

Joshua 5–6

Day 1

Circumcision and Passover. Read Joshua 5:1–12

1. Who heard about the Israelites crossing the Jordan (5:1)? Apparently, how quickly did this information spread?
 - How did they react? Compare 2:9–11.
2. What was God teaching and saying to this next generation by having them be circumcised? See Genesis 17:10–11.
 - What were the Israelites saying to God by their obedience?
3. Why hadn't the generation of Israelites that entered the promised land been circumcised (5:4–7)?
4. How was this a risky thing to do from a military standpoint (5:8)? Consider: Why do you think God commanded them to do this after they crossed over the Jordan and not before?
 - What was He teaching them? (For the practice of circumcision see Genesis 17:8–14.)

FYI: "Circumcision was always a powerful act of consecration to God...It was stepping out in faithful obedience and identifying as one of the LORD's people. It was renouncing the flesh and the world. It was dying to self and living to God.

Obviously, this was suicidal from a military standpoint. All the men of fighting age were made completely vulnerable and unable to fight for a period of several days, *till they were healed*...So, not only did Israel cross over the Jordan at a militarily undesirable place (right in front of Jericho, the strongest military outpost of the Canaanites), they also incapacitated their army for several days. They did this because they trusted God, and His directions, instead of their own wisdom. They were put in the place where they could trust in nothing but God alone – a hard place, but a good place. God only asked this of them after He showed His greatness by the Jordan River crossing. When we remember all the things the power of God has done in our lives, we are willing to trust Him in radical obedience."
– David Guzik

"If the entire military is completely disabled for at least three days, then Israel would have no defense . . . at all . . . except for . . . hmmm . . . God. Exactly...Once again, the point is made— success depends not on military strength but upon the nation's faith."
– Dr. Chris Miller

5. What had God done for the Israelites (5:9)? See also Psalm 31:20 and Isaiah 54:17.

6. What “reproach of Egypt” (4:9) had the Israelites endured? See Exodus 3:17 and Deuteronomy 9:27–28.

- How would removing this affect the mental and emotional state of the Israelites?
- How and what reproach has God removed from you? For what does that equip you? Ephesians 2:1–10 (See also 2 Corinthians 5:17,21; Philippians 3:9.)

FYI: rolled away Strong’s OT:1556 *galal*; to roll (literally or figuratively): “to roll, to remove, to commit, to trust. It can also describe abstract concepts, such as reproach being rolled off (removed) from someone (Psalm 119:22) or one’s ways and works rolled onto (committed, entrusted) to someone (especially God) (Ps. 37:5; Prov. 16:3). This important root word is used to form many other names and words (Gilgal in Josh. 5:9).”

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reproach/shame Strong’s OT:2781 *cherpah* “A noun meaning reproach, scorn, taunt.”
– “*cherpah*” The Complete Word Study Dictionary, AMG Publishers, 2003

“God called Israel to a place where they saw themselves as they were in Him. By faith, they could see themselves as an obedient, trusting people, and stop seeing themselves as they were in their slavery and bondage.

Of course, this is the same work God wants to do in us, taking away the dishonor and shame of our previous sin and rebellion, and seeing ourselves as who we are in Jesus...

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.”
– David Guzik

7. What would the Israelites be reminded of by celebrating the passover (5:11)?

- What reasons are given in Exodus 12:42 and 13:8–9 for observing the Passover?

8. The day after their first Passover, what did the Israelites eat in the promised land (5:11)? What would have made it easy obtain this food (6:1)? See Deuteronomy 8:7–9, Nehemiah 9:25, and Numbers 13:23,27.

- What happened the next day (5:12)?

FYI: “The ‘bread from heaven’ (John 6:31, 32) ceased as suddenly and miraculously as it had begun (Exodus 16:4,15). God does not dispense miracles capriciously, but always only with a redemptive purpose. The manna was essential for 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.”
– The Defender’s Study Bible

9. How do you think the three actions that the Israelies performed after crossing the Jordan prepared the people’s minds and hearts for conquering the land?

- 4:20–23
- 5:3
- 5:10

FYI: Most of us would have wanted to rush on through and take care of Jericho – why not take advantage of the time when they are all afraid of you? But God is never in a hurry, and He knows that beyond us *doing* something, we must *be* something for Him – so He takes time out to conquer Israel spiritually before they can conquer Jericho under His guidance.” - David Guzik

✂ **Applying the Word:** How well do you think you do at claiming the blessings that you have been given in Christ? Are there any reproaches from the past that you allow to have control over your life?

Day 2

The Captain of the Hosts of the Lord. Read Joshua 5:13–15

10. How intimidating do you think it was for Joshua to see the man who appeared before him? How did Joshua react (5:13)?
11. Instead of answering Joshua’s question, why did he say he had come (5:14)? Who needed to be on whose side?

Digging Deeper
See Abraham and Joseph’s encounters with God in Genesis 18:16–33 and 32:24–30.

FYI: “The warrior responds, ‘Neither,’ which shows that the real question is whether Joshua is on God’s side. Chapter 5 makes clear that this story will not be about the Israelites versus the Canaanites. Rather, it is God’s battle. Israel will play the role of spectators and only sometimes act as supporters in his purposes.” – The Bible Project Guide to Joshua
<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-joshua/>

“Why did the angel say ‘neither’?...He’s not simply saying, ‘I’m here to help you on your way.’ He’s saying, ‘I’m here with a mission and if you want to help me, that’s great.’ This is so significant when it comes to what Israel’s mission was and what your mission is too. Most of us assume that God is just a helper to help us get what we want...The captain of the host says ‘No, I’m coming as the one in charge, and I have a mission. I have a goal that I am accomplishing in this world, and if you would like to get in line behind me and follow along and be a part of this mission, you will find your life. If you get out ahead of me and try to lead on your own...you might as well go talk to Baal, because if you try to save your life, you will lose it. If you lose your life, and get in behind my mission, you will find it.’”
– Dr. Chris Miller (Joshua video).

12. What does Joshua's response tell you about this "man" and Joshua's understanding of His mission?

13. Underline who or what is being referred to as the Lord's "hosts" in the following:

- Exodus 7:4 "When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. NASU
- 1 Kings 22:19 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. NIV
- Psalm 103:20–21 Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. NIV

Digging Deeper

For times of protection for Israel by hosts see Genesis 32:1,2; 2 Kings 6:16,17

14. Why did the man tell Joshua to remove his sandals (5:15)?

- How does this compare to Moses' encounter in Exodus 3:4–5?

15. From the man's description of Himself, Joshua's reaction (5:14), and the command in 5:15, who do you think this was?

Digging Deeper

For what is said about worshipping men or angels, see: Acts 10:25–26

Acts 14:11–15

Revelation 22:8

16. What kind of victory can we claim in the battles we face?

- John 16:33
- Romans 8:31,37–39
- 2 Corinthians 4:16–18
- Philippians 1:6; 4:13

17. From the first five chapters of Joshua, review the ways God had instructed and prepared the nation of Israel for entering the land.

- 1:7–9
- 3:3–4,15–17
- 4:5–7
- 5:2
- 5:10
- 5:12
- 5:14–15

Digging Deeper

For verses about the unlimited power of God, see:

1 Samuel 14:6b

1 Samuel 17:47

Job 42:2

Matthew 19:26

Romans 8:31

✂ **Applying the Word:** When have you had to fight a battle for the Lord? How and how much did you depend on Him?

Day 3

Crossing the Jordan. Read Joshua 6:1–14

18. From 6:1, what would you say about the level of the enemy's fear? For how long might they been watching these people come?

- How intimidating would the city have looked to the Israelites? See Deuteronomy 9:1

FYI: “The mound, or “tell” of Jericho was surrounded by a great earthen rampart, or embankment, with a stone retaining wall at its base. The retaining wall was some four to five meters (12–15 feet) high. On top of that was a mudbrick wall two meters (six feet) thick and about six to eight meters (20–26 feet) high. At the crest of the embankment was a similar mudbrick wall whose base was roughly 14 meters (46 feet) above the ground level outside the retaining wall...This is what loomed high above the Israelites as they marched around the city each day for seven days. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for the Israelites to penetrate the impregnable bastion of Jericho.”
– Bryant Wood “The Walls of Jericho” <https://answersingenesis.org/archaeology/the-walls-of-gericho/>

“In dramatic contrast to its desert surroundings, Jericho thrived as a fertile, spring-fed oasis. In the Old Testament, it was often called the “City of Palms” for its abundance of palm trees (Deuteronomy 34:3; Judges 1:16; 3:13; 2 Chronicles 28:15). Strategically located as a border city, ancient Jericho controlled important migration routes between the north and south, and the east and west.”
– “What is the significance of Jericho in the Bible?” <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jericho-in-the-Bible.html>

19. What does the Lord's use of the phrase “I have given/delivered” instead of “I will give” say about this battle (6:2)?

20. What instructions were given for each of the following?

- men of war: 6:3,7b,9
- priests: 6:4
- people: 6:5,7a,10

21. How logical do these instructions seem to you? How much military might was going to be used to break down Jericho's walls (6:5)? How questionable would this seem? See Hebrews 11:30.

- How do you think Joshua felt about passing on these instructions? What did it take for the priests, fighting men and people to follow them?

22. From the following verses, what significance does a trumpet sound have?

- Exodus 19:16–19
- Matthew 24:30–31

23. In crossing the Jordan, the ark of the covenant led the way. In the battle for Jericho, it was in the middle of the procession (6:9). Do you see any significance or teaching in that? See Leviticus 26:11,12. Do you see any significance in seven days?

24. Read 6:12–14. What effect do you think the silence, except for the sound of trumpets, and seven days of marching had on the Israelites, on the people of Jericho, or on Rahab?

- How mighty was the force marching around the city? Compare Numbers 26:2,51.

FYI: “**Six days** It took courage for Israel to do this; Israel was wide open to attack during this time...It took endurance for Israel to do this; the march was for six days, and they had to persist in something that didn't seem to make much sense. In this, the helplessness of Israel was revealed; through six days of silent marching, they had a good look at the walls that seemed to be impenetrable – they knew that this was a battle bigger than they were.” – David Guzik

☞ **Applying the Word:** When have you had to wait in facing an enemy or a difficult situation? What was your biggest struggle? What did you learn through the waiting?

Day 4

Twelve Stones. Joshua 6:15–27

25. What was different about the 7th day (6:15)?

- What reason were the people given for shouting (6:16)?

26. The number seven is used over and over again in this episode. Underline what the number seven is associated with in the following verses.
- Genesis 2:2–3 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that he had done. NIV
 - Exodus 21:2 "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything. NIV
 - Exodus 29:35 "Do for Aaron and his sons everything I have commanded you, taking seven days to ordain them. NIV
 - Leviticus 14:7 Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean...NIV
 - Numbers 8:2 "Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you set up the seven lamps, they are to light the area in front of the lampstand.'" NIV
 - Matthew 18:21–22 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. NIV

FYI: "Seven is used often in the Bible to symbolize perfection, fullness, abundance, rest, and completion."
 –Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

27. What instructions did Joshua give about the things "under the ban"?

- 6:17
- 6:18
- 6:19

FYI: under the ban/accursed/designated for destruction/devoted things Strong's OT:2764 *cherem*; physical (as shutting in) a net); usually a doomed object; abstr. extermination:

"The nations that occupied Canaan had become so hideously debauched, so degenerate in custom and practice, that the judgment of God became imminent. We are told in the Mosaic account that God is preparing to act and His longsuffering is about to end. 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants.'

(Leviticus 18:25)"

– Steve Fazekas "Slaughter at Jericho"

<https://answersingenesis.org/contradictions-in-the-bible/slaughter-at-jericho/>

"**the accursed things.** By this, he means the idols and things associated with the demonic and depraved worship of the people of Canaan. The severe judgment that is brought against Jericho, and all of Canaan, didn't come because they were in the 'way' of God's people. It came because this was a people who were in total rebellion against God and in league with the occult, as the artifacts recovered from this period demonstrate. [See Deuteronomy 18:9–14]

But all the silver and gold...All the valuables belong to God; Jericho is the first fruits' city of Canaan, and so the valuables are set apart for **the treasury of the LORD.**" " –David Guzik

28. How easily did the people enter the city (6:20)?

29. How obedient were the Israelites in destroying the city (6:21,24)? How hard do you think it was for them to do that?

FYI: “Archaeologists found evidence for a massive destruction by fire, just as the Bible relates. Kenyon wrote in her excavation report, *“The destruction was complete. Walls and floors were blackened or reddened by fire, and every room was filled with fallen bricks, timbers, and household utensils; in most rooms the fallen debris was heavily burnt.”*

What caused the strong walls of Jericho to collapse? The most likely explanation is an earthquake. But the nature of the earthquake was unusual. It struck in such a way as to allow a portion of the city wall on the north side of the site to remain standing, while everywhere else the wall fell....According to the Bible, Rahab’s house was miraculously spared while the rest of the city wall fell. This is exactly what archaeologists found. The preserved city wall on the north side of the city had houses built against it.” – <https://christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a011.html>

“The German excavation of 1907–1909 found that on the north a short stretch of the lower city wall did not fall as everywhere else. A portion of that mudbrick wall was still standing to a height of over two meters (eight feet).⁷ What is more, there were houses built against the wall! It is quite possible that this is where Rahab’s house was.” – Bryant Wood “The Walls of Jericho”

<https://answersingenesis.org/archaeology/the-walls-of-gericho/>

30. List who and what was saved because of Rahab (6:23).
31. What does the description in 6:25 say about Rahab’s identification with Israel?
- What different emotions do you think Rahab had to deal with through all these events? What kind of trust in God’s love had she shown?
32. What warning did Joshua give about Jericho (6:26)? See I Kings 16:34 for a fulfillment of this curse.
33. What did this battle show about the relationship between God and Joshua (6:27)? Compare 1:9 and 3:7. What does it show about the relationship between the people and the Lord?
- ✎ Applying the Word:** Do you have any “strongholds” in your life that need to come down; i.e., habits that control, fears that immobilize, memories that burden, worries that trouble, disappointments that distress, or doubts that hinder you? How should we fight those kinds of battles? (See 2 Corinthians 10:3–6.) What lessons from this account could help you in your struggle?

MAP OF CANAAN - TWELVE TRIBE PORTIONS

