



# Biblical Manhood

Remembering Our Legacy, Fulfilling Our Destiny

May/June, 2017

## Before The Battle

In **Joshua 3**, the Lord God dried up the Jordan River for Israel. He enabled Israel to go into the Promised Land on dry ground. Then, in **Joshua 4**, the people respond to this miracle. They build a memorial of stones to the Lord. This memorial served as a reminder of God's mighty work in their behalf. It pointed them to the faithful and powerful God whom they worshiped and served.

**Joshua 5** reveals that Israel is in Canaan, the Promised Land. What should Israel do? The most obvious step is for them to attack Jericho. Jericho is just a few distant miles away. Worldly wisdom would dictate an immediate attack on Jericho before it could prepare for an attack.

At the same time, the people of the land were terrified and disheartened. **Joshua 5:1** says, "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."

**Joshua 4** was a horror story for the Canaanites. They were terrified at seeing the massive hordes of Israel just across the Jordan. Yet, the Lord dried up the Jordan River at flood stage. Israel passed over on dry land. Now they were poised for attack only miles away from Jericho. This is why the Bible says that "their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them."

So, it's obvious, isn't it? Israel should attack. Worldly wisdom and military strategy dictated an immediate attack. However, God had a different perspective. Instead of an immediate attack, God called for a three-day delay. God slows the action; He pushes the pause button.

This went against worldly wisdom. It certainly didn't coincide with military strategy. Yet, God, in His wisdom, called for this delay. Israel needed some things before they began the battle.

At the same time, in this text, we can also see some things that we need. In our walk with the Lord and service for Him, we are going to fight a variety of battles. The Christian life is a life of warfare. Just as they did, we need the same things. What do you need before you go to battle?

### **A Commitment To Obedience (5:1-6)**

After crossing the Jordan River, the Lord commanded Joshua to circumcise the men of Israel, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time" (5:2). God had given this command in **Genesis 17:13**, "Both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant."

Circumcision was the sign of the covenant. It was a symbol of having a relationship with God. It meant that God was their God and that they pledged to be His people. It signified membership in the people of God.

This command to circumcise had been ignored or kept on hold for a generation, "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 after Egypt . . . yet all the people who were born on the way in the

wilderness after they had come out had not been circumcised (5:4-5).

This was a crucial step. Before they went into battle, they had to be right with God. They had to obey His Word. It was far more important that they be right with God than that they gain a momentary military advantage.

They needed to obey God in this matter. It would be a constant reminder to them of the relationship that they had with God. It would encourage them because they had a relationship to their powerful and gracious God.

We can't expect God's blessing in our battles if there is hidden compromise. If we are not determined to obey God, how can we expect God to bless us (5:6)? Before the battle, we must have a thorough commitment to obey God. We must be ready and prepared to do what God says in His Word, to follow His leading.

### **The confidence that God can handle the consequences of our obedience (5:7-9)**

Joshua was faithful to carry out God's command, "So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised" (5:7). This action marked a new beginning. This place was named Gilgal (5:9). "Gilgal" means to "roll away." With this circumcision, God rolled away the slavery, bondage, and disobedience of

Israel's past. They were now ready to lay hold of what God had promised.

Not surprisingly, the Israelites waited to begin the campaign against Canaan, "they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed" (5:8). I don't think this needs a great deal of explanation. These men had been circumcised with flint knives. They were in no condition to fight. They were not able to march and attack Jericho. They had to rest and heal.

This text shows that God was able to handle the consequences of their obedience. At this point, they were vulnerable. Yet, God protected them. It would have been easy for enemy forces to come and attack them. They would be no match for any force at this point. However, God helped them and hedged them in.

When you obey God, He can take care of the consequences. When you obey Him, you can depend on Him to sustain you. You can count on Him to be with you and to watch over you. Stepping out in obedience is stepping into the loving care of your Father.

Now this doesn't mean that everything will be easy. It doesn't mean that you will not have difficulty and pain. Obedience can be costly and painful. However, it does mean God will sustain and help you. He will not forsake or fail you. You can rely on Him to be with You. We can depend on God

to look after the outcomes of our obedience to Him.

### **Conviction concerning God's faithfulness (5:10-12)**

In these verses, Israel celebrates the Passover on Canaan's side of the Jordan (5:10). The Passover was a celebration of God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. It was a time to look back and remember what God had done. They were to focus on the power and mercy of God in redeeming them from Egypt. God was faithful to His promises. He delivered Israel out of Egypt and brought them through the wilderness.

Yet, it was also a time to look forward to what God would do. God would continue to be faithful to them. God gave them an object lesson in this, "And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain" (5:11). During their time in the wilderness, God had sustained them with manna. Now He blesses them with food from Canaan. God was showing them that He would be faithful.

On the one hand, God had blessed them with manna throughout their wilderness wanderings. He sustained them and provided for them all the way through this time. God promised to feed them with manna from heaven

until they reached Canaan. He kept His Word! That's exactly what He did!

Yet, He also kept His Word by giving them food from Canaan, "And the manna ceased the day after they ate the produce of the land. And there was no longer any manna for the people of Israel, but they ate the fruit of Canaan that year (5:12). God did exactly what He said He would. What a powerful object lesson!

This is something that we need before the battle – a conviction that God will be faithful. We must trust that God will keep His Word. We must rest in the fact that He will supply what we need. We must believe that He will grant all this is needed as we press forward to do His will.

## World Prayer Plan

### July

- 1-Luxembourg
- 2-Macao
- 3-Macedonia
- 4-Madagascar
- 5-Malawi
- 6-Malaysia-The Church
- 7-Malaysia-The Lost
- 8-Malaysia-Open Doors
- 9-Maldives
- 10-Mali
- 11-Malta
- 12-Marshall Islands
- 13-Martinique
- 14-Mauritania
- 15-Mauritius
- 16-Mexico-The Church
- 17-Mexico-The Lost
- 18-Micronesia
- 19-Midway Islands
- 20-Moldova
- 21-Monaco
- 22-Mongolia

- 23-Montserrat
- 24-Morocco-The Church
- 25-Morocco-The Lost
- 26-Morocco-Persecuted Believers
- 27-Mozambique-The Church
- 28-Mozambique-The Lost
- 29-Myanmar (Burma)-The Church
- 30-Myanmar (Burma)-The Lost
- 31-Namibia

### August

- 1-Nauru
- 2-Nepal-The Church
- 3-Nepal-The Lost
- 4-Nepal-Mission Efforts
- 5-Netherlands
- 6-Netherland Antilles
- 7-New Caledonia
- 8-New Zealand
- 9-Nicaragua
- 10-Niger
- 11-Nigeria-The Church
- 12-Nigeria-The Lost
- 13-Norway
- 14-Oman
- 15-Pakistan-The Church
- 16-Pakistan-The Lost
- 17-Pakistan-Open Doors
- 18-Pakistan-Persecuted Believers
- 19-Palau
- 20-Palestine West Bank-Open Doors
- 21-Palestine West Bank-Peace
- 22-Panama
- 23-Papua New Guinea-The Church
- 24-Papua New Guinea-The Lost
- 25-Paraguay
- 26-Peru-The Church
- 27-Peru-The Lost
- 28-Philippines-The Church
- 29-Philippines-The Lost
- 30-Pitcairn Island
- 31-Poland-The Church

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