

## Joshua 5: God's People, God's Purpose, God's Plan

1. Introduction
  - a. Read Joshua 5:1-15
    - i. God's command to circumcise is carried out (vs 1-9)
    - ii. Passover & Provision (vs 10-12)
    - iii. Joshua meets the Commander of the Lord's Army (vs 13-15)
  - b. Our focus for Chapter 5 will be on 1 word; Holiness.
    - i. God's holiness
    - ii. Israel's call to holiness
  - c. Each section we will see how Israel is God's People, they were meant for His Purpose, and they are to follow His Plan.
2. Israelites were holy not hasty (vs 1-9)
  - a. They recognized that God is holy, and they had been set apart for holiness, not personal gain.
  - b. Military Plan was abandoned
    - i. Attack when the enemy is frightened and demoralized (vs 1)
      1. "hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them" (vs 1)
    - ii. Build upon previous victories
      1. No military victories yet BUT they have experienced victories through God (Spies success and protection, God guiding them over the Jordan, Finally in the Promised Land)
      2. The Israelites are excited and ready!
    - iii. Protect the Camp
    - iv. Keep your soldiers strong
      1. They were about to purposely wound and temporarily disable the soldiers!
      2. Sons of Jacob, Levi and Simeon used circumcision as a military advantage in Genesis 34. They convinced Shechem to have all the men circumcised and then, in their weakness, slaughtered them to take back their sister who had been defiled.
    - v. Use good sense in planning
      1. An angel appears at a faculty meeting and tells the dean that in return for his unselfish and exemplary behavior, the Lord will reward him with his choice of infinite wealth, wisdom or beauty. Without hesitating, the dean selects infinite wisdom. "Done!" says the angel, and disappears in a cloud of smoke and a bolt of lightning. Now, all heads turn toward the dean, who sits surrounded by a faint halo of light. At length, one of his colleagues whispers, "Say something." The dean looks at them and says, "I should have taken the money."
  - c. Israelites followed God's Plan (vs 2-3)
    - i. "the Lord said {circumcise}" "So Joshua circumcised" (vs 2-3)
    - ii. Delayed the attack until God said
      1. The events in chapter 5 took 10 days
      2. Marching around Jericho another 6 days

3. First military victory came over 2 weeks after they were in the Promised Land.
  - iii. Gave honor to God for His victories
    1. 12 Stones Monument
    2. Take time to be His People following His Purpose and His Plan (Circumcision, Passover, Planning with the Commander)
    3. *Example of driving to Memphis and arriving safely* **\*\*Doesn't need to be on the screen\*\***
  - iv. Protected the Covenant
    1. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant
    2. A "mark" to identify them as God's People. A reminder that they were "set apart".
    3. To be practiced by every Israelite male (Genesis 17:10)
      - a. "This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised."
    4. Acted as an entrance rite into the community of Israel
    5. External, Physical alteration was to be a symbol of recognizing the internal, spiritual dedication to God Almighty.
      - a. Similar, in a way, to our baptism.
  - v. Kept their relationship with God strong
    1. They believed and were obedient
    2. Their faith and trust in God were stronger than their impulse and self.
  - vi. Used God's sense in planning
    1. Good sense would've attacked immediately
    2. God's sense handed them victory even though the path didn't make sense
    3. Error on the side of holiness
3. The Patriotism of the Passover and Provisions (vs 10-12)
- a. Passover was a reminder that they are His People, for His Purpose, and according to His Plan.
    - i. It is a memorial of the birth of the nation of Israel. Reminder of redemption from Egypt.
    - ii. This was a national event! The first Passover meal this new generation had experienced IN the Promised Land.
    - iii. Circumcision was a requirement for partaking in Passover. The fact that circumcision did not happen for the time in the Wilderness indicates that they didn't observe Passover during this time either.
    - iv. This new generation was excited to be His People and follow His ways. They took time to honor Him and recognize the importance of holiness.
  - b. God's Provision had now shifted from manna to produce from the land. (vs 11-12)
    - i. Manna was a reminder of how "great" Egypt was. (Exodus 16:3, Numbers 11:4-9)

- ii. New generation of Israelites no longer had an appetite for the past, but had set their “minds on things above” (Colossians 3)
- iii. This shift was another way God demonstrated they were His People, for His Purpose, according to His Plan.
- iv. They were now living off the land! The 40 year miracle of manna could stop.
- v. “Clarence Macartney told the story about Dr. John Witherspoon . . . 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 Rocky Hill and drove horse and rig each day to his office at the college. “One day one of his neighbors 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.” **\*\*Doesn’t need to be on the screen\*\***

4. The Confirmed Commander in Chief (vs 13-15)

a. Joshua seeks the “mans” identity

- i. Man has a sword drawn
- ii. “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” (vs 13)
- iii. “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” (vs 14)
  - 1. 2 main views of who this was
    - a. Manifestation of God (theophany)
    - b. Appearance of pre-incarnate Christ (Christophany)

b. The Commander is worthy of worship

- i. “Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped” (vs 14)
- ii. “‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” Matthew 4:10

c. Joshua seeks His Plan

- i. “What does my Lord say to His servant?” (vs 14)
- ii. “Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!” 1 Chron. 16:11

d. Holiness is the focus

- i. “for the place where you are standing is holy.” (vs 15)
- ii. Similar to the command given to Moses at the Burning Bush (Exodus 3)
- iii. Lacking the word “ground”
  - 1. Not just the ground where Joshua is standing but that the entire Promised Land is the holy. (The Holy Land)

2. God's Purpose for His People is to hold holiness as their top priority and then His Plan will happen.

5. What is your top priority?

-The old saying goes that the first step in the recipe for making rabbit soup is to catch the rabbit. You can't move on unless you've got your priorities correct.

- a. Old Generation of Israelites
  - i. Trusted the external mark of the covenant
  - ii. They were God's people, they could do as they please.
  - iii. They wanted the luxuries of Egypt (their old life)
- b. New Generation of Israelites
  - i. Trusted the God of the covenant
  - ii. They were God's people, they desired to be holy.
  - iii. Their happiness came from holiness.
- c. "Some people today fell sure they're saved and are going to heaven because they're baptized, confirmed, and participate regularly in Communion. As good as these religious rites can be, they must never become substitutes for faith in Jesus Christ." Warren Wiersbe
- d. "They had been circumcised but they did not listen to the voice of Yahweh (vs 7). You can have all the marks of the people of God...but have no faith...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." Dale Ralph Davis
- e. Some years ago a young man approached the foreman of a logging crew and asked for a job. "That depends," replied the foreman. "Let's see you fell this tree." The young man stepped forward and skillfully felled a great tree. Impressed, the foreman exclaimed, "Start Monday!" Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday rolled by, and Thursday afternoon the foreman approached the young man and said, "You can pick up your paycheck on the way out today." Startled, he replied, "I thought you paid on Friday." "Normally we do," answered the foreman, "but we're letting you go today because you've fallen behind. Our daily felling charts show that you've dropped from first place on Monday to last on Wednesday." "But I'm a hard worker," the young man objected. "I arrive first, leave last, and even have worked through my coffee breaks!" The foreman, sensing the boy's integrity, thought for a minute and then asked, "Have you been sharpening your ax?" The young man replied, "I've been working too hard to take the time."
  - i. How about you? Are you so busy with family, work, projects, volunteering, staying busy for the Lord that you are not being sharpened?
  - ii. Joshua and the Israelites saw the importance of slowing down, following God's Plan and being used for God's Purpose.
  - iii. Today, make a new commitment to stop, seek God, be sharpened, and be in awe of who HE is!