear that Joshua was indeed talking to the Angel of the Lord, another appearance in Old Testament times of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (cf. Joshua 6:2). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

And said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant Joshua's response reminds me of young Samuel's "Speak LORD, for Thy servant is listening." (1Sa 3:9), a good response for all God's bondservants! Note that Joshua refers to Him as **lord**. Note also that Joshua refers to himself, the same using the same Hebrew word used for Moses the servant of the Lord (Joshua 1:1). God had promised to be with Joshua (Josh 1:5, 9), and the people had prayed that the Lord would be with him (Josh 1:17). The enemy knew

that God was with Israel (Josh 2:8ff), and Joshua had encouraged his people with this promise (Josh 3:9ff). Joshua was now experiencing the reality of that promise! The Lord met him as **Captain** of the Lord's armies, whether in heaven or on earth. "The Lord of hosts [armies] is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Ps 46:7, 11). Joshua would recall the song Israel had sung at the Red Sea: "The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name" (Ex 15:3).

THOUGHT - Note Joshua's humility in identifying himself as the servant of the Captain of the LORD's host. The Hebrew *ebed* is used repeatedly to describe Moses and it is translated with *doulos*. *Doulos* speaks of submission to one's master. The *doulos* had no life of his own, no will of his own, no purpose of his own and no plan of his own. All was subject to his master. The bond-servant's every thought, breath, and effort was subject to the will of his master. In sum, the picture of a bondservant is one who is absolutely surrendered and totally devoted to his master. *Doulos* conveys the idea of the slave's close, binding ties w/ his master, belonging to him, obligated (& desirous) to do his will, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, HIS WILL BEING ALTOGETHER CONSUMED IN THE WILL OF THE OTHER (Mt 8:9; 20:27; 24:45, 46). The men God uses are bond-servants see Paul in Ro 1:1, Peter in 2Pe 1:1, James in James 1:1 and Jude in Jude 1:1. Ultimately this is simply imitation of Jesus (1Co 11:1), for as Mark 10:45 says "even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to **serve**, and to give His life a ransom for many." In Php 2:7 Paul says that Jesus "emptied Himself taking the form of a bond-servant (*doulos*). And even in eternity future we read an incredible description of Jesus - "Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them." (Lk 12:37+). Do you want to be great in God's Kingdom, learn to be the servant of all [Play this old Maranatha chorus](#).

In ministry great public victories are won in private as leaders submit to the Lord and receive their directions from Him. It's doubtful that anybody in the camp of Israel knew about their leader's meeting with the Lord, but that meeting made the difference between success and failure on the battlefield.

Joshua was also reminded that he was second in command. Every leader is second in command to the Lord Jesus Christ, and when we forget this fact, we start to move toward defeat and failure. The Lord came to Joshua that day, not just to help but to lead. "Without Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). Joshua was an experienced soldier, whom Moses had trained for leadership. Yet that was no guarantee of success. He needed the presence of the Lord God.

Hampton Keathley - Verse 14 tells us this man came as the "captain of the hosts of the Lord," the commander of the Lord's army. Joshua's response in verse 14b and the statement of the captain in verse 15 shows this was a theophany, or better, based on the truth of John 1:1-18, it was a Christophany, a manifestation of the preincarnate Christ, who, as the Logos, is the one who reveals God. If this was only a man or an angel, he would certainly have repelled Joshua's worshipful response (vs. 14). Compare the response of Paul in Acts 14:8-20 to those who wanted to make them into gods and the response of the angel to John in Revelation 19:10. Here then, the preincarnate Christ appears to Joshua to teach and reinforce certain vital truths for God's people, especially for those in positions of leadership, which really includes all believers to some degree.

S A Blackwood - I indeed come now as **Captain of the host of the LORD** - Surely Israel might now face the foe with unwavering confidence, and sing of victory even before the battle was gained. And so may the Christian. It is to no conflict of uncertain issue that he advances; the result of the battle is not doubtful. The struggle may be severe, the warfare long; he may sometimes, like the pilgrim, be beaten to the ground, and well-nigh lose his sword; but "though cast down" he is "not destroyed." The Captain of salvation is on his side, and in the midst of sharpest conflict he can say, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Lord (0113) '*adon* is a masculine noun meaning lord or master. The most frequent usage is of an earthly lord in excess of 300 times, but it is also used of divinity about 30 times (as here in Joshua 3:11). Generally, it carries the nuances of authority rather than ownership. One of the most notable uses of '*adon* is in Psalm 110:1 where David records "The LORD (YAHWEH) says to my (David's) **Lord** ('*adon* = THE MESSIAH): "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." Psalm 110:1 is quoted repeatedly in the NT - Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42, Lk 20:43; Acts 2:34, Acts 2:35; Heb 1:13

Servant (05650) ('*ebed* from '*abad* = work in any sense) means a slave or bondservant, and is a title of humility for someone in a position of lower authority or stature (whether in relationship to people or to God). Slavery in Israel amounted to indentured servitude. A fellow Israelite could not be held indefinitely against his will. In fact, his time of service was limited to 6 yr (Ex 21:2). The master could be punished if evil intent against the slave was proven (Ex 21:14) or if the slave died (Ex 21:20). These types of servants held a position of honor (Ge 24:2ff; 41:12, 15:2). **Summary** - 1) slave, servant 1a) slave, servant, man-servant 1b) subjects 1c) servants, worshippers (of God) 1d) servant (in special sense as prophets, Levites etc) 1e) servant (of Israel) 1f) servant (as form of address between equals)

Uses of ebed in Joshua - Jos. 1:1; Jos. 1:2; Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:13; Jos. 1:15; Jos. 5:14; Jos. 8:31; Jos. 8:33; Jos. 9:8; Jos. 9:9; Jos. 9:11; Jos. 9:23; Jos. 9:24; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:15; Jos. 12:6; Jos. 13:8; Jos. 14:7; Jos. 18:7; Jos. 22:2; Jos. 22:4; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 24:17; Jos. 24:29;

The Captain of the Host of the Lord - Alexander Maclaren

"The Angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7)

The vision of the divine presence ever takes the form which our circumstances most require. David's then need was safety and protection. Therefore he saw the Encamping Angel; even as to Joshua the leader He appeared as the **Captain of the Lord's host**; and as to Isaiah, in the year that the throne of Judah was emptied by the death of the earthly king, was given the vision of the **Lord sitting on a throne**, the King Eternal and Immortal.

So to us all His grace shapes its expression according to our wants, and the same gift is Protean in its power of transformation; being to one man wisdom, to another strength, to the solitary companionship, to the sorrowful consolation, to the glad sobering, to the thinker truth, to the worker practical force--to each his heart's desire, if the heart's delight be God. So manifold are the aspects of God's infinite sufficiency, that every soul, in every possible variety of circumstance, will find there just what will suit it. That armour fits every man who puts it on. That deep fountain is like some of those fabled springs which give forth whatsoever precious draught any thirsty lip asked. He takes the shape that our circumstances most need. Let us see that we, on our parts, use our circumstances to help us in anticipating the shapes in which God will draw near for our help.

Joshua 5:14 God's Plans

What do you want your servant to do? (nlt) Joshua 5:14

Today's Scripture & Insight: Joshua 5:13–6:2

An army officer may have an overall plan, but before each battle he has to receive and give out new instructions. Joshua, a leader of the Israelites, had to learn this lesson. After God's people spent 40 years in the wilderness, God chose Joshua to lead them into the land He had promised to them.

The first stronghold they faced was the city of Jericho. Before the battle, Joshua saw the "commander of the Lord's army" (probably the Lord Himself) standing opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. Joshua fell on his face and worshiped. In other words, he recognized God's greatness and his own smallness. Then he asked, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" (Josh. 5:14). Joshua experienced victory at Jericho because he followed the Lord's instructions.

On another occasion, however, Joshua and his people "did not inquire of the Lord" (9:14). As a result, they were deceived into making a peace treaty with the people of Gibeon, enemies in the land of Canaan. This displeased the Lord (vv. 3-26).

We too are dependent on the Lord as we face life's struggles. He longs for us to come near to Him today in humility. And He'll be there again for us tomorrow. Keila Ochoa ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

In what area do you need God's guidance today? Ask God to lead the way.

Spiritual victory comes to those who humble themselves and seek God's will.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

14. And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. 'I am neither Israelite nor Canaanite, neither friend nor foe in your sense of the words, for I am not a mortal man, but as prince and leader of the Lord's host, of the angels in heaven, and even of that very power of which you are commander, have I now come, to instruct and aid thee in the great undertaking in which thou art engaged.' There seems to be a peculiar emphasis in the word now (עַתָּה attâh), as if he had said, 'I who formerly appeared as the Jehovah of the burning bush (Ex. 3.), and who was announced as the tutelary Angel of the travelling hosts (Ex. 23:23), now appear in the different character of the Divine Defender of the covenant nation; and as my presence formerly made Sinai holy (Ex. 19:20), so now doth it sanctify the spot upon which my footsteps tread.' He probably at the same moment put forth some visible demonstration of his true character, which at once satisfied Joshua, and filled him with an overwhelming sense of his majesty and glory, so that he instinctively fell on his face to the earth, and offered him those tokens of worship which a mortal is bound to pay to his Creator. How much reason he had for this is evident from ch. 6:2, where the august stranger expressly denominates himself Jehovah.

What saith my Lord unto his servant? With the profoundest reverence I acknowledge thee as my Lord and leader, I subject myself to thy sovereign will, and humbly wait for the orders it may seem good to thee to issue.

Joshua 5:15 The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, '**Remove** your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so.

- **Remove your sandals:** Ex 3:5 Ac 7:32,33 2Pe 1:18
- [Joshua 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JOSHUA WAS ON HOLY GROUND

The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua - The designation Captain of the LORD's host is repeated.

Guzik - The Man announces who He is: Commander of the army of the LORD. This is God Himself pulling rank on Joshua, who himself was a great military leader—but he was not Commander in Chief.. We know that this Being, standing before Joshua, was God. Though the title Commander of the army of the LORD could perhaps apply to an angel (such as Michael, based on a passage like Revelation 12:7), Joshua's falling down and worshipping is inconsistent with angels, who never receive worship (Revelation 22:8). Army of the LORD here is used in a way that implies that the armies commanded are angelic armies. This is a Being who commands angels.i. As well, Joshua refers to the angel as my LORD; but most of all, the command to remove his sandals (a picture of our humanity and contact with a "dirty" world), was to Joshua (who read and knew Exodus 3:4–6 because he was in God's word) clear proof that the Man standing before him was the voice from the burning bush. The idea of Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, appearing as a man before Bethlehem is provocative, but logical. We know that He existed before Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); why should He not, on isolated but important occasions, appear in bodily form? This idea is also evident in passages like Genesis 18:16–33, 32:24–30, and Judges 13:1–23. ([Joshua 5 Commentary](#))

Related Resource:

- [Angel of the LORD](#) - Discussion of Christophanies

Remove your sandals from your feet for the place where you are standing is holy- Sandals would profane the holiness of the place. This must have sounded familiar to Joshua as he had either heard Moses or read it in the Pentateuch (of which he had a copy) in Exodus 3:5+ -

"Then He (Yahweh, the [Angel of the LORD](#)) **said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."**

And Joshua did so - Note Joshua's unhesitating obedience indicating total submission to the Captain, the pre-incarnate Christ. He is in essence acknowledging Who is truly in charge of the battle. He also knows that the Captain's presence and power assure that Israel will be victorious!

Campbell - The top general of the LORD's army had not come to be an idle Spectator of the conflict, or even an ally. He was in complete charge and would shortly reveal His plans for capturing the citadel of Jericho. How comforting all this was for Joshua. He did not need to bear the heavy burden and responsibility of leadership alone. By removing his sandals he gladly acknowledged that this battle and the entire conquest of Canaan was God's conflict and that he was merely God's servant. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Guzik asks "Why did Jesus come to Israel at this strategic time?. He had come to instruct Joshua in the plan to capture Jericho. Joshua will carry out a plan in the following chapter that is so improbable it could only have been initiated at the direct command of God.ii. Most of all, He had come to conquer Israel—before Israel could conquer anything else in the promised land, they had to be conquered by God—and Joshua's total submission shows that they are conquered by Him. This is the missing element in a life of victory for many Christians; they have not been, and are not continually being, conquered by God. ([Joshua 5 Commentary](#))

Henry Morris - Unseen by the Israelites, a host of angels accompanied them as they prepared to fight the Canaanites. (Note similar references to God's hosts in Genesis 32:1,2; 2 Kings 6:16,17; 7:6).

Irving Jensen sums up this first section - The Christian who sincerely desires to live his life in God's blessed will and favor—in God's rest-land—will find that it is not he living the life, but Christ living in him. Therefore, in the face of all the enemies of his soul

who would keep him from this living relationship to Christ as Lord, he must prepare his heart. First, has unconfessed sin broken fellowship with God, causing a suspension of claim to His blessing? Confession will mark the day of reproach rolled away. Then, is there a lurking doubt whether God will give the victories He has promised, because of unworthiness? When God sees the blood of Jesus His Son, He passes over and delivers. Perhaps the Christian has been hesitant to partake of a token of the blessings of Canaan land. He needs but taste and see! The fruit of the land is so much more delightful than the manna of the desert. And if the weight of battle against Satan and his hosts is too heavy to bear, the Son of God goes before to wage His holy war, to meet "the tyrant's brandished steel." One has nothing to lose, and all to gain! The Israelites on the plain of Jericho had committed themselves when they crossed the divided Jordan and watched it close behind them. Practically speaking, they had reached a point of no return. But they were not led here to be shut up to a life of squalor, shame, and subjugation; rather, a glorious land lay open before them—a land for them to enjoy with its milk and honey, its homes and temples for the worship of God. The yesterdays were days of preparation; the tomorrows would be days of conquest. Written in the skies above were the timeless words of the mandate, "Go in to possess the land, which Jehovah your God giveth you" (Joshua 1:11). And God's people of generations later have been joining in the spirit of commitment to such a life by saying, with the writer of Hebrews, "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest" (Heb. 4:11).

QUESTION - [Who was the commander of the army of the LORD in Joshua 5:14?](#)

ANSWER - In Joshua 5:13–15 we read of Joshua's conversation with the "commander of the army of the LORD." This commander appeared to Joshua near Jericho, before that fateful battle. The personage held a sword and told Joshua that the place where he stood was holy ground.

The person who appeared to [Joshua](#) was clearly a powerful being. We are told Joshua fell on his face and gave him reverence.

Then, Joshua addresses the man using a Hebrew word that means "master" or "lord." Joshua clearly had much respect for this being. Finally, the man tells Joshua to remove his sandals, "for the place where you are standing is holy."

Based on this information, there are only two possible identities for this person. First, this commander could be an example of a [theophany](#), a visible appearance of God Himself. Supporting this view is the fact that Joshua was to take off his sandals similar to how Moses did at the [burning bush](#) when he met God (Exodus 3:5).

The other possible identity of this commander is that he was an angel. This theory notes that the being identifies himself as the "commander" of the Lord's army, not as the Lord Himself. In this view, Joshua's bowing is seen as an act of reverence rather than worship. Joshua's address of the commander as "lord" could be a general term of respect.

Those who favor the view that Joshua met an angel appeal to the fact that no one can see God and live (Exodus 33:20). Those who favor the view that Joshua met God suggest that this was God the Son, a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.

Whether the commander of the Lord's army was angelic or divine, it was God who communicated an important message to Joshua to prepare him for the upcoming battle. [GotQuestions.org](#)

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 5](#)

14. And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. 'I am neither Israelite nor Canaanite, neither friend nor foe in your sense of the words, for I am not a mortal man, but as prince and leader of the Lord's host, of the angels in heaven, and even of that very power of which you are commander, have I now come, to instruct and aid thee in the great undertaking in which thou art engaged.' There seems to be a peculiar emphasis in the word now (עתה *attâh*), as if he had said, 'I who formerly appeared as the Jehovah of the burning bush (Ex. 3.), and who was announced as the tutelary Angel of the travelling hosts (Ex. 23:23), now appear in the different character of the Divine Defender of the covenant nation; and as my presence formerly made Sinai holy (Ex. 19:20), so now doth it sanctify the spot upon which my footsteps tread.' He probably at the same moment put forth some visible demonstration of his true character, which at once satisfied Joshua, and filled him with an overwhelming sense of his majesty and glory, so that he instinctively fell on his face to the earth, and offered him those tokens of worship which a mortal is bound to pay to his Creator. How much reason he had for this is evident from ch. 6:2, where the august stranger expressly denominates himself Jehovah.

What saith my Lord unto his servant? With the profoundest reverence I acknowledge thee as my Lord and leader, I subject myself to thy sovereign will, and humbly wait for the orders it may seem good to thee to issue **15. Loose thy shoe from off thy foot.** This was a token of respect and reverence usual in the east, and equivalent to uncovering the head with us. (See Illustrations of the Scriptures, p. 129.) These are the same words which the angel of the burning bush spake to Moses, Ex. 3:5, from which, and other circumstances, it is probable that it was the same person who appeared in both places. That great and glorious Being, who knows fully his own infinite perfections, which we are very inadequate to comprehend, knows what external manifestations of respect they

justly claim of his creatures. 'Outward expressions of inward reverence, and a religious awe of God, well become us, and are required of us, whenever we approach, to him in solemn ordinances.' Henry.

The place whereon thou standest is holy. Heb. **קֹדֶשׁ** kodesh, is holiness. It was for the time made holy, or consecrated by the Divine presence. As soon as that was withdrawn, its peculiar sacredness also forsook it, and it was no more holy than any other place. Yet with the pious heart there will naturally be, from the laws of association, a feeling of reverence for any place where God has been pleased to vouchsafe the special manifestation of himself. Such a sentiment, however, should be guarded from degenerating into superstition.