

# Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 7: Circumcised (5:1-12)

Before the Israelites could wield God's sword, they must submit themselves to it. *"God, your God, will cut away the thick callouses on your hearts and your children's hearts, freeing you to love God, your God, with your whole heart and soul, and live, really live"* (Deuteronomy 30:6, MSG).

In Canaan, consecration would precede confrontation<sup>i</sup>, for no enemy would be conquered by those with calloused hearts. They must be different, distinctly different, externally and internally marked by God's presence (John 15:2) and His Word (Hebrews 4:12) if they were to conquer the enemy and eat the fruits of God's promises.

The fullness of Canaan will never be experienced by those who choose to live a comfortable and casual existence, but by those who make intentional and deliberate choices to forsake sin and pursue righteousness.

*Read Joshua 5:1-7.*

1. Why was this an opportune and inopportune time to circumcise the sons of Israel? (v.1)
2. For what reasons did Joshua do this? (vv.4-6)
3. Per this passage, what effect did physical circumcision have upon their father's hearts? How does verse 5 reveal their spiritual indifference?
4. Why was this important to God? Read Genesis 17:1-11 and Acts 7:6-8.

5. Describe God's "knife": John 15:2, Hebrews 4:11-13, Ephesians 6:17.
  
6. The Apostle Paul declares, *"Don't you see: It's not the cut of a knife that makes a Jew... It's the mark of God on your heart..."* (Romans 2:28-29, MSG).  
  
What is circumcision of the heart? What was this act to signify? Read Deuteronomy 10:12-21, 30:6, Jeremiah 4:1-4, Romans 2:28-29, and Colossians 2:11-13.
  
7. Describe the external evidences of internal circumcision. Do you bear these? If not, why?
  
8. Describe the physical effect of circumcision upon the men in Genesis 34:24-25.
  
9. With this in mind, by submitting to this command, what were the Israelite men agreeing to? Why were they willing to do this?
  
  

Alan Redpath notes, "The rite of circumcision was an outward testimony to the fact that the land was to be possessed in the weakness of the flesh... It symbolized the weakness and almost death, as it were, of everything that man can be, in order that the possession of the land should be given to them unmistakably in the sovereign grace of God".<sup>ii</sup>

  
10. How might this have challenged the Israelite women? How could they have stood in the way? How can we do the same?

11. Have you ever been required to disarm yourself, making yourself completely vulnerable before others?
  
12. How did Christ do this? See Isaiah 53:7 and Matthew 26:51-52.

Why was He willing?

*Read Joshua 5:8-9.*

13. What did Egypt symbolize to the Israelites? What does it symbolize to the believer?
  
14. Spiritually, what reproach was rolled away through this act of obedience?
  
15. Why was this necessary to prepare them for what lied ahead?
  
16. Can spiritual battles be won by worldly Christians? Explain.

17. What is the difference between holiness and legalism?

18. Read Matthew 5:11-16. How does an individual avoid "battles"? What makes him ineffective? (Also consider Romans 2:17-24.)

*Finally, read Joshua 5, verses 10-12.*

19. What does the Passover signify? According to Exodus 12:48, who could partake?

20. What occurred one the third day after Israel observed the Passover? (Joshua 5:12) What correlation do you see between this and Christ's resurrection?

21. Why is it imperative that we remember why we cut away the flesh and the reason we are able to partake of the fruits of God's promises?

22. How does Psalm 23:5 apply to this passage?

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<sup>i</sup> Focht, Joe. Sermon.

<sup>ii</sup>Redpath, Alan. (2013). Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua. (p. 72). The Redpath Family.