

- The Second Generation (Josh 5:1,6)

**#1. A Nation Yet Uncircumcised in Heart** (Josh 5:2-5, Gen 49:24)

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- Take the Sword in Our Hand (Eph 6:17, 2Cor 5:11, Matt 10:16, Heb 11:1)
- Circumcision (Jos 5:5,7,9, Deut 30:6, Rom 2:28-29, John 8:36, 1John 4:7,19, Eph 2:8, 1Co 10:12, Phil 2:13)

Please open your Bibles to the Prophecy of Joshua, Josh 5:1 (2X). Physically, this is the time in history when the children of Israel had just crossed over the Jordan River into the Promised Land, and they had set up camp in Gilgal, which was near Jericho. But spiritually, something else had taken place in the hearts and minds of many of the children of Israel: They had become an obedient people. Let us now consider why that took place.

- **The Second Generation** of them that came out of Egypt. (Josh 5:1,6)

Josh 5:1 And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which *were* on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until WE were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

Did you see that word WE? Who does that word WE represent? It refers to  $\kappa E$  the people,  $\text{\textcircled{3}}$ like in the Declaration of Independence.  $\text{\textcircled{3}}$ When God dictated this to Joshua He referred to  $\kappa E$  the elect of God.  $\text{\textcircled{3}}$ How do we know that this is the correct interpretation? Historically, the Canaanites were already nervous when the children of Israel were in the South of the land of Canaan. But now, when they heard of the stupendous miracle that the God of Israel had dried up the Jordan River to let Israel cross over, now they feared that it was their turn to die and face the Judge of all the earth. And it was a different fear than Israel had for Jehovah their God. But this paragraph was written in the third person. And now, suddenly, the author uses the word WE. This occurs again in verse 6.

Jos 5:6 For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *that were* men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give US, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

Did you see that word US? Who are US referring to? This paragraph was written in the third person. And now, suddenly, the Author uses the word US. Remember that God wrote the Bible not for them, but for US. In these two verses, Josh 5:1 and 6, God is reminding US that He wrote the Bible for people of all times and all nations. These are the only two places in the entire scroll of Joshua where God the Author of the Bible is addressing His elect, US directly. And He is reminding US: If WE indeed have crossed the Jordan with Christ, and were represented by Him and in Him, and we have been made aware that we were partakers with Him in His death and in His resurrection, as represented by this crossing of the Jordan, and if we indeed have been made heirs of the Promised Land, the Kingdom of God, then we have much to be grateful about. That is why the children of Israel now paused in thanksgiving, and they remembered that their fathers were consumed in the wilderness and were denied the privilege of entering into the Promised Land, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord.

#### **#1. A Nation Yet Uncircumcised in Heart** (Josh 5:2-5, Gen 49:24)

Jos 5:2 At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

When we read in the KJV the words Thee and Thou, it refers to one person. And when we read in the KJV the words Ye and You, it refers to many persons. We have lost that distinction in our modern English language, but it

did still exist in the Biblical Hebrew and Greek. God said to Joshua: "Make Thee (singular) sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time". God's command was to Joshua as a single individual. We do not read anywhere that Joshua delegated this task to the Priests or the Levites. And yet we know that it was physically impossible for Joshua, as a single individual, to circumcise close to one million people. But that is how God wrote the Bible. Therefore this verse begs for the spiritual meaning, which is that Joshua represents Christ.

Moreover, to make this verse 2 even more complex, the KJV says: "Make Thee sharp <06697> knives <02719>". The word sharp <06697> is almost always translated "Rock". That is the proper translation. One of the glorious symbolic names for God in Scripture is "The Rock". The Rock speaks of the Solitary, Sovereign, Eternal, and Immutable One, who is the same yesterday, today and forever. Jehovah is declared to be: "The Mighty One of Jacob; from thence *is* the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel" (Gen 49:24). Only in Joshua 5:2-3 has this word been translated "sharp". It should have been Rock.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the word knives <02719> is rarely translated knife in the Bible. It is almost always translated "Sword". Now you can understand that the KJV translators had trouble with this verse, because historically Joshua did not make swords out of rock to circumcise the children of Israel. Moreover, nowhere in this chapter do we read that Joshua circumcised only the males of this nation. In fact, verse 8 specifically says that all the people were circumcised. Now, that poses a problem. And look at the wording of the command in verse 2: "Circumcise again". God could have left it there. But why did God emphasize: "the second time"? That seems redundant. Literally verse 2 says: "Make Thee Rock Swords, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time". If we take God's words seriously, we must to look for the spiritual dimension of this true historical event, which is called "The second circumcision". Let us now continue in verses 3 to 5:

Jos 5:3-5 And Joshua made him sharp knives (Lit: Rock Swords), and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins (Lit: the hill of the uncircumcised). And this *is* the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, *that were* males, *even* all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people *that were* born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, *them* they had not circumcised.

And so, what is the spiritual dimension of "The second circumcision"? We find that in the following verses:

- **The Reproach of Egypt** (Josh 5:8-9,2, Deut 5:6)

Jos 5:8 And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people (Lit: when all the nation had finished being circumcised), that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.

Jos 5:9 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

God said: "I have rolled away from off YOU", where YOU means the plural YOU, which means not Joshua alone, but also the children of Israel, and it also means US. What has God rolled away? God rolled away the reproach of Egypt! What was the reproach of Egypt? It was the reproach of being in bondage to the kingdom of Egypt, which means to be in bondage to Sin and Satan. That is why God says in Deut 5:6, "I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee (and God is speaking to US) out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage". When God saves us, He has

brought us out of the land of Egypt; He has brought us out of the kingdom of Satan and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; therefore He has rolled away the reproach of Egypt; He has rolled away the abomination that we have been citizens of the kingdom of Satan. How did we end up in the land of Egypt anyway? We were born there. We were born as slaves to the king of Egypt, who is representing Satan. The Bible says that at one time we all were by nature the children of the wrath of God, even as others who never become saved. There is NONE righteous of himself, NO NOT ONE! Ever since Adam's Sin the entire human race came into the world in bondage to sin, in rebellion against God, and deserving the just wrath of God, which is Hell.

When God said in verse 9: "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you", God was using the language of salvation. Think it out now! Is it possible that the children of Israel, through the ceremony of circumcision, had become saved? No, that is impossible. We cannot become saved, we cannot have our sins washed away by something that we do, and certainly not by performing the ceremony of circumcision. Ishmael was circumcised, but God states in Gal 4 that Ishmael was never saved. When we do a ceremony on the outside of our body, can we thereby command God to do a spiritual work inside our soul? The answer is an emphatic NO! What occurs outside the body does not synchronize with what God does inside our soul. And here we see God's interpretation of the spiritual dimension of verse 2. God said in Jos 5:2, ¶ that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.<sup>3</sup>At that time, after Christ had endured the equivalent of an eternity in Hell for our sins in AD 33, typified by the Ark of the Covenant standing in the midst of Jordan, after that had taken place, God said to Joshua, which is the same name as Jesus, and He is representing Jesus, "circumcise again the children of Israel the second time". God is using here the language of:

- **The Second Birth** (John 3:3, Deut 30:5-6, Col 2:10-14)

When the Lord Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, Jesus was not stating a new principle. This principle is found in the Old Testament in many places. For example God said in Deut 30:5-6, ¶ And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.<sup>3</sup>Now, how can anyone circumcise his own heart? We cannot do it. God has to do it. This is the language of salvation. It is the language of becoming Born Again by the action of God the Holy Spirit who gives us a regenerated heart, "so that thou wilt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live", which indicates that we will have eternal life. This is what God had in view in Jos 5:2. God crafted the words of Jos 5:2 in such a way that it reads as if Joshua, better as if Jesus personally had to circumcise the hearts of all the people, both males and females. That is indeed true if we understand that God had spiritual circumcision in mind. And what did Jesus (Joshua) have in His hand to circumcise the hearts of these people? He had Swords, spiritually speaking He had Bibles, the Sword of the Holy Spirit, which is the Word of God, because "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God". And these Swords consist of solid Rock, which is symbolic for God Himself, because God

Himself (Jesus) crafted these Swords, and the Bible circumscribes who our God is; the Bible defines who our God is. When were our sins cut off? It was when Christ was crucified for our sins in our place. God speaks about that in the New Testament as the circumcision of Christ, or also as the baptism of Christ. Please turn to [Col 2:10](#), where God speaks of us as having been spiritually circumcised by the cutting off of our sins by Christ on the cross.

Col 2:10-14 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: **In** whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (= His crucifixion). **Buried** with him in baptism (= the washing of our sins), wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. **And** you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision (= the filthiness) of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; **Blotting** out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

The handwriting of ordinances, the Law of God, cannot send us to Hell any more, because Christ paid for all our past, present, and future sins and took the law out of the way. We, the elect, are declared righteous in the sight of God. Now, let us return to Joshua 5, and see the consequences of our spiritual circumcision:

## **#2. There Stood a Man (Jos 5:13-15)**

Jos 5:13-15 **And** it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adversaries? **And** he said, Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. **And** Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? **And** the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. **And** Joshua did so.

Now here is that same Hebrew word that was translated knife in verse 2, but here in verse 13 it is translated Sword. Is this a different Sword? Not at all. This is still the Word of God, which is the Sword of the Spirit, but now the Sword is not used to save, but to judge. Who is this man with His Sword? Well, He identifies Himself. Literally He says: Pay, for I (am) the Prince of the army of Jehovah; now I have comē He is the Prince of the army of Jehovah, ready to execute Judgment on the Canaanites and bestow His favor upon the children of Israel. He was going to be among them and lead them. #1. Who in Scripture is identical with God, and yet distinct in His appearance? #2. Who, without abandoning His Deity, kept company with sinful man, walked as a man among men? #3. Who, without denying the wrath of God, at the same time represents the supreme mercy of God for those whom He calls *The Israel of God*̄ #4. This is none other than the Second Person of the Trinity, The Lord Jesus Christ. God has instructed Moses and Joshua to wipe out the Canaanites. Now Christ is appearing to Joshua as the Leader of the army that brings Judgment upon the Land of Canaan: He comes with His sword drawn in His hand, ready to use! Where in the Bible do we see a similar situation of Christ coming with His Sword drawn? Please turn to the Revelation of Jesus Christ, [Rev 19:11](#) (2X). We see here the second coming of Christ, coming out of heaven with all the armies of heaven, and Christ comes with His Sword drawn and ready to judge.

- **Christ Is Leading the Armies of Heaven** (Rev 19:11-16, John 12:48)

Rev 19:11-16 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Who is this, riding on a white horse? Are there horses in heaven? Of course not. Flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But here Christ is not coming as the Suffering Servant but as the Judge of all the earth. The Judgment on the Canaanites was a picture of the judgment on all the earth. When Christ came riding into Jerusalem He came on a donkey, but now He comes as a Judge. He is called The Word of God, which is unmistakably identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. But why does He have to come as a Judge? It is because God's righteousness demands payment for every sin, even sins as small as an idle word. How is He clothed? He is clothed with a vesture (garment) dipped in Blood! This was not His blood, but our blood that was on His vesture. God's righteousness demands payment for sin, no matter who sinned. His vesture was stained, because He had trodden the winepress of the wrath of God for our sins already at Calvary, where He paid for the sins that were imputed to His account. This time the Sword is not in His hand, but it comes out of His mouth. Does that make a difference? Yes it does. When the Sword is in His hand, there is still hope for some, like for Rahab the harlot, and for the Gibeonites. But the Lord Jesus spoke about the sword out of His mouth in an ominous way. He said in:

John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

It is a terrible thing to have heard the true Gospel and reject it. It would have been better never to have heard the Gospel, than to be among those who have heard it, and reject it.

- But **Christ Is Leading Also His Armies on Earth** (Rev 19:16, Psalm 136:3, Jos 5:14)

When Christ comes on the Last Day there is no second chance for anyone who is still unsaved. But before Christ comes again, while there is still hope, Christ is leading His armies on earth. We read in Rev 19:16, and he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. I want to focus for a minute on those two names. You see, as long as Christ is leading His armies on earth there is hope. He is the King of kings. Who are those kings? Are there any kings today? Yes! The saints are called kings. Perhaps you remember that I read it this morning from Rev 1:6, "He hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father". We are His army of kings and priests on earth. We are called a holy priesthood, because we intercede for others by bringing them the Gospel and by praying for them. And Christ is spoken of as Lord of lords in Psalm 136:3,

Psalm 136:3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

His mercy is only forever for those whose sins have been paid by Christ on the Cross. But we do not know who they are, and that is why we continue to pray for our unsaved loved ones as long as there is hope. Since we do not know whom God will save we pray: "Not our will, but Thy will be done". Please turn again to the Prophecy of Joshua, Jos 5:14 (2X). There we read how Christ is leading His armies on earth.

Jos 5:14 And he said, Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?

Jos 5:15 And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

Here is a direct result from the fact that God said: "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you". Israel as a nation had become the people of God, and Jehovah was now their God; which was quite a contrast with the generation from before they crossed the Jordan. Now they are His people. Christ took up the leadership of this nation, as it was about to conquer the land of Canaan. Christ had done all the work of rolling away the reproach of sin, and Christ had to be in charge of the work to conquer the land of Canaan. What does that mean for today in our life? It means that Christ must do 100% of the work of salvation, and Christ must do all the work of sanctification in us and through us. Not only is He in charge, but also He must direct us every step of the way, for it is all a gift of grace. All we do is fall down and worship and we will obey His orders. That is a promise. Where do we find His orders? We find them in the Bible, in the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible.

### **#3. What Are The Battles We Fight? (Eph 6:10-17, Matt 10:34, Rom 4:25)**

Please turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians, Eph 6:10 (2X). Joshua's response was a complete obedience to the Captain of the army of the Lord. Now, with Christ in charge, Israel could fight the battles of the Lord and win every time. Let us apply this to our battles in this day and age. What are the battles that WE fight? Previously, in our unsaved condition, both in body and in soul we were in the kingdom of sin and Satan, and therefore we did not have many battles, because both our body and soul were at peace with one another. But we were under the wrath of God. When Christ came in our life, something took place. Perhaps you remember that Jesus said in Matt 10:34, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword". The first small battles are within ourselves and within our own families. We received a regenerated soul that is in the Kingdom of God, but we hang on to a body that is still unsaved. Let me express that in the language of Joshua 5: Christ found us as great stones in the Jordan River, a picture of being under the wrath of God (Hell). The Ark of the Covenant stood still in the midst of Jordan, as a picture of Christ atoning for the guilt of our sins, and we were justified when He rose from the dead (Rom 4:25). The stones were picked up at that time in AD 33. The stones were carried to Gilgal almost one kilometer away, which took some period of time, and there they were put down in the Promised Land, which represents the kingdom of God. This means that the moment when the stones were put down, it coincided with our being Born Again when we were taken out of the kingdom of Satan and placed in the kingdom of Christ; our sins were wiped away, our souls regenerated, and we joined the rank of the saved ones, the saints. These stones were stacked together to form a monument, honoring Christ as our Redeemer and Builder (= Joshua), representing the church as a visible

monument where the saints gather together. However the visible church became infected by idolatry, just like the Old Testament church was infected by idolatry, and God divided the church into a false church, a show church and the eternal church. Christ took us out of the Jordan, into the land of Canaan, but now we need to battle the Canaanites. Then Christ appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the host of the Lord to let us know that He is in charge of our lives. But is He indeed the Captain of our faith? Have we submitted to Him? It is vain to say that we believed the Gospel, that we believed what Christ has said, if we have made no commitment to obey His Word. It is certain that we will face spiritual battles in this life, but who are we relying on to take charge of our spiritual battles? What are the battles that we fight? We read in [Eph 6:10-17](#),

Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The first thing we need to know is this: Are we strong in the Lord? Have we been saved? Make sure that we know this up front, for if we have not been saved we are blaspheming His name. Then Christ gave us commands:

Eph 6:11-13 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Verse 12 gives us a list of the hierarchy of evil spirits in the kingdom of Satan. But did you notice that it is the whole armor of God? It is not our armor. We do not know how to protect ourselves. Spiritually speaking, we are naked. We are totally dependent on the covering that God will give us, and He will. It is God's good pleasure to give us protection from Satan's attacks. Twice God says in these verses: "Put on the whole armor of God". Do not leave anything out. Where do we find this wonderful armor of God? We find it in the Bible, in the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. This is the most important armor God has given us.

Eph 6:14-17 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

The first three items are communicable attributes of God: Truth, Righteousness, and Peace. The next three items are gifts of the Spirit produced by God working in us and through us: Faith, Salvation and a nimble Sword of the Spirit. Let us focus just on one of these six pieces of armor:

- **Take the Sword in Our Hand** (Eph 6:17, 2Cor 5:11, Matt 10:16, Heb 11:1)

Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: This is the only offensive weapon in the arsenal. The other five are defensive. Do we fight the battles in the land of Canaan with the Sword in our hand? Would we be successful swinging our Bibles left and right? I don't think so. You see, this Book is not a physical sword, but it is a Sword of the Spirit. We need to know what is in the Bible before we can successfully use it as an offensive weapon. Just having the Bible in our hand is not good enough. Study it; memorize it; understand it; search out the Greek and Hebrew text; search for cross references; and pray for wisdom, for all our getting is not going to get us



anywhere without the grace of God. Pray that God will give us faithful interpretations of the Word of God.

Why do we need an offensive weapon in the first place? We need it for at least two reasons. First, we need to learn how to be good swordsmen, men who are skillful in handling the Sword of the Word of God, and in this God the Holy Spirit can teach us how to become good swordsmen. God says in 2Cor 5:11, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. God commanded us to love our neighbor and to love even our enemies, and we can do that by giving them the true Gospel. But we need to do it skillfully, for the Lord Jesus said in Matt 10:16 hold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Be wise as serpents, for the Devil is a very clever and shrewd enemy; try to outwit Satan, and by the grace of God we may be able to loose the bands that hold the sinner in the hands of Satan. Be harmless as doves means present your story without a mixture of evil, free from guile, presenting unadulterated truth and leave it up to God to do the persuading, for God is wiser than Satan. But we must learn to bring the Gospel faithfully. knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. Do we hear what God is saying in this verse? We should not be saying that a loving God will not send people to Hell, for this verse speaks of the terror of the Lord. Judgment day and Hell are coming for sure, like it came for the Canaanites. And there was not one Canaanite saved, because they were under the hearing of a false gospel. But if they will not listen, then God has not opened the door. We are only instruments in God's hand. We do not receive the credit, nor do we receive the blame for someone failing to believe the Gospel.

Secondly, we need to be skillful in handling the Sword of the Word of God for our own needs. If we need to examine ourselves, we need to know where to begin our study. Certainly we want to know if we understand the true Gospel correctly. And certainly we want to know if we are going to be disqualified. We also want to teach this Gospel clearly to our children. We need to teach them in a tactful way that they were born as sinners on the way to Hell, and that God's salvation is by grace alone. And how can we then find out if God's grace rests upon us? We need to teach ourselves and our children one of the evidences hidden in Heb 11:1, For faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. If our children are in their teenage years we have a very difficult task, for in their eyes we are a little stupid. Pray for them that they may love the Lord above all and that they may have a high opinion of Bible Study. But if we belong to the kingdom of Christ, then Christ is fighting for us.

- **Circumcision** (Jos 5:5,7,9, Deut 30:6, Rom 2:28-29, John 8:36, 1John 4:7,19, Eph 2:8, 1Co 10:12, Phil 2:13)

Why did God allow Israel to remain uncircumcised until they entered the land of Canaan? Why did God put these uncircumcised children of Israel at risk when they fought against the Amorites, and the Midianites, and Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan. Even though these battles were won, there were children of Israel killed in those battles. Why did God arrange it this way? The answer is: God wanted to create the spiritual picture of circumcision of the heart. You see, Israel came out of Egypt circumcised, but they were uncircumcised in heart. God showed hereby that the ceremony of circumcision in no way guarantees salvation. Most of those who came out of Egypt died unsaved, as we can read in Heb 3. There are three things that God now emphasized in Josh 5: **#1**. You must be circumcised in heart. **#2**. You must become a new creature. **#3**. You must love God above all and love your neighbor as yourselves. Let us begin with **#1**. God says in Jos 5:7, the children whom God raised up in their stead

were uncircumcised, but now Jesus (in the person of Joshua) circumcised them in their heart. This is a requirement for anyone who wants to enter into the kingdom of God. But we cannot circumcise our own heart; God must do this. Therefore we read in Deut 30:6, and the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.<sup>3</sup>This is an absolute requirement for salvation, as God also tells us in Rom 2:28-29, *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: **But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.**<sup>3</sup>This lands us at point #2. You must become a new creature. Is this not what God referred to when He said, *This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you?*<sup>3</sup>You must be Born Again; and here also it is God who must give us this gift of becoming Born Again from the inside; we cannot do it to ourselves. This is how we become new creatures before God. This is how we are changed from dirty rotten sinners to saints who are free from sin. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:36; *For the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*<sup>3</sup>And with our newfound freedom we find that we now can serve our Creator and Master with a love that passes all understanding. This lands us at point #3. When God has made us Born Again, He also instills within us a love for Him and a love for the brethren. We read in 1John 4:7 *Whoever loves, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*<sup>3</sup>We cannot do that! God must give us this love for Him and for one another; just like we cannot repent, for repentance is a gift from God. God says in 1Jo 4:19, *Whoever loves him, because he first loved us.*<sup>3</sup>Salvation is only by the grace of God. When John the Baptist preached in Mark 1:15, *Repent and believe the Gospel,*<sup>3</sup>we must realize that both repenting and believing are gifts from God, for salvation is only by the grace of God. How quickly are we deceived when preachers emphasize salvation by faith, and they de-emphasize that we are saved by grace alone. Certainly God gives us faith when we become saved, but we receive that faith as a result of salvation, and not as a cause of salvation, for faith is a gift from God as we read in Eph 2:8, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*<sup>3</sup>We often imagine that we simply should preach the Gospel of grace alone, and presto God will save that person. How about having this person hear the Gospel of grace and believe, and enthusiastically join with the saints for 12 years, and still end up not saved? Yes, that is a distinct possibility. God says in 1Co 10:12, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*<sup>3</sup>We must examine ourselves thoroughly; the Devil is ready to devour. We must be circumcised in our heart, and the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit must take over our whole being, so that we love Christ above all in our lives. This is the most important criterion we must use to examine ourselves. Remember, we are no match against the rulers of the darkness of this world. We are no match against spiritual wickedness in high places. The only thing we can comfort ourselves with is that the Lord Jesus Christ will not let His people fall away. God says in Phil 2:13, *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*<sup>3</sup>and for this we must give Him thanks. God has done a wonderful work in us and through us. Let us continue to search the Bible and learn how much He loved us, and let us not take that love for granted. AMEN. Let us turn to the Lord in prayer.