

Joshua Series “The Sign of Circumcision”
Joshua 5:1-12
April 22, 2021

Joshua 5:1-12

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

2 At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time.” 3 So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. 4 And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. 5 Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. 6 For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord; the Lord swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 7 So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

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

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

“Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important.”

Where did circumcision come from?

Genesis 17:10-11

10 This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.

Circumcision became a defining outward sign of Israel.

“Obedience at home must precede the display of power in the world.”

Joshua 5:5

All the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised.

The conquest isn't more important than the covenant.

Joshua 5:8

When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed.

Sometimes it takes greater faith to trust God with the consequences of an act of obedience than to perform the original obedience.

There was always a longing for a deeper circumcision.

Deuteronomy 30:6

And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

"What you ought to do and what you most want to do are the same thing."

Romans 2:28-29

For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

The true mark is a new heart.

Romans 4:9-11

We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11 And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.

Colossians 2:11-14

11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him..."

On the cross, Jesus was in a sense cut off for us.

Joshua 5:9

And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you."

Their days of wilderness wanderings are truly over.

Grow Group Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you during our Sunday gathering?
- How do you distinguish between what is urgent and what is important? Are those the same things? What are some of the "urgent" things that want your attention? What is the important thing God wants you to do as your approach what is urgent?
- God has Israel cross over the Jordan, into enemy territory, and then He cripples them? Why would God do that? What does this say about God and what is important to Him?
- From the New Testament passages, Romans 2:28-29, Romans 4:9-11, and Colossians 2:11-14, what is a circumcised heart and why is it important?
- As Israel is circumcised at Gilgal, the Scriptures say that God rolled away the reproach of Egypt. What does that mean? Have you experienced a "rolling away of the reproach"? How does this happen in Christ?
- How can your Grow Group help you apply this teaching to your life this week?