

## Trinity Home Teams

Sermon Notes / Nov. 2, 2025

### The Priority of Holiness / Joshua 5:1-12

1. Read the scriptures in the block at right. How would you describe circumcision: its meaning and importance for believers – then vs. now?  
2. Why do you suppose the exodus generation of Israelites did not circumcise their children? Are these reasons similar to yours when you disobey the Lord?  
3. Moses builds a case in **Deuteronomy 6:10-12**. What are his arguments?

The first five books of the OT make it clear that holiness is to be a priority for Israel. Yahweh's people were to be set apart among all the peoples. They were to be distinct in the way they worshiped and lived.

**Leviticus 11:44-45** -- "Consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am holy..." (through meditation on and obedience to God's word).

**Joshua 1:7-8** -- "Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Yahweh commanded the perpetual observance of Passover, a part of the promise of the inheritance of the land Yahweh had sworn to Abraham to give to his descendants. See **Exodus 12:24-27**. At the end of chapter 4, Israel reaches the Promised Land in time for the observance of the Passover.

#### A renewal of covenant obedience

In order to observe the Passover and inherit the land promised to Abraham, they had to be members of the covenant community. This required circumcision -- instituted as a sign of Yahweh's covenant with Abraham.

**Genesis 17:9-14** "And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. <sup>10</sup> This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male ... shall be circumcised ...

- Circumcision not optional, serious to Yahweh.
- Circumcision required for Passover participation. See **Exodus 12:43-48**
- Israel arrives in promised land, but many are uncircumcised. Exodus generation did not obey, so they died in wilderness. See **Numbers 14:31**.
- Their children, who Yahweh raised up in their place, were uncircumcised, yet led across the

Jordan and into Canaan. However, they will not be granted inheritance if not circumcised.

- Yahweh commands Joshua to circumcise them. This 'second' circumcision of Israel marked a new generation unlike the previous generation who failed to trust Yahweh. Their obedience marked their trust in Yahweh and a desire for holiness.
- It is a reminder that circumcision is more than an outward sign; it is to be an inward reality.

**Deuteronomy 10:16** -- "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn"

**Romans 2:28-29** -- "For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. <sup>29</sup> 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."

**Colossians 2:11** -- "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."

#### A removal of reproach

The circumcision of the nation was complete. They obeyed the covenant command of circumcision. Now, they took time to heal. Bad timing? This ceremony left them vulnerable. [In **Genesis 34**, the sons of Jacob enact retribution against Shechem for raping their sister. They use circumcision as a ruse. Many died.]

The lesson: Yahweh calls his people to holiness and obedience. God's kindness is meant to make us repentant not complacent. Yahweh used the powerful miracle of stopping the Jordan, and other miracles, to paralyze Israel's enemies with fear. Yahweh had promised it. **Exodus 23:27**

Yahweh removed reproach by demonstrating the righteousness of circumcision, by showing that he had not abandoned his people, and by giving them a land of their own. He removes reproach of his people.

#### A remembrance of covenant blessings

After crossing the Jordan into Canaan, and after all had been circumcised, the Israelites observed Passover. The first Passover was held just before Israel was delivered from Egypt, when the Lord passed over the houses marked with the blood of a spotless lamb. Unleavened bread: they left Egypt in haste. Bitter herbs: bitterness of bondage. Spotless lamb: sacrificed, roasted and eaten.

This Passover was the first in the Promised Land. Was a memorial of God's faithfulness to his covenant promises. Marked the end of wilderness wandering. Yahweh was faithful to his covenant, so they were to be faithful. Holiness was a priority; if they walked in holiness, all else would be as it should. Yahweh would go before them and fight for them with an army invincible.